QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES — A WORK IN PROGRESS

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APPROACH SO FAR

Development overseen by Chair of our Flexible Delivery Group, with working group established to include academic and Professional Services colleagues.

Aiming to take a measured approach, with an initial pilot phase in targeted subject areas, starting delivery in 2024/25.

Intend to work in line as far as possible with existing Quality Assurance mechanisms, taking a proportionate approach whilst recognising the need to monitor provision.

Existing Committee structures used, both to sign off the governance structure for micro-credentials, and to monitor going forward.
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT

- Micro-Credentials Characteristics Statement (2022)
- QAA Discussion Paper re. Modular Qualifications (December 2020), including consideration in this space by UNESCO and the Scottish Funding Council
- QAA Micro-Credentials webinar (2023)

As well as recognition of the relevant work by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
MAPPING TO THE CHARACTERISTICS STATEMENT

Very much informed by the Statement, with the following as a driving principle:

“'microcredential' does not necessarily refer to a very small module. Rather, it represents something that is being studied on a 'micro' level (that is, less than a recognised qualification such as a CertHE or PgCert) and which can stand alone and still have credibility and validity even if it is a module drawn from a larger programme or pathway.”
PROPOSED PILOT PHASE

- Proposal to QAC in July 2023, for operationalisation in September 2024.
- 20-credit micro-credential provision at Levels 4-7.
- Specified subject areas.
- Distance learning anticipated.
- Using existing provision wherever possible.
- Further consideration regarding how we will make macro-awards.
USING EXISTING MECHANISMS WHEREVER POSSIBLE

A suite of paperwork established:

- Governance Framework
- Initial Proposal Form
- Micro-credential Specification

- Adapting existing Committee Terms of Reference to include M-Cs
- Need to consider Awards Framework and how we use awards there
VALIDATION PROCESS

Following these principles:

• Any validation decision should be taken by a ‘body’ at University-level.

• Initial micro-credential proposals will therefore be presented for consideration at the relevant Faculty Executive Committee(s).

• Following approval there, the micro-credential specification will be taken to Faculty Quality Assurance Committee(s).

• From there, submission will be to Major Modifications Committee (MMC), for centralised consideration and final approval.

• FQAC will be notified of successful submissions MMC at each meeting.

• An annual report will be made to QAC, from MMC, regarding micro-credential activity across the University.
QA - PRACTICALITIES OF DELIVERY

- Regulations
- Minimum and Maximum periods of registration
- External Examiner
- RP(E)L
- Modifications
- Monitoring
- Accreditation
OPERATIONALISATION - CONSIDERATIONS

• Provision Lead and Parent Course
• Period of validation
• Transcript/Award
• Student Support
AREAS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

• Stackability: moving from micro- to macro-
• Student journey, from onboarding to awarding
• Student experience, cohort identity, etc.
• Partnerships: implications and opportunities