

Bangor University's strategic approach to micro-credentials

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Background and context

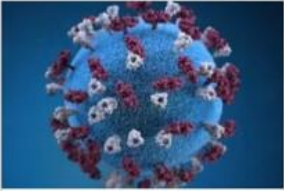
Bangor University, with its 140-year civic mission rooted in widening access to education, is re-establishing its commitment to lifelong learning through a strategic focus on micro-credentials. The embedding of lifelong learning within its core academic and strategic frameworks was catalysed by the Research Wales Innovation Fund and is now a central theme in the University's Strategy 2030. A key enabler has been the development of an internal framework to define and distinguish short courses, aligning with the QAA [Micro-credential Characteristics Statement](#).

Two-pronged approach

Bangor has adopted two main approaches to micro-credentials:

1. **Standalone micro-credentials:** Developed under a HEFCW-funded pilot, these were initially intended for delivery via FutureLearn but were hosted internally due to platform issues. While operationally challenging and with limited uptake, this approach provided valuable learning.
2. **Opened-up modules:** More successful has been the repackaging of existing modules from programmes in health, medicine, sport science and education as standalone micro-credentials. This model has proven more sustainable and scalable, aligning with both institutional capabilities and learner needs.

EXPLORE OUR MICRO-CREDENTIALS

			
Infection prevention 1	Accelerating Expertise	Sustainable Leadership In Education	Individual Performance Psychology
 5 Weeks Flexible	 12 Weeks	 5 weeks flexible	 12 weeks
 100% Online	 100% Online	 100% Online	 100% Online
			

Lessons learned

Lessons learned from challenges and barriers can be categorised into internal and external domains:

- **Internal challenges** included complex systems for enrolment and transcript generation, limited institutional awareness of micro-credentials and difficulty accessing usable data to evidence impact. However, strong collaboration between academic and professional services teams has emerged as a critical success factor.
- **External barriers** involved widespread confusion among learners and employers about what micro-credentials are and a cumbersome enrolment process that deterred casual learners. Despite these hurdles, employer interest in collaboration is growing and micro-credentials are seen as a valuable tool for aligning education with labour market needs.

Current and future plans

Bangor is currently repackaging post-registration standalone modules in Health Sciences as micro-credentials and has more offerings in development. The University is navigating a period of structural change, which underscores the need for flexibility and responsiveness to evolving learner demographics and behaviours.

The Welsh Government's Medr 2025–2030 strategy calls for a flexible, joined-up tertiary education system. Bangor sees micro-credentials as a key mechanism to deliver on this vision. However, this will require sustained investment and institutional support.

We are committed to continued collaboration, both within Wales and across the UK. Bangor is actively engaged in national networks including the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL).

Bangor University's experience illustrates both the promise and complexity of embedding micro-credentials in higher education. Through strategic alignment, internal collaboration, and external engagement, Bangor is positioning itself as a leader in flexible, skills-focused learning for the future.

This case study was presented at the QAA Cymru webinar 'Micro-credential postcards from the Nations: Practice-sharing event with a focus on micro-credential development around the UK' on 3 June 2025. The webinar formed part of the work of the Medr-funded Micro-credentials Special Interest Group (MIC.SIG).

Find out more about the MIC.SIG on the QAA Cymru [website](#).

