

# WP4 – Micro-credentials a path to social inclusion and response to public responsibility for Higher Education

## 4.3. A grid for programme design

Project: NEW BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: FUNDAMENTAL VALUES (NEWFAV)

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Aim of the grid

Previous experiences with designing and implementing micro-credentials and flexible learning activities in higher education at different levels, through transnational processes of cooperation between universities and academics, and the results and findings of the research on existing practices at the level of different European higher education institutions (deliverable 4.1. of this project), have based the development and testing of a grid for programme design, based on micro-credentials, that could potentially lead to flexible and open joint / multiple degree programmes and other educational opportunities building on a micro-credentials' philosophy.

Conceived as a guiding tool for academics, educational leaders, and other related higher education staff members in different European universities, the grid aims to support the design and implementation of programmes that lead to the acquirement of micro-credentials by the learners, both traditional and non-traditional to the current higher education teaching and learning context (including also, but not limited to, training teaching staff at all levels, for example, that in the sense of continuous professional development). While micro-credentials move from tools to visions, their impact on the learners' typologies and directions vary in a wide range of possibilities and the junctions between formal and non-formal education merge tight in the new curricular context facilitated by higher education institutions and other educational (and not only) providers.

### 2. Methodology and format

The grid, as will be detailed below, covers three main elements that support, based on the analysed experiences and practices, the design and implementation of programmes leading to micro-credentials: general information about the programme, information about the design and format of the programmes, and the content and outcomes of the programme. Although the grid maintains an overarching structure with three sections aligned to the design process, each section diverges in content and structure owing to the distinct nature of the learning activities. Consequently, these sections are tailored to accommodate the unique requirements of the different activities, ensuring that each segment reflects the specific needs and nuances inherent to its respective teaching and learning activity.

On top of these components, the grid also supports the academics and other relevant actors in aligning the programme with current tools at European level, such as the European Learning Model (ELM)<sup>1</sup>, European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC)<sup>2</sup>, Europass<sup>3</sup>, and the European Approach for Micro-Credentials<sup>4</sup>, considering the most relevant categories and indicators aimed for such programmes:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europa.eu/europass/en/node/2128>

<sup>2</sup> <https://europa.eu/europass/en/stakeholders/european-digital-credentials>

<sup>3</sup> <https://europa.eu/europass/en>

<sup>4</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials>



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modularization, stackability, recognition of prior learning, non-formal learning experiences, certificates' interconnections, and digital credentialing. Thus, the grid ensures that the programme responds to the widely accepted must-have characteristics and components of educational programmes leading to micro-credentials and provides the academics and other relevant people the baseline for building innovative learning opportunities for all types of learners.

## MODULARISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Modularisation represents one of the main priorities for the European Commission in terms of innovating teaching and learning in higher education and is an important tool for building larger blocks of learning pathways. Moreover, as a response to the European approach to micro-credentials and as a means for adopting micro-credentials in the academic curricula. By using smaller learning units (such as the Single Learning Activities, or in combination with some of the types included the Multi-Structured Learning Activities (MSLAs) category, larger learning blocks can be built (for example Blended Intensive Programmes or Micro-Programmes), leading to the design and delivery of full degrees (such as multiple or joint degree programmes), as can be seen below.

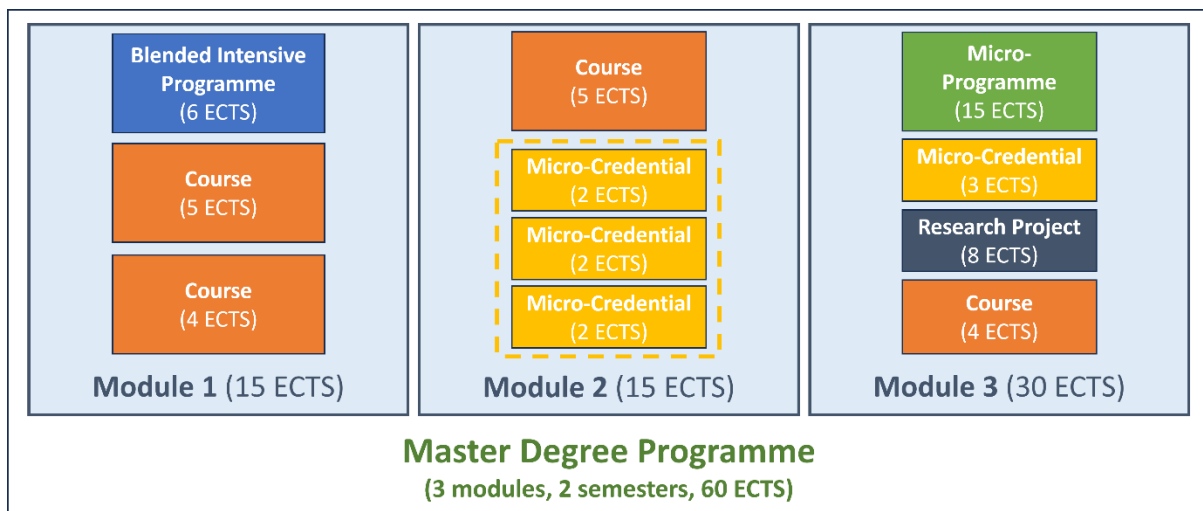


Figure 1. A master's degree programme structural proposal based on a modular & stackable philosophy

The Multi-Structured Learning Activities (MSLAs) can be offered as collaborative learning components, based on the cooperation between at several universities. They can be monodisciplinary (tackling only one subject / thematic area), or they can consider extra-curricular topics (e.g., transferable skills), or be designed and delivered as transdisciplinary coursework on a challenge-oriented theme. Below we give a brief overview of each category. As the building blocks are mainly the SLAs described in the previous section, we will not detail / repeat the information.

