

# Micro - Credentials evolution: Insights from Ireland

ENQA Members' Forum, Cardiff, 22- 24 June 2022

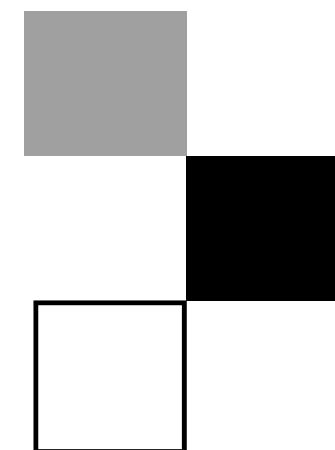
*Dr Lynn Ramsey, Director of MicroCreds  
Irish Universities Association*



# Structure

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- Overview of European Developments
- Overview of MicroCreds
- Role of National Quality Assurance Agency
- Insights



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# Eu Wide

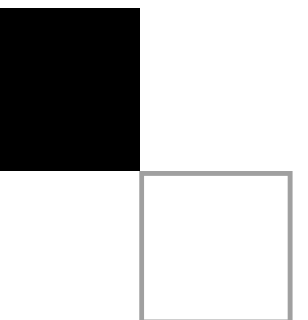
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## Policy drivers

- Who?
- Why?

**Council Recommendation** on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability adopted 16 June

- **Common Definition**
- **11 Standard Elements**
- **10 Principles**



## Definition

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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.

*Council Recommendation on a European Approach to Micro-Credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability 2022*



# 11 standard elements

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1	Identification of Learner	7	Notional workload to achieve LO (in ECTS where possible)
2	Title of Micro-Credential	8	Level and Cycle of the Learning Experience
3	Country/Region of the Issuer	9	Type of Assessment
4	Awarding Body	10	Form of Participation in the Learning Activity
5	Date of Issuing	11	Type of Quality Assurance
6	Learning Outcomes		



# 10 Principles for Design and Issuance

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1	Quality
2	Transparency
3	Relevance
4	Valid Assessment
5	Learning Pathways
6	Recognition
7	Portable
8	Learner Centered
9	Authentic
10	Information & Guidance



# European commission support

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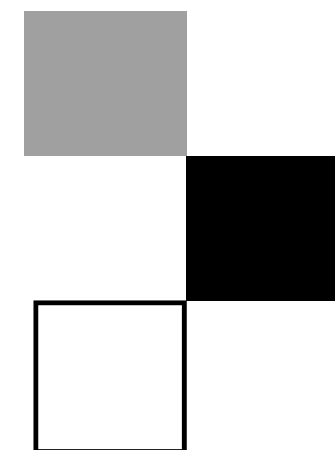
- Develop and adapt existing EU tools
- Support co-operation between Member States and stakeholders
- Technical implementation through Europass
- Research and data collection

## **Bologna Process/Lisbon Convention**

(Recommendations from TPGs on Qualifications, QA and Recognition) and WG on L&T)

## **European Universities Initiative, European Universities Alliances and Funded Projects (eg MicroNet)**

Linkages between **European Education Area** & **European Research Area**

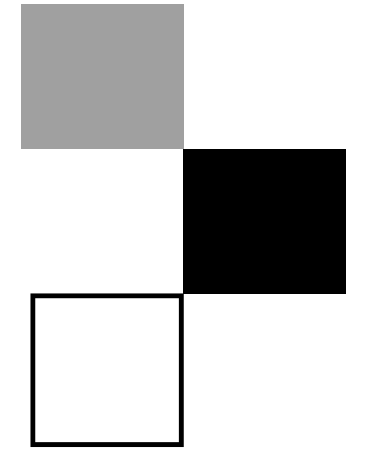


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## Irish (University) context

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### The key HCI objectives are to:

- Increase provision in areas of identified skills need
- Future proof graduates with industry relevant skills for emerging technologies
- Ensure that there is a greater focus across the whole spectrum of higher education course provision on promoting and embedding transversal skills
- Incentivise continued reform and innovation in higher education provision building on best practice available nationally and internationally.

