

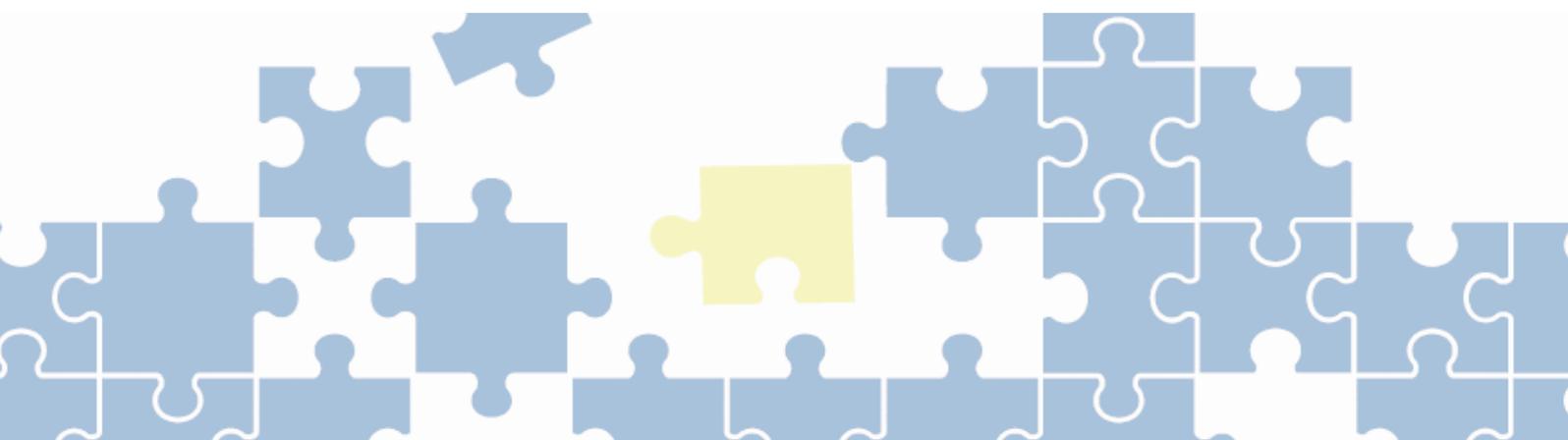
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European project MICROBOL

Survey on Micro-credentials

October 2020





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INTRODUCTION

This survey is created in the framework of the MICROBOL project (Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments). This 2-year project, co-funded by Erasmus+ KA3 Support to Policy reform, and more specifically "Support to the implementation of EHEA reforms", engages ministries and stakeholders involved in the Bologna Follow-up Group to explore whether and how the existing EHEA tools can be used and/or need to be adapted to be applicable to micro-credentials.

The aim of this survey is to collect information on the **current state-of-play and development with regards to the topic of micro-credentials in different member states of the European Higher Education Area.**

The focus of this survey is on micro-credentials offered by higher education institutions or recognised by them, unless otherwise stated in the questions. When filling in the survey, please consider any short courses, programmes, or learning experiences, whether they are offered as part of the existing degree programmes or not, that exist in your system today and correspond to the below definition, even if they are not specifically called 'micro-credentials'.

Definition of a micro-credential within the MICROBOL project:

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.

The results collected from this survey will be used within the MICROBOL project to give input to the work of the three working groups within the project (on Qualifications Framework&ECTS, on Recognition and on Quality Assurance).



INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete the survey online, using the link sent to the BFUG representatives.

Please note that we accept only 1 submitted response per country.

The survey is open from 15 October 2020 until 15 November 2020.

Besides aiming to collect data on the current state-of-play of micro-credentials in your country, we hope this survey will encourage national discussions on micro-credentials and their link to the Bologna Key Commitments. Therefore, the **target group** of the survey are members of the BFUG as well as the nominated representatives in the MICROBOL working groups.

Furthermore, we kindly ask you to consult the different national stakeholders (higher education institutions, students, QA agencies, recognition centers, etc.) when completing the survey.