### 1. Summer / Winter Schools

Summer / Winter (Seasonal) Schools consists of a series of events and activities that might be accomplished through workshops, webinars, and / or lectures, R&D sessions (Bootcamps), etc. accompanied by individual study. Schools can be either physical, blended, or virtual. An intensive approach for carrying out the educational activities included in the Seasonal Summer / Winter School's schedule is recommended. Summer / Winter Schools can cover a large variety of subjects / topics, in relation with global and societal challenges, but not limited to. If the seasonal schools do not have a modular / multi-component structure (for example a series of workshops, webinars, and / or lectures), they can also be SLAs. The number of ECTS credits will be adjusted accordingly, in agreement with the total number of allocated hours (individual work included).

## 2. Internships / Traineeships

Internships are long duration learning experiences offering full-time or part-time integration into a professional or research environment, with regular supervision and feedback from an academic or administrative mentor. Internships can be approached as an extensive research / practice stage at any of the study cycles, linked to BA, MA, PhD programmes. If Research & Development oriented, they can also have a modular or extended approach, from the SLAs R&D Bootcamps described above. Besides the mobility for studies, an important component in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2023<sup>5</sup> is given by the student mobility for traineeships. The activities in the labour market or in the fields of education, training, youth, research, and innovation are recognized, including teaching assistantships for student teachers and research assistantships for students and doctoral candidates.

## 3. Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)

According to the Erasmus + Programme guide, Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs) are “short, intensive programmes that use innovative ways of learning and teaching, including the use of online cooperation” and will enable new and flexible mobility formats combining physical and virtual mobility, including online collaboration to reach a wide range of students. The combination of short-term physical mobility and online learning will enhance cultural exchange and students’ level of involvement. The criteria for designing BIPs include, among others, the following:

- At least three EU universities are involved.
- At least 15 Erasmus participants (students) who travel to the destination (host) country for training.
- The physical component has a maximum 30-days duration, and a minimum of 8 teaching hours per week for each participant academic.
- The virtual component is compulsory and can be organised before and/or after the physical mobility.
- Upon assessment, students are awarded minimum 3 ECTS credit points.

If the BIP does not have a modular/ multi-component structure (for example a series of workshops, webinars, and / or lectures, practical activities, etc.), it can also be a SLA. The programmes may include challenge-based learning where transnational and transdisciplinary teams work together to tackle challenges for example those linked to the United Nations’ sustainable development goals or other societal challenges identified by regions, cities, or companies.

## 4. Modular Offer

Modularisation is a priority for the European Commission. Modularisation philosophy is a tool to build larger blocks of learning pathways. By using smaller units (such as SLAs, BIPs, etc.), larger blocks can be built, either leading to the European BA/MA/Ph.D. programmes (a) or within the framework of

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<sup>5</sup> <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>



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lifelong learning (b). According to the premise of modularization, students can design a path to follow their interests, deepen their knowledge, and broaden their fields of expertise.

The modular offer can be delivered physically, virtually or in a blended format. The units and related activities can be delivered in different languages, with multilingualism being encouraged as a strategic point for the development of the actions. In the same vein, Innovative Pedagogies must be included in the teaching design of the units. Modularisation is part of the answers to the increasing demands for flexibility, both concerning the labour market and the learners' pathways. In this way, two types of frameworks to build up the blocks are envisaged:

1. Regular official courses/modules offered by Higher Education Institutions and aimed at conforming Micro-Programmes
2. Lifelong learning experiences in the form of Micro-credentials

### 4.1. Micro-Programmes

Micro-programmes represent learning components that offer students short and medium sized official learning activities, on a variety of topics and formats, built on different smaller units of learning (courses, research, and practice activities / projects, etc.) that exist in the curricular offer or are newly designed for the purposes of modularisation.

Different modular structures can combine smaller accredited units (ECTS, QA, etc.) of:

- Regular courses (Bachelor / Master / Ph.D.) already offered by higher education institutions as part of learning official programmes.
- New courses combined with regular ones, leading to a module / micro-programme.

Different modules could be stacked and led to a degree programme (depending on national regulations) or just a certificate of content / knowledge (5 to 30 ECTS credit points). The length is correlated with the number of units and the overall organisational framework. The credit recognition at the student's home university can be partial or full (according to the national legislation and the institutional practices in place), through the Transcript of Records, recording the list of the courses taken by students together with additional information such as passed exams, course length, number of ECTS credits gained etc.

Micro-Programmes allow students to combine multiple Single Learning Activities (SLAs) into one coherent learning pathway which reinforces or complements their main study programme. Micro-programmes offer students short and medium sized activities, on a variety of topics and formats, built on different smaller units of learning, existing in the curricular offer, or newly designed for the purposes of modularisation. With transdisciplinary or disciplinary approaches and interests, micro-programmes offer students the possibility to officially follow their own learning and training interests, deepening their knowledge in specific topics linked with societal challenges or beyond, offering access to:

- Wide range of disciplinary / interdisciplinary / transdisciplinary learning opportunities linked around one large topic, in a collaborative and modular curricular framework.
- Extra-curricular topics and interests, and interest in the training of transferable skills.
- Challenge-based learning approaches, linked with global and societal challenges.





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### 4.2. Micro-credentials

'Micro-credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning (1-15 ECTS). These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences 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 stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity. As recommended by the Council of the European Union in June 2022<sup>6</sup>, European higher education institutions contemplate the inclusion of micro-credentials as part of the lifelong learning offer. Also rooted in the philosophy of modularisation, micro-credentials are differentiated from the Micro-Programmes in orientation and format.