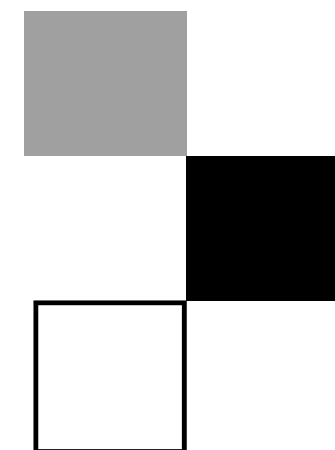
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## Irish context

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### The key areas of focus for actions under the initiative are:

- Priority skills needs for the economy, particularly in high productivity growth sectors
- Mitigating Brexit risks
- Promoting regional development and NDP/Project 2040 objectives
- Innovation and reform in programme provision
- Responding to digitalisation and the future world of work
- Strengthening relationships with enterprise and addressing identified future skills needs
- Provision of upskilling and reskilling through lifelong learning

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# Microcreds : Overview

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STRAND 1: **National Framework** for Micro-credentials

STRAND 2: **MicroCreds Innovate** sustainable model of data informed university – enterprise collaboration

STRAND 3: **Discovery Platform** linked to a digital credentialing solution (Europass early adopter)

STRAND 4: Agilely developed & flexibly delivered **suite of micro-credentials** across partner universities

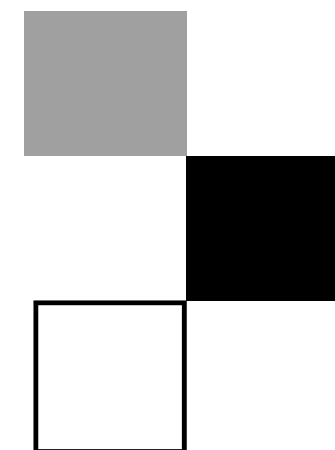
The logo consists of a solid magenta square with the words "MICRO" and "CREDS" stacked vertically in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

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# Our Universities

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**CAITRÍONA NIC  
GIOLLA MHICHÍL**

Project Lead at Dublin  
City University



**DR ZSUZSANNA  
ZARKA**

Project Lead at  
Maynooth University



**JANICE MULVANY  
GLENNON**

Project Lead at NUI  
Galway



**DEIRDRE HARKIN**

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College Dublin



**MAGS ARNOLD**

Project Lead at  
University College Cork



**SORCHA MULCAHY**

Project Lead at  
University College  
Dublin



**DR SARAH BRADY**

Project Lead at the  
University of Limerick

# Enterprise Advisory Group

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**DR AISLING SODEN**  
Talent Transformation  
& Innovation Manager,  
IDA Ireland



**TONY DONOGHUE**  
Policy Advisor, Ibec



**ALAN FAHEY**  
Vocational Trainer, SAP  
Software Solutions



**NATASHA KINSELLA**  
Regional Skills  
Manager, Regional  
Skills Forum Dublin



**HELEN MCMAHON**  
Senior Executive for  
Client Skills, Enterprise  
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**ADAM WEATHERLEY**  
Learning &  
Development  
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**BRIDIE CORRIGAN  
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Network Director, Taste  
& Success Skillnet



**SINEAD O'SHEA**  
Client Services Director  
for Cpl Resources

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MicroCred

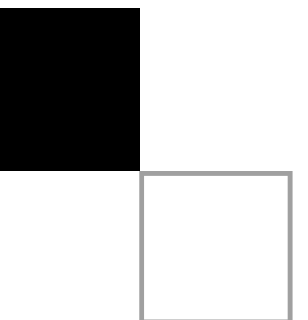
I n n o v a t e

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Zero Carbon  
(18 January 2022)

Digital Transformation  
(4 May 2022)

SME Productivity  
(28 June 2022)