Message: When filling in the survey, please consider any short courses, programmes, or learning experiences, whether they are offered as part of the existing degree programmes or not, that exist in your system today and correspond to the proposed definition, even if they are not specifically called 'micro-credentials'.

SURVEY

All questions marked with an '*' are mandatory.

* CONTACT INFORMATION

In this section, we aim to collect information about the contact person for this survey.

- Please indicate the name of the contact person for this survey at your Ministry/ Organisation/ Association.
- Please indicate the email address of the contact person for this survey.
- Please indicate the main function of the contact person for this survey.
- Please indicate the name of your Ministry/Organisation/Association.
- Please select the country of your Ministry/Organisation/ Association.

GENERAL

In this section, we want to collect some general information about micro-credentials in your country.

- *1. To your knowledge, are micro-credentials already offered or being developed in your country?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I do not know

- *2. Do you have examples of micro-credentials in your country offered by HEIs, or recognised by them?
 - a. Yes
Please provide further details on the micro-credentials you have in your country. Please provide links to relevant information and documentation, if available.

 - b. Being developed
Please provide further details on the micro-credentials being developed in your country. Please provide links to relevant information and documentation, if available.

 - c. No

 - d. I do not know

- *3. Does your national legislation allow for the provision of micro-credentials ?
 - a. Yes, and there are specific regulations
Could you please provide more detail and/or a copy or link to the relevant norms or legislation? (and an English translation, if possible)

In order to further develop such learning experiences or micro-credentials, would you like to receive additional support (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc)?

b. Yes, but there are no specific regulations

Could you please provide more detail and/or a copy or link to the relevant norms or legislation? (and an English translation, if possible)

In order to further develop such learning experiences or micro-credentials, would you like to have additional support (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc)?

c. No, but currently under discussion

Why is the legislation discussed now? What key issues are being discussed?

Would you need further support to revise your legislation (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc.)?

d. No, institutions should not offer such learning experiences.

What revisions to your legislation would be necessary to make provision of micro-credentials possible?

Would you need further support to revise your legislation (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc.)?

e. Other (please specify).

*4. How satisfied are you with the current uptake and acceptance of micro-credentials in your legislation?

a. Very satisfied, micro-credentials are well integrated into our legislation and funding system

b. Satisfied, there is increasing national interest and action in integrating micro-credentials into our legislation and funding system, but still a lot to do

c. Not satisfied, there is little national interest and action in integrating micro-credentials into our legislation and funding system and there should be more work done

d. Not applicable, in our country we do not currently have an interest in or a need to integrate micro-credentials into our legislation and funding system

*5. If you have a national policy on the digitalisation of credentials, are micro-credentials part of it?

a. Yes

b. No, micro-credentials are not part of it

c. No, we do not have such a policy

d. I do not know

*6. Do you have an official record or register of micro-credentials and providers in your country? (multiple answers possible)

- Yes, we have a record/register of (most of) the providers
- Yes, we have a record/register of (most of) the (accredited) micro-credentials on offer
- No, we do not have a record/register or register of providers
- No, we do not have a record/register of the micro-credentials on offer
- I do not know

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK & ECTS

In this section, we want to collect information about the qualifications framework and ECTS in your country.

*7. Is your national qualifications framework open to micro-credentials?

a. Yes, we have already some examples in our national qualifications framework
At which level(s) are they referred to/or can be referred to?

b. Yes, but none has yet been referred to the national qualifications framework
At which level(s) are they referred to/or can be referred to?

c. No, not yet
Could you elaborate on the reason for this?

d. We do not see the need at the moment
Could you elaborate on the reason for this?

e. I do not know

*8. Are micro-credentials expressed in ECTS or other credit systems (with reference to learning outcomes and workload)?

a. Yes, always
What is the range or amount of ECTS/ other credit systems for micro-credentials?

b. Yes, in some cases
What is the range or amount of ECTS/ other credit systems for micro-credentials?

c. No
Why not?

d. I do not know



- *9. What do you think is the biggest challenge in applying Bologna tools like ECTS and Qualifications Frameworks, to micro-credentials?
- Awareness of the tools in general
 - The implementation of the tools at the national level
 - The applicability of the tools to micro-credentials
 - Other possible challenges?
10. Do you have any other comments regarding these tools in relation to micro-credentials (e.g. design, use)?