A micro-credential is a small volume of learning certified by a credential that defines learning outcomes in terms of specific knowledge, skills, or competencies that can be stacked into larger credentials. In terms of workload, they must be expressed in number of hours and linked with ECTS credit points. They are a way to develop new skills or be updated. These learning activities are essentially focused on the acquisition of skills and competences that respond to societal and labour market needs, based on learning processes of upskilling or reskilling. The target audience is varied and wide, so they can be either addressed to recent graduates looking for their first job in the market or to the more experienced workers needing to validate and broaden their skill set. Micro-credentials can also be targeted at specific social groups with societal needs (i.e., migrants, refugees, unemployed women, etc.). Micro-credentials are ideal for innovating any learning pathway as they are stackable, open to everyone, not necessarily graduate students, only if the portability / stackability through the blockchain technology is a certificate / accreditation. If micro-credentials are awarded through an SLA, they can be included in that category. Depending on the regulation of each university, micro-credentials can also be included in the official Degree. Micro-credentials can be offered along with experts on the labour market, also to non-traditional students.

- Different micro-credentials could be stacked and led to a module programme (depending on national regulations).
- Micro-credentials could be designed by cooperating with lecturers and with external specialists in their respective fields of work.
- Some micro-credentials can be created by redesigning existing, SLAs or courses.

Providing a common recognition frame across European universities represents one of the major challenges existing, especially considering that each university has different conditions and legal barriers related to the recognition of learning. The credit recognition process relies on the ECTS and guidelines and the mutual trust among the partners on the award of ECTS by the host(s) of a course or another credit giving educational activity. The ECTS credit points is an expression of the student workload considered for the programme and all the learning components included in the programme. In this sense, each ECTS credit point must correspond to 25-30 hours of workload, including both the educational activities and the student independent work, according to the ECTS User's guide<sup>7</sup>. The

<sup>6</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9237-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/da7467e6-8450-11e5-b8b7-01aa75ed71a1>





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specific workload needs to be defined for each learning activity, specifying how it is divided by educational activities and individual learning.

A mandatory request for gaining ECTS credit points for a specific course is passing an assessment. Any component included in the educational offer must indicate the method of assessment and other conditions for passing the examination: "Credits are awarded when appropriate assessment shows that the defined learning outcomes have been achieved at the relevant level. If the student has not achieved the learning outcomes, no credits will be awarded", according to the ECTS User's guide. The recognition at the student's home university can be partial or full, according to the national legislation and the institutional practices in place. Constant efforts must be made to support this process and to offer students the possibility to fully recognise ECTS credit points received in learning activities at their home universities and add them to its regular curriculum. On the contrary, where this cannot be realised, ECTS may be recognized as extracurricular activities.

# A GRID FOR PROGRAMME DESIGN

## 1. Rationale of grid components

### 1.1. "General Information" section

The "General Information" section serves as the foundational introduction to the proposed learning activity. The provision of key general information in this section encompasses vital aspects such as the activity's categorical type, its distinctive title, potential code if applicable, relevant field of study, and the thematic area it aligns with. This collective information enables learners to grasp the programme's comprehensive context and intrinsic relevance. Moving forward, it becomes imperative to detail the integral facets of the learning activity. This involves specifying the university responsible for the coordination, the hosting faculty or department, all partner universities involved, and any additional collaborative entities such as non-governmental organizations (e.g. NGOs).

Central is the role of the coordinators. Their identity and contact information stand as pivotal points of reference. Furthermore, the process of student enrolment whether through centralised Mobility Management platforms or alternative channels, is expounded upon. The provision of comprehensive instructions, along with essential links, facilitates a seamless registration process for prospective participants. The realm of quality assurance is particularly important when the activity integrates within an institution's curriculum. The delineation of the mechanism employed for quality assurance, along with the entity responsible for overseeing this process, underscores the university's commitment to maintaining educational excellence. The certification or credential bestowed upon successful completion of the programme underscores the inherent value of the endeavour.

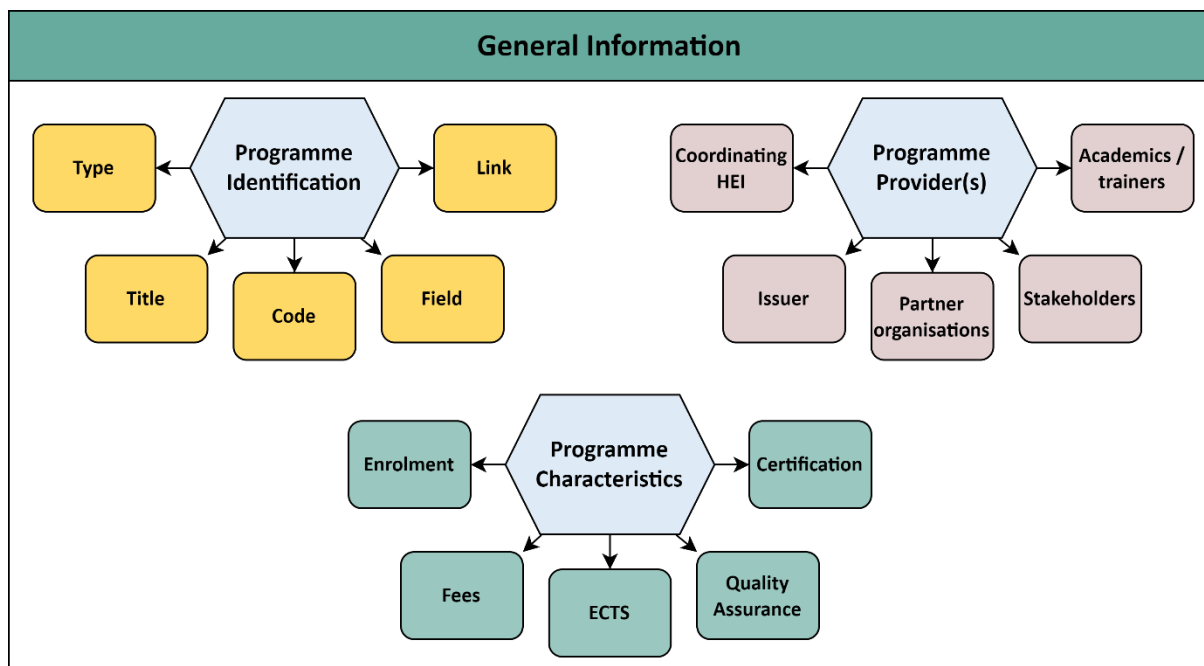


Figure 2. Structural model of the "General Information" component

The templates not only structure the information but also guides the creation of a coherent and comprehensive learning endeavour.

