

ENQA Working Group

Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials - Expectations within the context of the European Standards and Guidelines

Please access survey at: <https://survey.evalag.de/index.php/287864?lang=en>

Please respond by: **27 April 2022**

SURVEY FOR AGENCIES/ORGANISATIONS

This survey is part of the activities undertaken by the ENQA Working Group on the “Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials - Expectations within the context of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”.

The Working Group has been set up:

- (1) to map quality assurance approaches for micro-credentials across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), focusing on the role of external quality assurance and representative quality assurance bodies;
- (2) to determine specific external quality assurance expectations for micro-credentials;
- (3) to ensure alignment for ESG applicability in quality assuring micro-credentials; and
- (4) to develop guidance on key considerations of quality assurance for micro-credentials, which can support institutions in ensuring ESG alignment of this specific form of provision, and can also serve to underpin methodologies/approaches to be developed and implemented by ENQA member agencies in individual national contexts.

There is increasing European and global interest regarding micro-credentials which prompts the debate about quality, in general, but also quality assurance, more specifically, for this form of education. Micro-credentials have gained significant focus in European (both EHEA and European Union) education policies over the past few years, with a number of working groups, initiatives and projects dealing with their integration into existing frameworks (ECTS, qualification frameworks, recognition, quality assurance).

Micro-credentials are designed to be learner-centred, modular, stackable, portable, with flexible formats and this form of education, in particular as part of continuous professional or personal development (i.e. re-skilling and up-skilling) is increasingly appealing, especially to more mature students with employment and/or family commitments. It is therefore important that the quality of education in this form is scrutinised in a comparable way to other qualifications to ensure that student teaching, learning and assessment experiences are equivalent in quality to more standard-type qualifications.

‘Micro-credentials’ is used here as an umbrella concept to cover all instances of short (certified) portable learning units which form part of an educational environment, and, hence, may fall under external quality assurance arrangements now or in the future.

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The European Commission defines a micro-credential as “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. 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” (accessed at [A European approach to micro-credentials brochure \(europa.eu\)](#) on December 2021)

The Microbol project offers helpful descriptors for micro-credentials <https://microcredentials.eu/about-2/microbol/> and notes important recommendations for the quality assurance of micro-credentials https://microcredentials.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2021/07/Output_document_QA.pdf (accessed on February 2022).

Whether the term ‘micro-credentials’ is used in your national context or not, in your answers to the survey, please consider micro-credential-type education in all its guises (and not exclusive to higher education).

The Working Group appreciates that there is important ongoing debate about internal quality assurance of micro-credentials; however, **this survey will be focusing exclusively on external quality assurance arrangements** as promoted by representative ENQA agencies.

Please ensure that your Agency/Organisation responds by **27 April 2022** so that your answers can be captured in the analysis and, subsequently, in the publication which will be prepared by the Working Group.

We greatly appreciate your involvement with this survey and your engagement, more broadly, with topical debates proposed.

Many thanks!

ENQA Working Group on Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials