

# QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

*Insights from a capacity building programme*



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# HOW WILL WE APPROACH THE SESSION?

## CONTENT:

- 1 Why did we design a training programme on MC ?
- 2 Why is an institutional strategy for MC essential?
- 3 What's our quality assurance approach for MC?
- 4 What are the programme's outcomes based on practical case studies?



# A CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME:

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*DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MICRO-  
CREDENTIALS WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA*

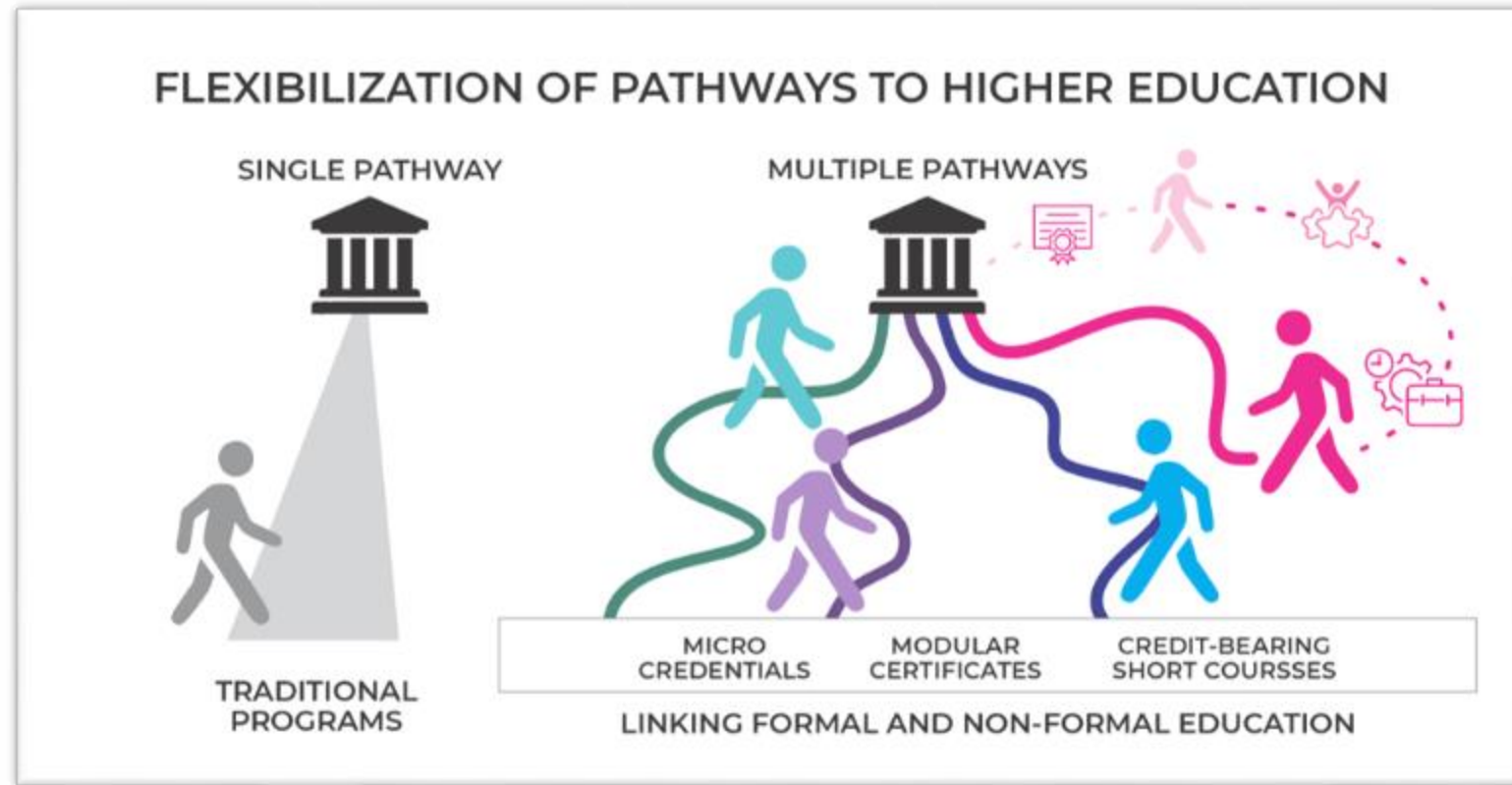
Based on 3 key contextual needs:

1. FLEXIBILITY OF LEARNING PATHWAYS
2. RELEVANCE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION
3. EMPLOYABILITY



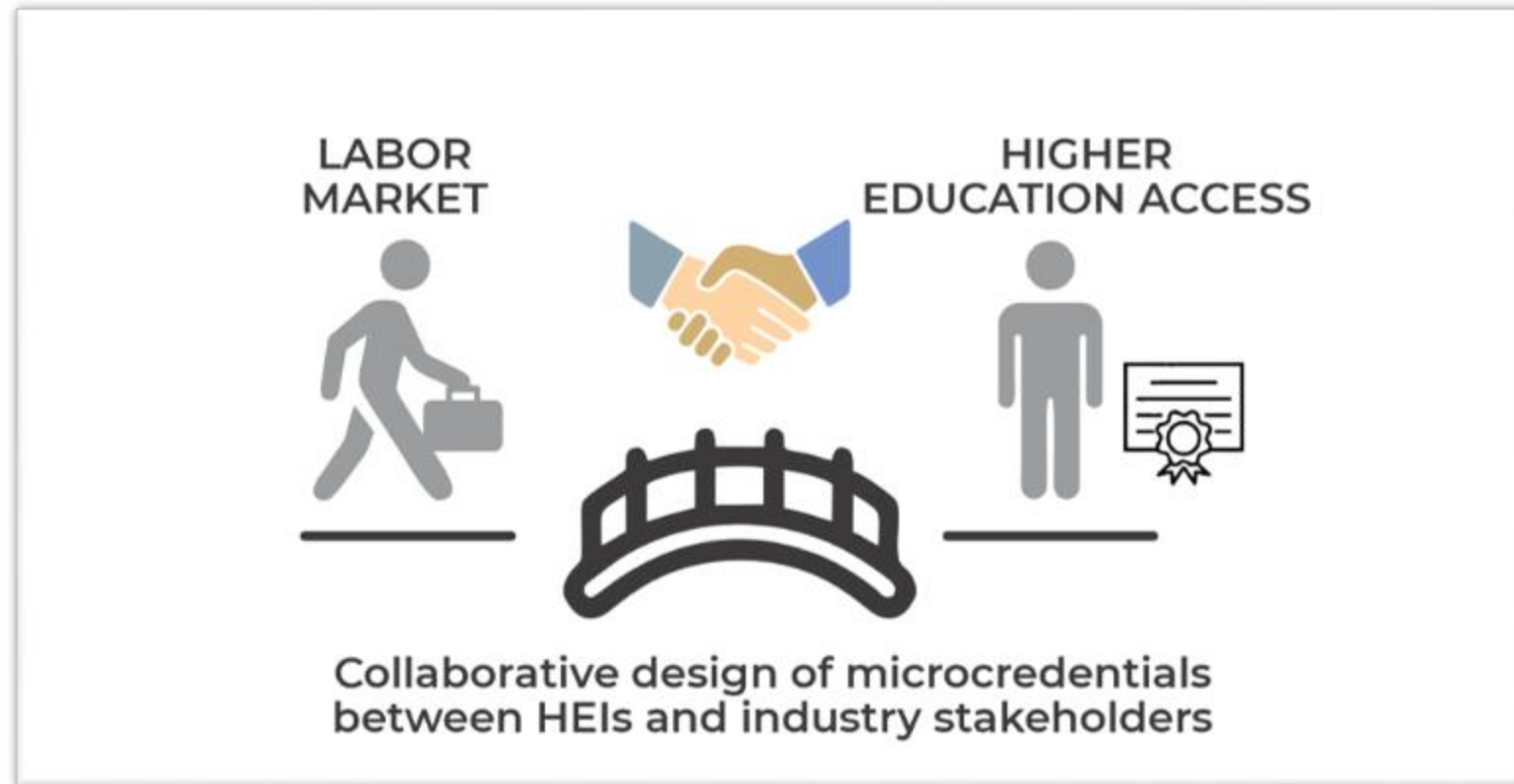
## GROWING DEMAND FOR FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS TO ACCESS HIGHER EDUCATION

FLEXIBILITY



## BRIDGING THE SKILL GAP BETWEEN INDUSTRY NEEDS AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

RELEVANCE



*PROMOTING SOCIAL MOBILITY AND FOSTERING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS*

# EMPLOYABILITY



## MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME



**OBJECTIVE:** empower higher education leaders in the design, implementation, and quality assurance of micro-credentials.

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**RECIPIENTS:** rectors, vice-rectors, and curriculum directors, with experience in university teaching and postgraduate education.

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**2 EDITIONS:** Held for Latin American and Caribbean HEI between September 2024 and July 2025.

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MoU: Jointly developed by INQAAHE and REALCUP  
(Latin American and Caribbean Network of Associations of Private Universities).

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## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN LATAM MC TRAINING PROGRAMME



**Total:**

**PARTICIPANTS 104**

**UNIVERSITIES 75**



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Module 1 Discovering the potential of microcredentials in higher education

1. Analyze the diversity of short-term training programs and identify and define the specificities of microcredentials.
2. Evaluate the use of microcredentials in various contexts.
3. Analyze the adaptations needed to recontextualize international experiences in the national context.
4. Identify the use of microcredentials as flexible learning structures, stackable towards macrocredentials.
5. Design a microcredential strategy for a higher education institution, including the key components for its design.

### Module 2 Designing robust, credible and portable microcredentials

1. Design the components of the MCs.
2. Design the procedures that ensure the development and implementation of robust, credible, transferable, portable, stackable, and interoperable microcredentials.
3. Analyze systems relevant to the issuance of reliable and robust microcredentials.

### Module 3 Effective management of microcredentials: Internal and external QA

1. Design a model to continuously improve internal quality assurance mechanisms that comprehensively cover all parties involved in the development, issuance, and review of a microcredential.
2. In accordance with INQAAHE International Standards and Guidelines (ISG), prepare the institution for an external review of the microcredential management process.

## PROGRAM WORKLOAD 50 hours (2 credits)



### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

**12 hours with pedagogical mediation**  
(synchronous and asynchronous) +  
**24 hours self-managed**



### ASSESSMENT

**14 hours for the design of the final project**

## METHODOLOGY

### ACTIVE LEARNING:

Flipped Classroom & Collaborative design

Pre-class study (videos-readings)

Peer discussion

Collaborative design project

**Student as  
ACTIVE  
LEARNER**

Conceptual discussion  
curate content

Provides ongoing  
feedback

Asynchronous &  
Synchronous sessions

### REAL- WORLD CASE STUDIES



## ASSESSMENT

Módulo 1

Módulo 2

Módulo 3

Micro-credential strategy

Formative assessment

Micro-credential program:  
LO + methodology +  
assessment

Formative assessment

Quality Assurance of the  
Micro-credential

Formative assessment

FINAL PORTFOLIO  
Summative assessment



DIGITAL CREDENTIAL  
NFT

NON- FUNGIBLE TOKEN  
recorded on a blockchain



## RUBRIC (4 levels of performance)

| CRITERIA                               |
|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Institutional Alignment and Vision  |
| 2. Labour Market Alignment             |
| 3. Value Proposition for Learners      |
| 4. Innovation and Impact               |
| 5. Micro-credential Design             |
| 6. Process Development                 |
| 7. Delivery and Recognition Modalities |
| 8. Quality Policy                      |
| 9. Quality Assurance Processes         |
| 10. Self-Assessment Report             |

- ▶ **A self-assessment tool for participants**
- ▶ **An evaluation resource for instructors**
- ▶ **A guideline for Project development**

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

**Responses from 71% of the participants** (47 out of 66)

**3 key dimensions for each of the three modules:**

content relevance

pedagogical quality

instructional clarity

**Scale ranged from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).**

High achievement of learning outcomes,  
especially through synchronous sessions  
and platform resources.

Activities aligned with learning outcomes  
and appreciated for their clarity and variety.

### Key Highlights

Content rated as relevant, updated,  
and well-organized, with strong clarity  
across all modules.

Facilitators recognized for clear  
explanations and responsiveness.

Effective peer collaboration and feedback for learning.

# STRATEGIZING MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Key elements:

**INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT**

**LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT**

**LEARNER'S VALUE PROPOSITION**





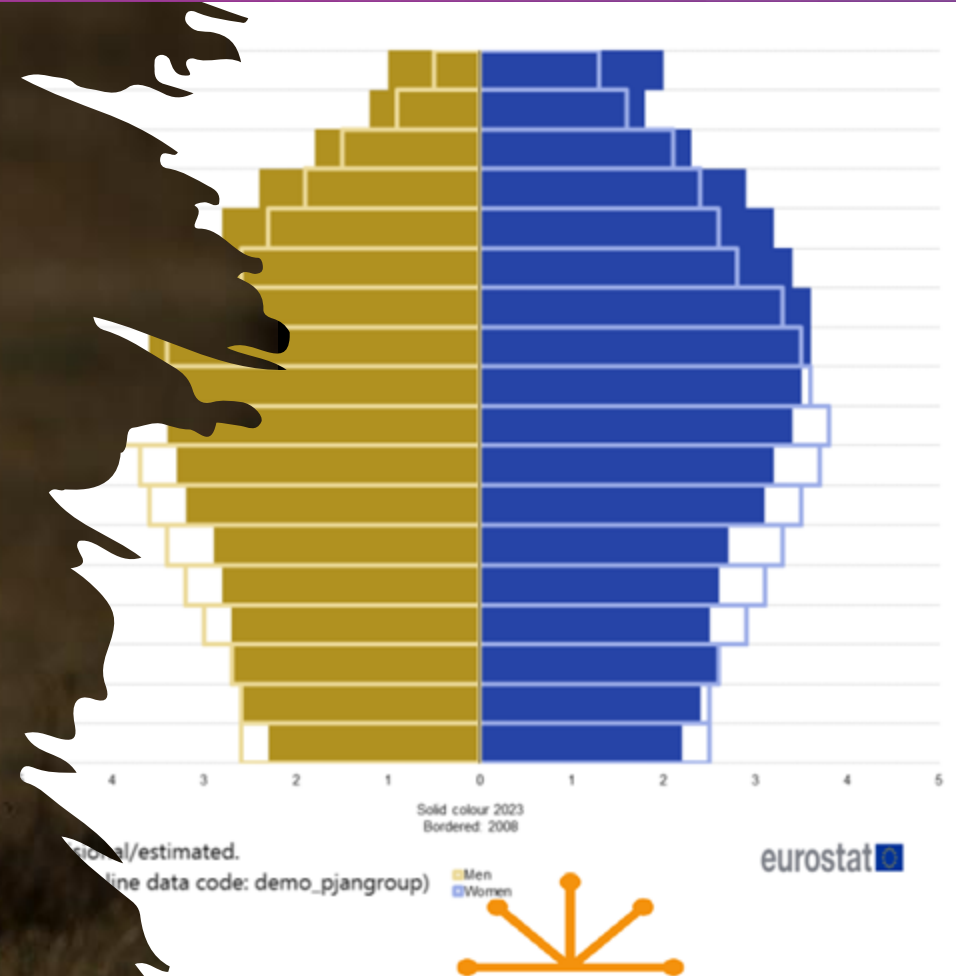




## Grey rhinos

In contrast to the unpredictable nature of black swans, gray rhinos are probable events with high impact.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/risk-and-resilience/our-insights/black-swans-gray-rhinos-and-silver-linings-anticipating-geopolitical-risks-and-openings> (2023)





Targeted



Smaller



More flexible



Why micro-credentials can be a solution in this environment?



**Record of focused  
learning  
achievement (LO)**

**Stand alone value  
and may contribute  
to other credentials**

**Assessment of LO &  
awarded by a  
trusted provider**

**Quality assured**





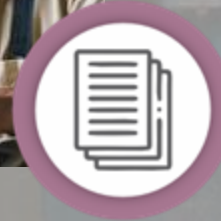
# Education

## FORMAL

## NON FORMAL

## INFORMAL

“Added” training program.  
CERTIFICATE UPON  
COMPLETION.



## EVALUATION

Can we break it  
down?



Allocation of credits

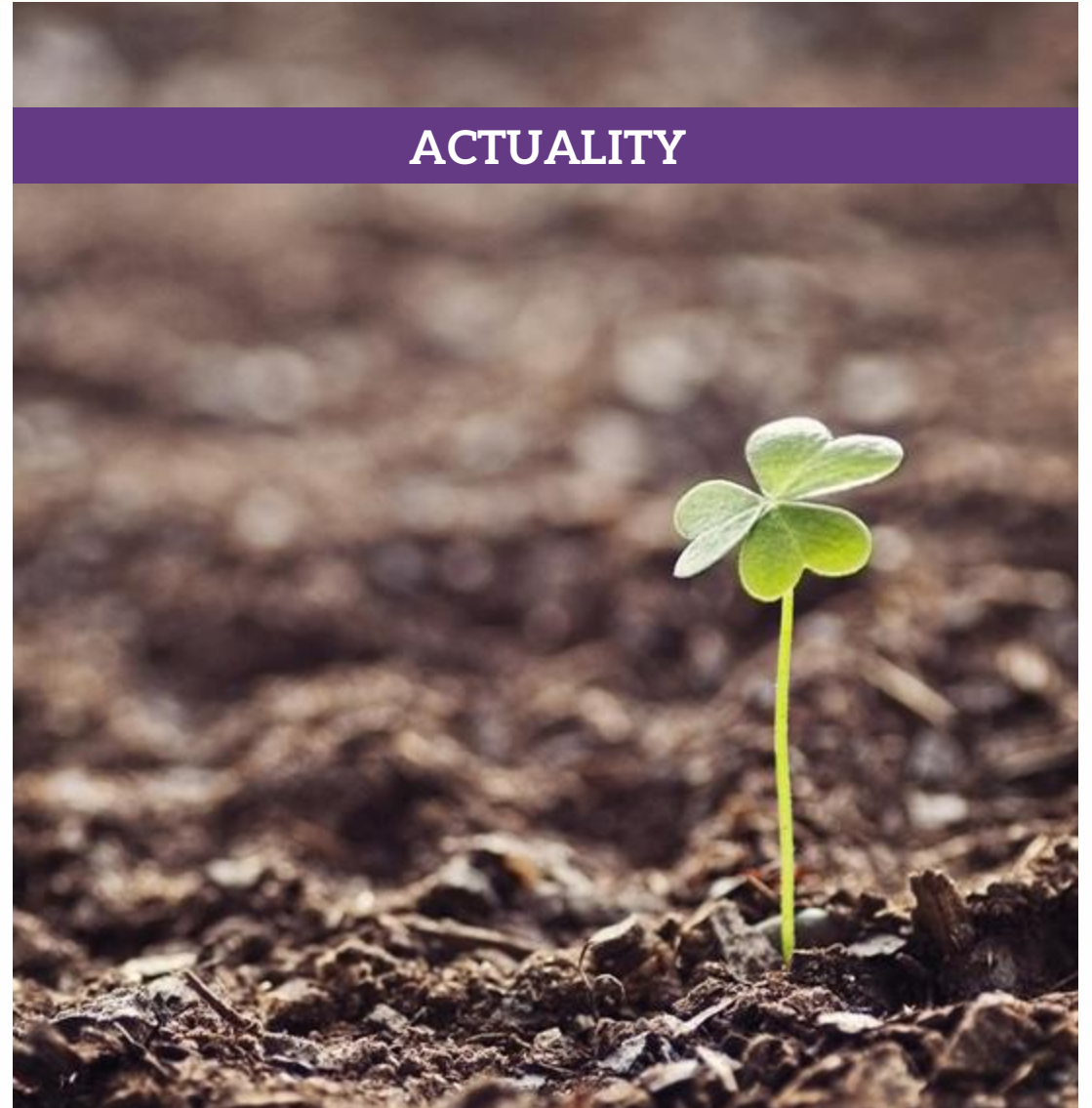
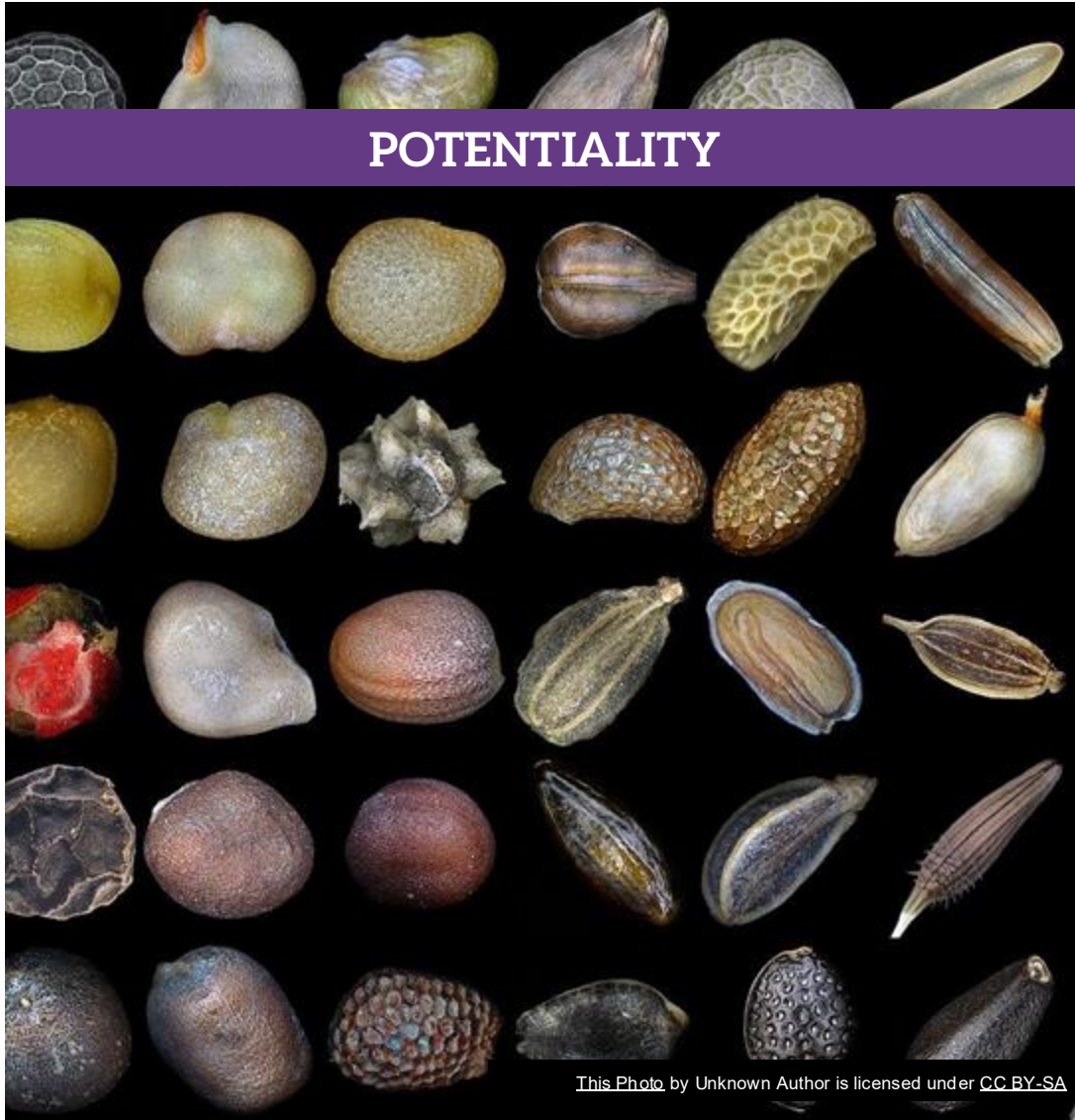