# Piloting a Multi

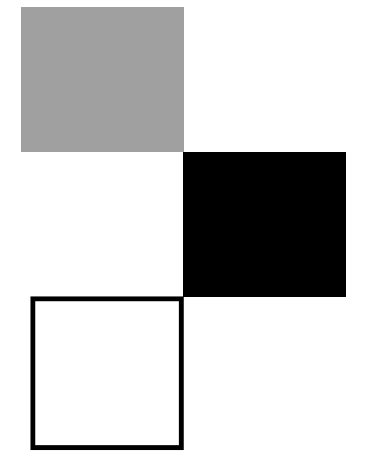
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- Element Universal

Working Definition

Core Values

Constitutive Elements

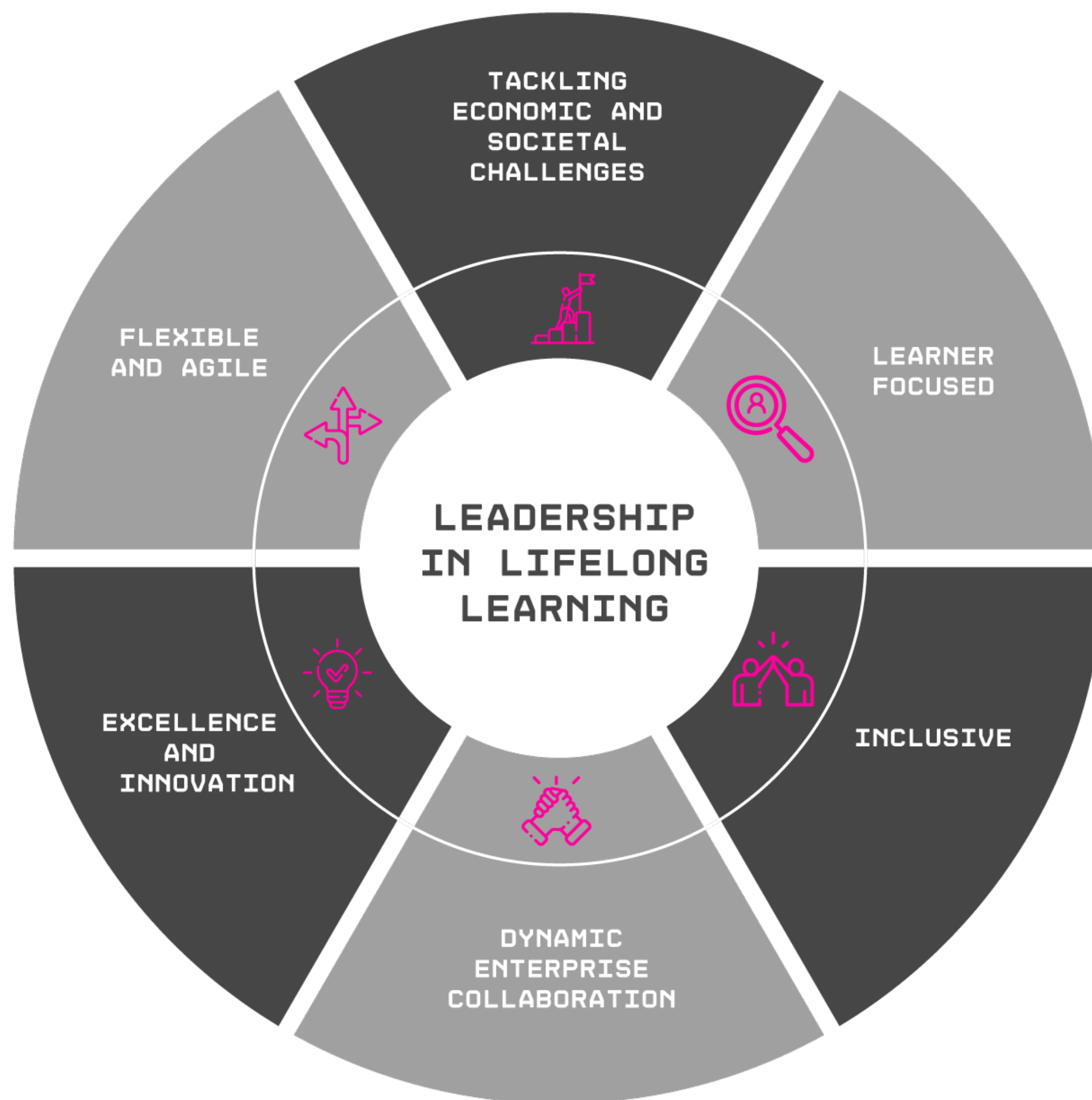


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# Our Core Values

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# Pilot MicroCred Constitutive Elements

