

Micro-credentials - -At a glance global overview

This 'at a glance overview' provides a brief summary of some established systems and frameworks from around the world. It was designed to support colleagues working in the area of micro-credential policy to provide an overview of how institutional policy may fit with other systems globally. It also forms part of the resource base for the [Tertiary Micro-credentials Special Interest Group](#) (MIC.SIG).

The short list of systems and frameworks is not intended to be comprehensive. Policy is continually developing in this landscape, and this overview is purely meant as an aid or introduction into further reading and exploration of this rapidly evolving area.

These notes may be helpful in using this table

System – the name of the system or framework and a URL is provided for further information. Note – these were all active as of October 2025 but some may become redundant over time.

HE/Tertiary – this column indicates the scope of the system. Some are tertiary and cover micro-credentials across the UK's equivalent of both further and higher education (HE). Where the framework is intended only for HE – this is indicated.

To support terminology, the term used for the micro-credential learner has been indicated. In all cases this is 'learner' and not student.

Definition – most systems/frameworks provide a relatively succinct definition of micro-credential. This has been provided with additional information, where appropriate in the final column.

Credits – a common discussion around micro-credentials is whether they are or can be non-credit bearing. The fourth column indicates whether each system or framework specifies a credit-bearing requirement, which most do. For some this is not clearly specified. Another source of deliberation is whether a micro-credential should be limited in its size. These limits, where specified are also provided in the fourth column. Where credit-rating is not required and a size limit is imposed, this is expressed as notional hours of learning.

Essential/Key components – the final column provides any further essential or key components or requirements of the relevant system/framework.

The overview is deliberately presented to enable it to be printed on one size of A4 or A3 for easy reference.

Further information can be found on QAA Cymru's [micro-credentials website](#), where there is information about MIC.SIG, useful links, case studies and webinars.

The Tertiary Micro-credentials Special Interest Group (MIC.SIG) is facilitated by QAA Cymru through its grant arrangement with Medr.

System	HE/ Tertiary	Definition	Credits	Essential/Key components
QAA Micro-credentials Characteristics Statement	HE Learner	A micro-credential is: 1. credit-bearing against a recognised level of the Qualifications Frameworks; 2. subject to standard quality assurance mechanisms; and 3. whilst there are no upper or lower limits on the amount of credit that a micro-credential carries, it should not normally constitute an award in its own right on the Qualifications Frameworks.	No min or max	
New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (updated 2024)	Tertiary Any level on the NZQCF Learner	Micro-credentials are units of learning designed to allow recognition of a discrete set of skills that meet specific learner, employer, industry, community, and iwi (Māori) needs. NZQA-approved micro-credentials: • certify the achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge • meet a specified need • include an assessment • are quality assured by NZQA or Universities New Zealand • are delivered by NZQA-recognised education providers.	Max 40 credits in size No min	• Strong evidence of need from employers, industry and/or community • Not duplicate current quality assured learning approved by NZQA • Be reviewed regularly to confirm they continue to meet their intended purpose (1-3 years) • Once NZQA approves a micro-credential, it is published on a micro-credential register NZQA Guidelines for MC listing, accreditation and approval
Malaysian Qualifications Agency Guidelines to Good Practices: Micro-credentials 2020	HE Learner	A 'Micro-credential' is defined as a certification for knowledge, skills and abilities assessed in a specific area designed for program components accredited by MQA or <i>stand-alone</i> courses that support the professional, technical, academic and personal development of students/employees.	Min 1hr learning	• Outcome based • Personalised • On-demand/industry driven – “active engagement with industries and employers is crucial” • Secure and shareable • Transparent • Assessed • Appropriately named based on the purpose, delivery, content, assessment and scope. • Appropriate PSRB consultation, even where the MC does not lead to professional recognition • Needs to be a Market Needs Assessment to inform design
Australian Government National Microcredentials Framework Nov 2021*	Tertiary Learner	A certification of assessed learning or competency, with a minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an AQF award qualification, that is additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of an AQF award qualification. *Published March 2022	Min 1hr learning Credit bearing not required	• Outcome-based. • Tailored to support lifelong learning • Must be assessed • Transparent and accessible • Cannot be a formal qualification within the AQF nor a macro-credential including diplomas, certificates and masters degrees. • To be placed on the Microcredentials Marketplace – further standards apply • Responsive to industry-need.
European project MICROBOL Recommendation s July 2021	HE Learner	“A micro-credential is a small volume of learning certified by a credential. In the EHEA context, it can be offered by HEIs or recognized by them using recognition procedures in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention or RPL, where applicable. A micro-credential is designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills or competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials have explicitly defined learning outcomes at a QF-EHEA/NQF level, an indication of associated workload in ECTS credits, assessment methods and criteria, and are subject to quality assurance in line with the ESG”	Credit-rated No min or max	• All micro-credentials should be subject to internal QA, independently of the external QA approach [programme level evaluation procedures should not be applied for each micro-credential, as these are too elaborate for small volumes of learning] • Compulsory information required for certification/credential
European Commission Dec 2021	HE Learner	‘Micro-credential’ means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs.	Credit-rated No min or max	Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.
Commonwealth Micro-credential Framework for Lifelong Learning (2025)	HE/tertiary - not specified Learner	Digital credential awarded for shorter learning experiences — including courses — that show a record of focused learning achievement and verify what the learner knows, understands, or can do. This includes credentials awarded by a trusted provider and assessed in accordance with clearly defined outcomes and standards. A micro-credential has stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning. Micro-credentials must meet the standards established by the relevant quality assurance agency.	Credit-rated No min or max	Formal, informal, and non-formal learning, including experiential learning, should all be recognised as ways to earn micro-credential qualifications. Micro-credentials must be robust and offered through a trusted and quality-assured provider. Learning outcomes should be assessed. Stackability of micro-credentials should be considered and promoted, but not be a requirement. Quality assurance and recognition of micro-credential providers and courses must be carried out in a transparent and fair manner using agreed criteria