Recognition of prior  
learning













Microcredentials have  
great potential



But the success comes  
with a well-thought  
strategy



Institutional alignment



Labor market alignment



Learner's value proposition



## Institutional alignment

|                                                              | POTENTIALITIES                                                                                            | CHALLENGES                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Undergraduates</b>                                        | Flexibility to innovate with new credentials and formats – e.g. transdisciplinary challenge driven units. | Inertia and institutional reluctance to change (Brian Rosenberg: "whatever it is, I'm against it").                                  |
| <b>Graduates</b>                                             | Opportunity to meet efficiently market needs with targeted learning – Upskilling & Reskilling .           | Poorly defined market ecosystem; hard for universities to navigate and choose reliable tools..                                       |
|                                                              | Chance to expand lifelong learning and professional development.                                          | Managing multiple campus units with different existing systems and brand protection.                                                 |
| <b>Non-traditional students<br/>Under-represented groups</b> | Ability to recognize and integrate external learning achievements.                                        | Reluctance to value credentials earned elsewhere.                                                                                    |
|                                                              | Potential to formalize non-credit learning into academic pathways.                                        | Lack of historical focus on converting non-formal learning into academic credit (issues with time requirements and academic rigour). |

## Institutional alignment - Key Elements of a Micro-Credentials Strategy

- Clear alignment with the institution's mission and strategic goals.
- Strong value proposition for the institution, students, employers, and other stakeholders.
- Clear and realistic link between institutional purposes and the types of micro-credentials offered.
- Solid justification showing specific, realistic, and achievable outcomes.





## Labor market alignment

| POTENTIALITIES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | CHALLENGES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support lifelong, ongoing reskilling and upskilling for graduates and employees</li> <li>• Delivering training to update workforce in evolving industries.</li> <li>• Help employees stay productive amid rapid technological and industrial changes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly defined market ecosystem; difficult for universities to navigate and select reliable tools.</li> <li>• Lack of documented evidence showing clear labor market demand.</li> <li>• Difficulty in designing market-attractive micro-credentials quickly, requiring new team-based pedagogical approaches.</li> <li>• Need for close collaboration with the corporate sector to integrate real-world expertise and gain recognition, especially without widespread standards.</li> </ul> |

### Labor market alignment - Key Elements

- Value proposition based on industry standards and evidence.
- Identification of employers, professional bodies, and policymakers.
- Use of labor market indicators to justify micro-credentials.
- Clearly defined and justified target audience.
- Strong link to employer demands (with room for deeper stakeholder engagement).



## Learner's value proposition

### MICRO-CREDENTIALS: A learner value framework – Beverly Olivier, 2021

- Value depends on the balance between the benefits and the costs of earning the credential.
- Benefits vary based on individual motivation, circumstances, and preferences.
- Learners pursue micro-credentials for career advancement or personal interest (often interconnected).
- Eight key benefits: outcomes, certification, signalling power, interoperability, quality/standards, assessment/feedback, engagement, and convenience.
- Costs mainly involve money and time (including effort, travel, and opportunity cost).