### 1.2. “Activity Design” section

When crafting educational programmes, it is vital to harmonize objectives with the promotion of mobility, innovation, and the assurance of quality. Well-designed educational activities are aligned with the overarching educational goals and priorities set by the European Higher Education Area, as well as the coordinating and partner universities, including (not exclusive): active civic participation, a challenge-driven approach, innovative teaching methods, adaptability, evaluation methods and practices, wellbeing for both learners and teachers, students motivation to learning, and a global perspective. These are the fundamental pillars but not the only ones. Goals can also include enhancing employability, fostering cross-cultural understanding, multilingualism, inter/transdisciplinary learning as well as the exploration of emerging fields of study, and the list of possible achievements can be, of course, vastly diversified.

The initial stage in designing an educational activity involves determining the intended audience, which includes identifying the target groups such as students pursuing diverse educational levels, namely Bachelor's (BA), Master's (MA), and Doctorate (PhD) programmes. When dealing with micro-credentials, it's crucial to also contemplate whether the target demographic extends beyond traditional tertiary students to specialized groups, such as individuals with low literacy levels or immigrants with unique requirements, older students, all those that we generally call, at least for the purpose of this report, non-traditional students. It's important to keep in mind that micro-credentials primarily emphasize the development of practical skills and competencies aimed at enhancing one's prospects in the job market, but also the connection between up-skilling and re-skilling processes, as well as using micro-credentials as building blocks for innovative large degree programmes. Moreover, when dealing with a micro-programme, it's essential to consider that the goal is to further one's knowledge and understanding in a specific subject or field, ultimately acquiring expertise in that area but not specific competencies. The micro-credentials programme / micro-programme needs to list the minimal requirements students must meet to enrol in the activity. This can include prior coursework, degrees, or specific skills. Specify the languages of instruction and any minimum language proficiency levels required to participate effectively, as well as the delivery format for the activities (online, face-to-face, hybrid).

Once the target group was decided, the organization of the academic activity can take various forms, each suited to different educational contexts. You can choose from intensive programmes, which are usually short and immersive, modular formats, breaking content into distinct units, or traditional regular courses based on semester schedules. The choice of delivery method is also crucial in today's diverse educational landscape. Activities can be delivered online, face-to-face, in a blended format combining online and in-person components, or through a hybrid model, which alternates between online and in-person sessions. Identify the tools and platforms used for both real-time and self-paced learning (e.g., among many others, Moodle, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.). While the delivery format is, of course, directly connected with many of the implementation components, it is essential to envisage the psychological factors that drive learning based on specific learning environments, such as the ones facilitated by online / virtual components.

Ensuring transparency and coherence, the estimation of ECTS credit points warrants meticulous attention. This estimation must harmonize with the workloads undertaken and the programme's total duration. Aligning with the internal regulations of the coordinating university is imperative, as it substantiates the equivalence of effort and credit. Specify the total duration of the activity, whether it spans a set number of weeks, months, or a full semester. Additionally, indicate the number of hours students can expect to engage with the activity per week, month, semester, or any relevant time frame. To ensure students have a clear understanding of the time commitment, it's important to define the workload in terms of total hours, considering the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credit points, as well as the ECTS User's Guide: each ECTS credit point corresponds to 25-30 hours of study, encompassing both contact hours and self-directed study. You should also outline how these hours will be distributed throughout the activity.

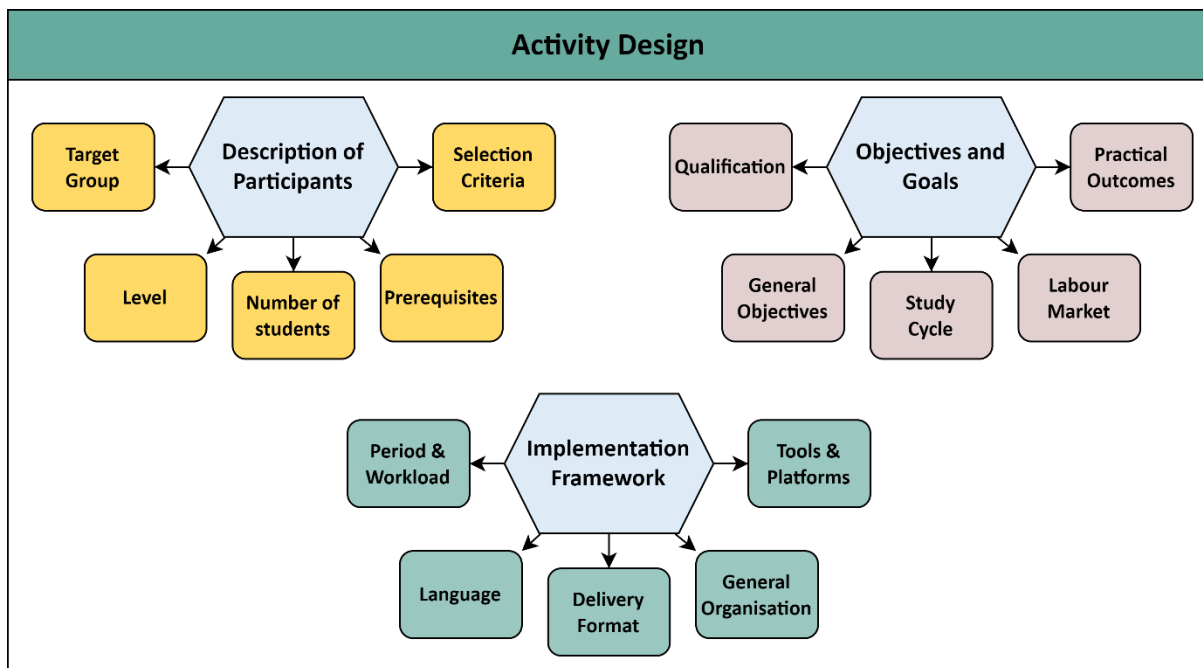


Figure 3. Structural model of the "Activity Design" component

Defining the mode of delivery - be it online, face-to-face, blended, or hybrid - and stipulating the start and end dates of implementation solidifies the logistical framework of the activity. The scope is then defined, specifying the competences, content overview, and the methodologies that underpin instruction.