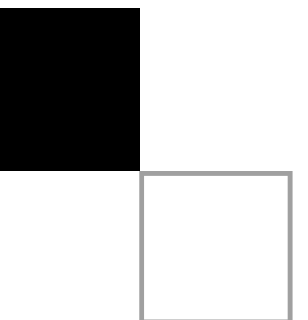
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**Level 6-9 NFQ (5-7 EQF)  
Credit size 1-30 ECTS  
Quality assured and credit bearing  
Agreed data fields**

Stand alone credential, some may stack  
towards a larger award

**Transparent and objectively assessed  
against stated learning outcomes**

Bologna Tools and Framework support  
recognition

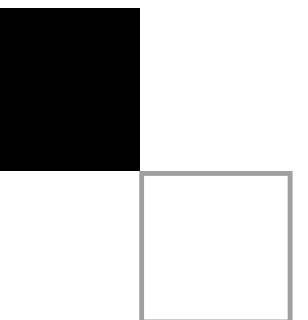




## QA, NFAQ and QQI

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- Irish universities are **autonomous** in their primary responsibility for internal QA but must have regard to **statutory** QA guidelines in the development of these procedures
- NFAQ provides for minor, special purpose and supplemental awards (national descriptors sectoral protocols apply)

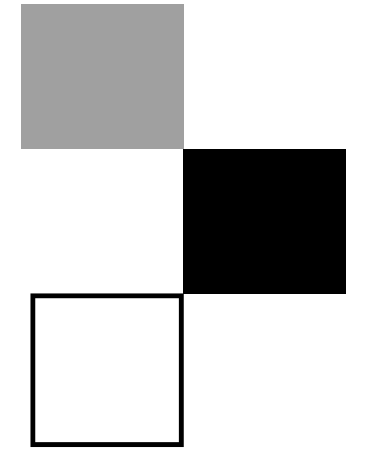


# Quality Assurance Agency, c o m p l e m e n t a r y   r o l e

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## QQI quality remit covers:

- Programmes of education and training, research and related services
- Establish Core QA guidelines which are applicable to all types of providers.
- Institutional review covers the programme development and review process
- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA [ESG 2015.pdf \(enqa.eu\)](#) (which refer to programme assessment and other factors) are incorporated into the terms of reference for QQI institutional level review of HEIs in Ireland and the suite of statutory QA guidelines
- The Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ) is a legislative resource that is managed by the agency. It provides public confirmation of the formal, technical relationship between a qualification and the NFQ
- Sectoral protocols are in place between QQI and HEIs for the inclusion of the HEI qualification in the NFQ at the required level
- Annual Quality Reports to QQI provide us with annual updates on the internal quality assurance systems and new developments in the HEIs
- QQI has adapted its validation procedures so that the microcredentials offered in the private sector can lead to QQI Awards, at a minimum size of 5 ECTS. [Case study - validation of microcredentials | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#)



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# INSIGHTS and questions

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Evolving understanding

Clear communication and understanding of value proposition is key

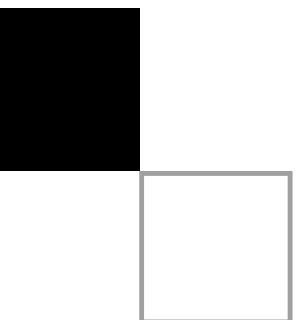
Pilot towards a national framework

Short cycle and co-creation, quality enhancement

Opportunities for Interoperability with national and EUROPASS (European learning model)

Sectoral protocols

NFQ







# Thank You!

Stay Connected with the project



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[www.iua.ie/microcreds](http://www.iua.ie/microcreds)



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