### Key Elements: Student's Value Proposition in Micro-Credentials

- Comprehensive understanding of student expectations and demands.
- Student-centered focus addressing both benefits (outcomes, certification, career advancement) and costs (time, financial effort).
- Alignment of micro-credentials with students' diverse needs, goals, and aspirations.
- Emphasis on relevance, accessibility, and clear learning pathways.

## How about Quality Assurance?

What do we expect from quality assurance?

Which challenges are on the QA agenda to resolve?

How to ensure credibility, trust, and recognition of micro-credentials?







2 responses submitted

The internal QA system for MCs at TEIs is the same as for the regular programs

Scan the QR or use  
link to join



<https://forms.office.com/r/xhNf4mdAsx>

Copy link

Agree

Disagree

Somehow agree

Wallah, I don't  
know

Treemap

Bar



1 of 4



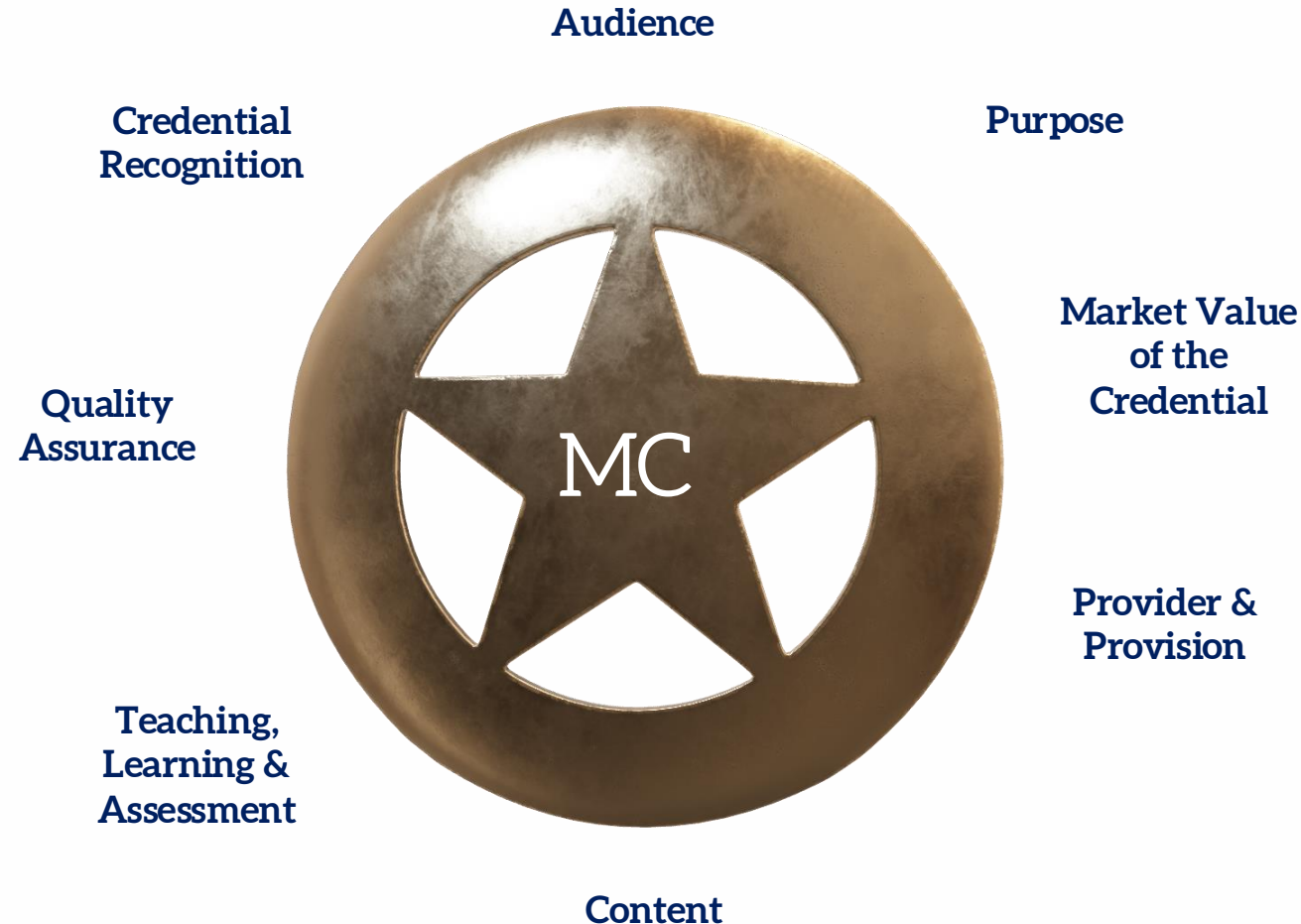
Learning outcomes for a full  
qualification/macro-credential  
programme



vs

Learning outcomes for a micro-  
credentials





*If you cannot define it, you cannot measure it and if you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it...*