### 2.3. "Activity Content" section

Understanding the scope of an educational activity is akin to defining its boundaries. It tells the limits of what can or should be covered. This is vital because it ensures that teaching materials and methods stay focused and relevant to the students' learning needs. An important step is to clearly state the competences as it provides clear direction for what you want students to achieve. Knowing these helps to tailor the content and teaching strategies to meet specific learning outcomes effectively. The description of the learning activity tells us exactly what is going to be taught and how it is going to be taught. Knowing this in detail helps to organize the materials and ensures the cover of all necessary topics. Learning outcomes are the results of the teaching; the skills and knowledge students will

acquire. Understanding these outcomes lets us design assessments that accurately measure what students have learned. Thus, assessment remains a fundamental component for learning programmes built on a micro-credentials' philosophy, as the more specific are the learning outcomes, the clearer and more transparent assessment needs to be. It is recommended that assessment is conducted through a wide range of methods, as alternative approaches allow reaching multiple learning outcomes and provides space for achieving niched competences and skills.

If the activity is in relation to other Modules / Learning Units / Study Programmes is important to specify as it helps to understand where the activity fits into the larger educational picture. It ensures that the teaching is aligned with the overall curriculum and that students have the necessary background to succeed.

Assessment considerations form an essential facet, and here, clarity prevails. The mandate for assessment is declared, with corresponding methods, evaluation criteria, and the formulation of the final grade composition expounded. Minimal requirements for exam or activity passage are stipulated, as well as the grading system employed. The assessment section includes the description of the methods and criteria. Assessment is how to measure students' progress. Understanding the assessment process ensures that tests and assignments fairly evaluate students' knowledge or skills or competences in the case of the micro-credentials. Knowing these methods helps to choose the right ones, making assessments more accurate and fairer. The assessment criteria are the standards used to judge students' work. Being clear about these criteria ensures that the grading system is consistent and transparent, providing students with clear guidance on what is expected. The grading system is the scale used to assign grades. Understanding this helps you convert assessments into grades consistently.

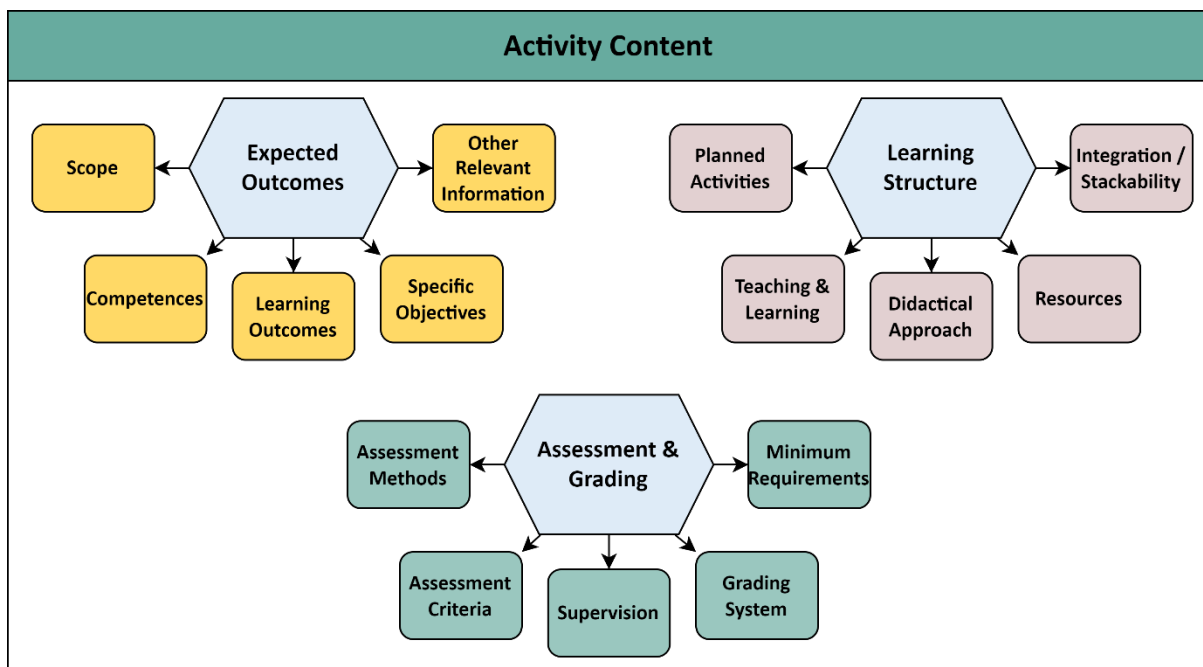


Figure 4. Structural model of the "Activity Content" component

## 2. Design and implementation

When embarking on the journey of designing and implementing new learning activities, the question arises: Where do you start? When facing this challenging task, it is essential to consider both academic and administrative steps from the very beginning. These two facets are intertwined and play crucial roles in the successful development and execution of educational initiatives. Here are some initial steps to consider in both the academic and administrative realms (it is important to highlight that, in case the micro-credential is provided by a consortium of providers, such as a European University Alliance, for example, the steps need to be recalibrated for the architecture of that specific consortium).

