



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
FINLAND

MICROBOL project - *conclusions and recommendations*

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Project details

Title: Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments.

Linked to the **aims** of the new Erasmus+ Programme and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) *to increase access to continuous learning for all learners, regardless of age or experience.*

Period: March 2020 – March 2022.



Project aims

- Check whether existing Bologna tools are fit for micro-credentials and/or propose changes for adaptations on European level.
- Raise awareness among national governments.
- Encourage and guide national governments to include microcredentials on the policy agenda.
- Formulate recommendations.
- Create a European Framework for Micro-credentials.

Structure & timeline

- **Desk research** (April–August 2020, September 2020)
- **Kick-off conference** (31 August & 1 September 2020)
- **Survey** among EHEA countries (October–December 2020, February 2021)
- **3 Working groups** (January–May 2021): QA, recognition, and QF & ECTS
- **Recommendations** *from the MICROBOL project for the European Commission's proposal on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability* (July 2021)
- **Common Framework** for Micro-credentials (March 2022)
- **Final Conference** (March 2022)

Microbol Recommendations

MICROBOL recommendations

- Based on survey results & discussions in the 3 working groups.
- Joint publication of 34 recommendations.
- Target: European Commission, EHEA countries and stakeholder organisations.
- Download: <https://microcredentials.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2021/07/MICROBOL-Recommendations-1.pdf>

Common agreement on what a micro-credential is

A micro-credential is a small volume of learning certified by a credential. In the EHEA context, it can be offered by higher education institutions or recognised by them using recognition procedures in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention or recognition of prior learning, 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 ('Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area').

Transversal themes

2/3

Common format

- Compulsory
 - **Information on the learner:** identification on the learner
 - **Information on micro-credential:** title, information on the provider (including country), information on the awarding body institution, if different (including country), date of issuance or date of assessment
 - **Information on learning experience:** learning outcomes, workload (in ECTS, whenever possible), assessment and form of quality assurance

Transversal themes

3/3

Common format

- Optional
 - NQF level (whenever possible, and if self-certified/referenced QF-EHEA and EQF level)
 - Field(s) of learning or subject area
 - Form of participation in the learning activity
 - Prerequisites needed to enroll
 - ISCED level
 - Expiration date

Bologna Key Commitments

1/2

- **Quality Assurance**

- Internal and external quality assurance
- Learner involvement in quality assurance
- Transparency of information
- Register and catalogues of providers and microcredentials

- **Recognition**

- Coverage/link with Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Recognition of Prior Learning

Bologna Key Commitments

2/2

- **Qualifications framework**

- The decision whether to include all micro-credentials or only some of them in the NQF is made on a national level.
- If the national decision is to include micro-credentials in the NQF, the criteria for inclusion in the NQF should be decided.

- **ECTS**

- ECTS should be used for micro-credentials provided by HEIs.

Common Framework for Micro-credentials

https://microcredentials.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2022/03/Micro-credentials_Framework_final-1.pdf

Common Framework for Micro-credentials 1/4

Common definition

A micro-credential is a certified small volume of learning.

Purpose

Micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills, and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs.

- A way to increase and diversify lifelong learning provision to support individual learning pathways and widen access to higher education.
- Provide a timely and relevant response to learners' and labour market needs.
- Collaboration is an important aspect for the provision of micro-credentials.

Common Framework for Micro-credentials 2/4

Use

Credentials are owned by the learner, are portable and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications (stackability).

- Micro-credentials can be earned before, during and after higher education degree programmes and as a new way to certify competences acquired earlier in life.
- Catalogues of existing micro-credentials can be an important source of information for learners.
- Certificates for micro-credentials can be awarded in many formats.
- Stackability: different micro-credentials can be combined into a degree or other type of certification.
- Micro-credentials can facilitate a smooth knowledge transfer, translating the latest research results quickly into learning opportunities for the benefit of society.

Common Framework for Micro-credentials 3/4

Constitutive elements

The constitutive elements for issuing micro-credentials are the following:

- **Information on the learner:** identification of the learner
- **Information on the provider:** information on the awarding body institution, including country, including a signature or seal of the provider and/or awarding body institution
- **Information on the micro-credential:** title, date of issuance or date of assessment, verification of authenticity
- **Information on the learning experience:** learning outcomes, workload (in ECTS, when possible), assessment and form of quality assurance
- **Information on the QF level:** NQF level (when possible), QF-EHEA and EQF level (if selfcertified/referenced), ISCED level & subject area code,
- **Form of participation** in the learning activity
- **Access requirements**

Common Framework for Micro-credentials 4/4

Link to Bologna key commitments

- **Quality Assurance**
 - Providers are responsible to assure the quality of the microcredentials they offer.
 - A register of trustworthy providers could support the acceptance and recognition of micro-credentials.
- **Recognition**
 - Micro-credentials can be assessed in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention principles, provided that all constitutive elements are properly displayed.
- **Qualifications Framework & ECTS**
 - Micro-credentials should be included in the NQF, whenever possible.
 - ECTS, as a recognisable system, can support the development and description of micro-credentials.

=> Bologna tools are applicable to micro-credentials



Thank you! Kiitos!

<https://microcredentials.eu/>