*~ Karakhanyan's elaboration on Lord Kelvin's famous phrase based on learning from systems and research findings, 2024*

**It does take a lot of efforts to get to a STAR!**



## PORTABILITY

Portability means the credential has value locally, nationally and perhaps internationally in labor markets, education systems, and/or other contexts. It enables the learner:

- ❑ To use the credential in a variety of environments.
- ❑ To move vertically and horizontally within and across the credentialing ecosystem for attainment of other credentials.



**Requires:**  
A recognizable currency: e.g., credits.  
Requires assessment.

## STACK-ABILITY

Sequences of nested MCs and degrees serving as ladders for learners to progress towards more advanced attainment in a field of study. They help to advance educationally and economically while working or carrying other adult responsibilities. Learners can collect MCs towards larger qualification/credential. Unlike a full qualification, each completed MC is a recognizable award.



**Requires:**  
A recognizable currency: e.g., credits.  
Requires assessment.

## TRANSFERABILITY

Refers to a country- and even state/province/territory-specific regulations on credentials regarding individual professions which require a special award (e.g. licensing, certification, board exams) and is not always directly transferable.



**Requires:**  
Two or more countries/states/provinces mutually agree to recognize each other degrees.  
Professional standards.  
Requires assessment.

## INTEROPERABILITY

Uses open standards and common ontologies/frameworks to enable data to be machine readable, exchangeable, and actionable across technology systems and, when appropriate, on the Web. Supports combinations of data from multiple sources. Enables human interoperability and can be understood by people in different occupations and industries from diverse backgrounds



**Requires:**  
Open and commonly agreed frameworks, machine readable.

# PRACTICAL CASES

4



## CASE 1

### MICRO-CREDENTIAL PROJECT

#### *Transforming the Way of Teaching and Learning in the University*

A CONSORTIUM WAS FORMED BETWEEN 3 UNIVERSITIES:



Universidad I Salud (Argentina)



Universidad Continental (Peru)



Universidad La Salle (Mexico)



## INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DESIGN OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS

### Alignment with Institutional Strategy:

- Supports institutional goals **to foster innovation and quality in teaching and learning.**

### Alignment with Labour Market Demands:

- Address the rising demand for educators proficient in **flexible, technology-enhanced learning environments and active teaching methodologies** *including the use of Generative AI.*

### Added Value for Students:

- Enhances **employability and career development** through advanced pedagogical innovation skills.

### Contribution to Innovation:

- Promotes **transformative teaching practices.**

## MICRO-CREDENTIAL DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

| COMPONENTS             | DESCRIPTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Outcomes      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design the planning of a class including activities for students using GenAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence). Use GenAI applications to develop activities, focusing on prompt engineering.</li> </ul>       |
| Teaching Methodology   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online learning (combining asynchronous, synchronous, activities).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                     |
| Assessment Mechanisms  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance assessment + Self-assessment + Portfolio.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  |
| Admission Requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey on prior training and professional experience, in-person interview, and completion of a leveling module focused on digital competencies and specific skills to standardize digital proficiency.</li> </ul> |
| Implementation Plan    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offered through institutional LMS platforms, supported by academic advisors and certified facilitators.</li> </ul>                                                                                                |
| Recognition Strategy   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certified under institutional micro-credentialing frameworks and aligned with regional qualification standards for interoperability.</li> </ul>                                                                   |

## INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE MICRO-CREDENTIAL



### QUALITY POLICY

- Commitment to ensuring academic and professional relevance.
- Promotion of continuous improvement through systematic review and feedback.
- Alignment with institutional quality assurance standards and regional guidelines for micro-credentials.



### QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

- Validation of micro-credential design by internal academic committees
- Monitoring of teaching and learning activities through regular evaluations.
- Systematic collection and analysis of student and facilitator feedback.



### STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- **Students:** Providing feedback on learning experience, satisfaction; and perceived relevance.
- **Faculty Members:** Participating in the design, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the micro-credential.
- **Academic Authorities:** Overseeing the strategic alignment and compliance with institutional quality.





# Q&A





THANK YOU

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