### 2.1. Administrative perspective

- Begin with a strategic assessment to align the new programme with the university's mission and goals, including assessing the feasibility of the programme, its potential market demand, and its alignment with the university's strategic plan.
- Develop the curriculum for the new programme, including course outlines, competences, and assessment methods. Administrative tasks also include curriculum design, alignment with quality standards, and resource allocation.
- Introduce if needed internships / traineeships / practical work as part of the initiative, outlining how they align with academic goals and detailing the administrative steps required for their implementation.
- Ensure the programme complies with relevant regulatory and accreditation requirements (e.g. steps in the accreditation process, gaining necessary approvals for the different bodies, and addressing legal and compliance issues at regional, national, European level).
- Administrative responsibilities include the allocation of the necessary resources, such as faculty, facilities, technology, and materials, to support the new programme.
- Establish admission criteria, processes, enrolment forecasting, student enrolment and students support services.
- Establish a quality assurance framework for ongoing monitoring and enhancement of programme effectiveness. This involves implementing assessment and evaluation mechanisms while ensuring alignment with quality assurance standards for compliance.
- Monitor the programme's financial performance, ensuring it remains sustainable and cost-effective.

### 2.2. Academic perspective

- Identify the specific learning needs and goals of the target audience and language to be able to understand what knowledge or skills are lacking or in demand.



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- Once these needs are pinpointed, the next step is to define clear competences that guide the overall design (modules, semesters, ECTS and academic content).
- Planning phase with a detailed roadmap for the learning activities: selection of appropriate content, teaching methodologies & methods, challenge-based approach, innovative pedagogies, and resources.
- Decide on the format of the activities, whether they'll be face-to-face, blended, hands-on workshops, modules, or a combination of various approaches.
- Design evaluation methods ensuring that the learning activities meet the evolving needs of the learners and the overarching educational goals.

### 2.3. Other perspectives

- Firstly, determining the type of mobility, whether it involves physical or virtual movement, or a combination of both, is fundamental to planning logistics effectively.
- Secondly, ensuring that necessary resources, including materials, technology, and facilities, are readily available for both educators and students is crucial for a smooth execution.
- Human resources are also relevant, check with the relevant office(s) at your university the type of support they can or not provide, also assessing what would be required from your side to accomplish the planned activities.
- Moreover, promoting inclusiveness by accommodating diverse learning styles, needs, and backgrounds is essential. It's imperative to provide the necessary support for students with disabilities or unique requirements.
- Additionally, aligning the activity calendar with the academic year or programme timeline of your partners or rest of partner universities. Take into consideration accounting for holidays, breaks, and other relevant events, all vital for seamless execution.
- Last, but not least, establishing robust follow-up mechanisms, including ongoing monitoring and feedback collection, enables the assessment of student performance, engagement, and satisfaction, which, in turn, informs future enhancements and improvements.

## 3. The grid for programme design

This template offers a concise insight into the main elements you will need to take into consideration when designing Micro-credentials and Micro-programmes. Micro-programmes and Micro-credentials are related but distinct concepts in the realm of education and professional development. Both serve the purpose of offering targeted, flexible learning opportunities to meet individual needs and career goals, but they are different types of courses, with a series of specificities.

The key difference between a Micro-programme and a Micro-credential lies in the formal recognition (type of certificate) and the scope of the educational offering they pursue (knowledge vs. competences), but it is also important to note that there are other aspects in which these notions





differ, such as the Integration / stackability options they demand or even the process of supervision and identity verification during assessment. Concerning recognition, Micro-programmes encompass brief courses or units that might or might not culminate in a certificate. In contrast, Micro-credentials are methodically designed learning experiences validating the learner's mastery of specific skills or competencies through digital badges. This kind of digital credentials or badges can be issued by educational institutions or industry bodies, usually emerging from collaborative initiatives between them. Notably, a Micro-programme has the potential to conclude with various types of certifications, Micro-credentials being a part of this spectrum.

As for the contents, Micro-credentials are specifically designed to verify and validate a person's degree of expertise in skills and competences, whereas Micro-programmes also include the acquisition of knowledge in a particular field. Typically, Micro-programmes are independent educational modules addressing a series of subject-matters or delivering precise knowledge in a specific field. Thus, the primary goal of these programmes is to offer supplementary knowledge in areas within the academic context. In contrast, Micro-credentials have a primary emphasis on enhancing employability and are designed for a wide range of individuals, not exclusively graduate students but also potential employees from different ages and career backgrounds. Furthermore, Micro-credentials are adaptable enough to cater to specific target groups, such as immigrants and even individuals with unique requirements, like those in the illiterate population, who have specific skill and competency needs.

For these reasons, the assessment process becomes a key tool in the correct validation of Micro-credentials, as these are meant to ensure the learners' real acquisition of expertise. In the same way, the specificity of Micro-credentials in a single and very concrete skill facilitates that they can be easily combined with other learning experiences to be stacked in the learners' portfolio – and even integrated as part of a Micro-programme.

### 3.1. General information

| Section category                 | Description and examples  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of learning activity</b> | <p>As mentioned in the sections above, there are two different major approaches when dealing with such programmes, one designed as a micro-programme and another when the learning activity is not a micro-programme but a learning activity (mentioned in chapter 2) that leads to micro-credentials. If the learning activity is not a micro-programme, please select micro-credential. Some of the grid fields do not apply to micro-programmes, as it will be indicated at the respective spot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Micro-credential</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Micro-programme</li> </ul> |
| <b>Title</b>                     | <p>This is the official name of the Micro-credential programme / Micro-programme you are offering. It should be clear and descriptive. We also recommend a shorter and concise title which reflects the main topic of the activity.</p>   |