RECOGNITION

In this section, we want to collect information about the recognition processes in your country.

- *11. Have you implemented policies and/or practices related to the recognition of micro-credentials?
- Yes
Please specify and provide a link to relevant information and documentation, if available.

Which elements are considered relevant in the recognition process? (multiple answers possible)

- quality of the study programme
- verification of the certificate
- level of the study programme
- learning outcomes
- workload
- assessment procedures
- identification of the participant
- other (please specify)

- No, but currently under discussion

Would you like to have additional support (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc) for the recognition of micro-credentials?

- No

Would you like to have additional support (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc) for the recognition of micro-credentials?

- I do not know

- *12. For what purpose do you recognise micro-credentials in your country? (multiple answers possible)



- To provide easier access to higher education
- To recognise credits or prior learning
- To increase learners' competitiveness in the labour market
- For academic purposes/ further studies
- To allow registered students to earn credits towards a higher education qualification
- We do not (yet) recognise micro-credentials in my country
- Other (please specify)

- *13.** Does your legislation allow higher education institutions to recognise micro-credentials when offered by providers that are not higher education institutions (companies, NGOs, international organisations, etc.)?
- a. Yes, micro-credentials from all higher education institutions and other providers are recognised
- b. No, only micro-credentials from higher education institutions are recognised, not from other providers
- Why are micro-credentials offered by other providers not recognised?

- *14.** Does your national legislation allow higher education institutions to recognize micro-credentials as part of a normal degree programme? In other words, can learners accumulate them to build up to a degree within higher education, or are they 'stackable'?
- 'Stackability: Stackability means that micro-credentials can be accumulated and grouped over time, building into a larger, more recognisable credential (Kazin and Clerkin, 2018, p. 7).'*
- a. Yes
- b. No
- Why not?

QUALITY ASSURANCE

In this section, we want to collect information on the quality assurance systems in your country.

- *15.** What external quality assurance systems do you have in place to assure quality of the courses offered by higher education institutions?
- Institutional Accreditation, Audit, Evaluation or similar
 - Programme Accreditation, Evaluation or similar
 - Other (please specify)
- *16.** Does your national quality assurance system explicitly include or refer to micro-credentials offered by higher education institutions?
- a. Yes, they are explicitly mentioned in the QA system
- Please give a reference.

b. No, they are not referred to explicitly, but implicitly fall under the same QA system

c. No, they are not referred and are not included in any QA system.

How do you see it possible to integrate micro-credentials into your QA system?

d. Other, please specify.

***17.** Have you implemented any other policies and/or practices related to the quality assurance of micro-credentials?

a. Yes

Can you please specify and provide a link to relevant information and documentation, if available.

b. No

Would you like to have additional support (e.g. peer support, exchange of practices with experts from other countries, webinars, etc) related to QA of micro-credentials?

c. I do not know

***18.** How can one get information on the QA status of the awarded credential (the award achieved at the end of the course)?

Through the provider (higher education institution)

Through a register or list of accredited micro-credentials

From a dedicated portal

Other (please specify)

It is not possible

I do not know

GENERAL

In this section, please share your last examples and further thoughts and comments with us.

19. Do you have examples of good practice in relation to any of the areas in the questionnaire (legislation, recognition, QA, QF & ECTS, etc.) that you would like to share? If yes, can you please specify and provide a link to the relevant information and documentation if available.

***20.** How would you characterise your overall feeling towards micro-credentials?

a. Micro-credentials are a way to make higher education more flexible and inclusive in the future



b. Micro-credentials are here to stay, but they have to be regulated and integrated properly

c. Micro-credentials are a short term trend

d. Micro-credentials do not have a place in higher education institutions and should not be included in related legislation

e. I have no feelings towards micro-credentials

21. Please share any further comments or thoughts.

Thank you for completing the survey online!