| Section category   | Description and examples  |
|--|---|
|  | <i>Example: Excel for administrative purposes.</i>  |
| <b>Code</b><br><i>(if case)</i>                                    | <p>You can use the university related code if the activity is already part of the existing curriculum or, if the first is not possible, provide a new code, used also for the registration of the programme in the university's platform(s) and for other identification purposes (marketing, certification, etc.).</p> <p><i>Example: 19187UB</i></p>  |
| <b>Field of study / field of education and training</b>            | <p>The fundamental field of study and specific topics. If the coordinating university allows, and if the national context permits, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) fields of education and training (ISCED-F 2013) could be used and selected from the list below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 00 – Generic programmes and qualifications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 01 – Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 02 – Arts and humanities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 03 – Social sciences, journalism, and information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 04 – Business, administration, and law</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 05 – Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 06 – Information and Communication Technologies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 07 – Engineering, manufacturing, and construction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 08 – Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 09 – Health and welfare</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 10 – Services</li> </ul> <p>If this is not possible / desired (for different reasons), please mention which is the field of study covered by the micro-credential programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other thematic area(s) <i>(to be mentioned)</i></li> </ul> <p>If the micro-credentials programme is aimed to be an interdisciplinary / a transdisciplinary programme, please enlist all the fields of study / fields of education and training covered by the programme. This information must also be specified when describing the programme's content, for each module / learning activity included in the programme, to make the connection between the fields visible.</p> <p><i>Example: social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, etc.</i></p> |
| <b>Thematic area(s) / Detailed education and training field(s)</b> | <p>Derived from the fundamental field of study mentioned in the previous field of the grid, please further mention the thematic area(s) or the detailed education and training field(s) (if the field has been selected from the ISCED list), selecting from the detailed list accessible <a href="#">here</a>. If this is not possible / desired, please mention which thematic area(s) is/are covered by the micro-credential programme. If the micro-credentials programme is interdisciplinary / transdisciplinary, please make sure to enlist all the relevant thematic areas / detailed education and training fields covered by the programme.</p>   |



| Section category  | Description and examples  |
|---|---|
| <b>Coordinating university</b>  | Indicate the full official name (and English version if the official name is in another language) and the acronym of the coordinating university. If the programme is coordinated by more than one university, please name all universities that coordinate the programme.  |
| <b>Organising faculty / school / department</b>   | Indicate the internal structure(s) of the coordinating university that deal with the implementation of the micro-credentials programme (faculty, school, department, etc.). If the programme is coordinated by more than one university, please name all internal structures that coordinate the programme.   |
| <b>Country and/or region of the issuer</b>  | Indicate the country and/or region of the university that will issue the micro-credentials certification at the end of the micro-credentials programme. Please be aware that the issuing country's regulations in place will prevail when dealing with specific aspects for designing and implementing micro-credentials programmes (such as the format of the certification, for example).   |
| <b>Partner universities</b><br><i>(other higher education institutions involved)</i>              | Indicate the full official name (and English version if the official name is in another language) and the acronym of the partner universities involved in the overall implementation of the micro-credentials programme, as well as their role in the programme (credit-awarding, key partner, academic team members, etc.).  |
| <b>Stakeholders</b><br><i>(NGOs, non-higher education institutions, etc.)</i>                     | Indicate any non-higher education institution partner(s) that play a role in the overall implementation of the micro-credentials programme, as well as their role. This can include any relevant partner institution, stakeholders, key actors, other institutions that are engaged in the implementation of the programme.<br><br><i>Example: IT company - delivering training for students, hospital - hosting research activity of students, museum - providing learning resources, private company, any other collaborator from outside HEIs to deliver the course.</i> |
| <b>Academic coordinator</b>   | Indicate the full name, academic position, role in the university, and contact details of the main coordinator of the programme. Normally, the main coordinator of the programme is based at the coordinating university, but, in exceptional cases, this can differ. If there are more than one coordinator of the programme, indicate the required information for each of them, as well as their institution (especially if they are not from the coordinating university).  |
| <b>Students' enrolment</b><br><i>(information regarding the registration procedure, web page)</i> | Indicate how the programme coordinators will manage the students' enrolment in the programme, both as a process and as tools used for this process, as well as the information to be disseminated to interested applicants (webpage, registration link, registration form, etc.). Please make sure the student management tools and the   |



| Section category   | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
|  | <p>universities managing them apply the European regulations for data protection when dealing with personal information of the students.</p>   |
| <p><b>Quality assurance</b><br/><i>(mention the mechanism and responsible body, e.g. faculty / university committee)</i></p> | <p>Indicate the quality assurance mechanisms in place for this programme, as well as all the processes, bodies, and other information that describe the overall quality assurance of the programme. All quality assurance processes for underpinning the programme must be in line with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). This information is required for both external and internal quality assurance mechanisms in place, based on the regulations and practices in place at the coordinating university and the respective country. Where possible, European quality assurance mechanism should be used.</p>  |
| <p><b>Certification</b><br/><i>(diploma + diploma supplement; certificate; badge + metadata etc.)</i></p>                    | <p>Indicate the type of certification issued for the graduating students of the micro-credentials programme, based on specific regulations and practices at the level of the coordinating university and respective country, as well as the agreement at consortium level (for micro-credentials programmes awarded in partnership with other higher education institutions). The information here should mention not only the type of document issued to graduating students, but also other related documents in place (such as Diploma Supplement, for example) and the issuing format (on paper / on paper &amp; digital / only digital). As modularisation is at the core of designing micro-credential programmes, it is recommended also to consider partial certificates for learners that accomplish only part of the programme (for example: 2 learning units / modules / activities / components out of 4), where partial certifications can be issued to attest the successful completion of the respective parts of the programme.</p> <p>In case of digital certificates, we recommend using the European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDCL) tool provided by the European Commission, interconnected with Europass and based on blockchain technology. The platform allows not only issuing the certificate, but also designing it and managing the entire process. More information <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><i>Example: Diploma, Certificate, Badge, other (to be mentioned)</i></p> |
| <p><b>ECTS recognition</b><br/><i>(depending on each higher education institution's internal regulation)</i></p>             | <p>Indicate, if possible, how the ECTS credits awarded at the end of the programme will be integrated in the students' study programmes or other learning activities, based on specific regulations and practices in place at the coordinating university. If the programme is awarded to students from other higher education institutions, this information can be provided, if possible, with the support of the respective universities or general recognition statements can be used (such as: <i>"Recognition fully depends on the regulations and practices in place at the students' home university and does not fall under the responsibility of the issuing university"</i>).</p>   |



| Section category                           | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
| <b>Tuition &amp; fees</b>                  | <p>Specify the total cost of the micro-credential programme. This should include tuition for all courses and any mandatory fees. If there are scholarships, grants, or financial aid options available for students, then provide information on how to apply, as well as the eligibility criteria. If there are additional costs for textbooks, software, or other materials required for the programme, provide an estimate.</p> <p><i>Example: The total cost of the Micro-credential in Data Science is 2,500 euros, which covers all course materials and access to online resources. Tuition is payable in three instalments. We offer a limited number of need-based scholarships. Eligibility criteria and application details can be found on our website (link to website to be provided).</i></p> |
| <b>Link to the webpage (if applicable)</b> | <p>Indicate the link to the webpage location that provides further information about the micro-credential programmes, as well as the registration information for candidates and other relevant information. This webpage can be either situated on the website of the coordinating and partner universities, but it can also be situated on different platforms (such as Coursera, EdX, Udemy, etc.).</p>   |

### 3.2. Activity Design

| Section category   | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
| <b>Target group (students at bachelor / master / doctoral level; lifelong learners; etc.)</b>                | <p>Indicate the micro-credential programme's target group description, such as the education level, academic background, professional profiles, and any other specific descriptors needed to characterise the target group addressed by the micro-credential programme. It is also very important to mention whether the programme addresses already enrolled students (people who, for the entire duration of the programme are student at a European higher education institution, for example), traditional students (people who have recently graduated from secondary, tertiary, or higher education programme and pursue a new learning opportunity), or non-traditional students (people who have graduated from secondary, tertiary, or higher education programme(s) a long time ago and are in need for a re-skilling or up-skilling learning opportunity), or a mixture of these. This information is very helpful not only for providing a better understanding on what the programme is about, but especially to better address this programme to the dedicated target group (for marketing purposes, for example).</p> |
| <b>Level (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the Micro-credential (EQF, QF-</b> | <p>Mention the educational level of the micro-credential programme (such as undergraduate, graduate, or professional development), using the levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and/or the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the country of the issuing university.</p>  |





| Section category  | Description and examples  |
|---|---|
| <b>EHEA)</b><br><i>(if applicable)</i>  |   |
| <b>Qualification (EQF/NQF)</b>  | Specify to which qualification the micro-credential programme is leading, based on the EQF and/or NQF. If this is not possible, indicate the related occupation(s), based on ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) <sup>8</sup> that are linked with the competences and learning outcomes provided by the micro-credential programme.  |
| <b>General organization</b><br><i>(intensive / modular / regular)</i>   | Mention the type of the general organization of the micro-credential programme, based on the planned activities (further detailed in the activity content component): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intensive:</b> designed activities will be held in a short period of time with high frequencies (example: 40 hours per week, for two weeks)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Modular:</b> designed activities will be organized in learning blocks with an irregular frequency (example: blocks of 10 hours per week, divided over a longer period through a calendar)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regular:</b> designed activities organized over a longer period with regular frequency.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Description of the workload for the students</b><br><i>(for the total number of hours resulted from the number of ECTS credit points 1 ECTS = 25-30 hours and their distribution per activity)</i> | Break down the total number of hours students are expected to invest in the programme. Also, explain how these hours are distributed between individual work and contact hours with professors. <p><b>Number of contact hours:</b> xx hours</p> <p><b>Individual student workload:</b> xx hours</p> <p><b>Total workload:</b> xx hours</p> <p><b>Contact hours refer to:</b> face to face/online/synchronous lectures, field learning, supervised assessment etc.</p> <p><b>Individual student workload refers to:</b> independent study time (mandatory bibliography, prerecorded lectures, lecture materials and class notes, other resources), research, projects, homework, etc.</p> <p><b>Total workload</b> is the sum between the contact hours and individual student workload.</p> <p><i>Example: Students are expected to invest 40 hours of individual practical work at home, including simulations and a final Project. The rest of the hours will take place virtually with the course instructors.</i></p> |
| <b>Estimated ECTS credit points</b>   | If applicable, specify the number of ECTS associated with the micro-credential. The number of minimum and maximum ECTS possible depends on the regulations and practices in place at the coordinating university and/or in the issuing university's country. The number of  |

<sup>8</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1326&langId=en>



| Section category  | Description and examples   |
|---|--|
| <i>(to be correlated with the workload)</i>   | <p>awarded ECTS credit points must correspond to the workload associated with each learning activity that constitutes the micro-credential programme, considering between 25-30 hours for each ECTS credit point (where the final number, meaning here the selection of hours per each credit point, depends on the coordinating university's accreditation system and internal regulations in place).</p> <p>Please find here an indicative list of ECTS per hours ratios (not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 ECTS: 25 - 30 hours</li> <li>• 2 ECTS: 50 - 60 hours</li> <li>• 3 ECTS: 75 - 90 hours</li> <li>• 4 ECTS: 100 - 120 hours</li> <li>• 5 ECTS: 125 - 150 hours</li> <li>• 6 ECTS: 151 - 180 hours</li> <li>• 7 ECTS: 181 - 210 hours</li> <li>• 8 ECTS: 211 - 240 hours</li> <li>• 9 ECTS: 241 - 270 hours</li> <li>• 15 ECTS: 375 - 450 hours</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Duration of the activity</b><br/><i>(total duration of the activity and no. of hours per week / month / semester, etc.)</i></p> | <p>State how long it takes to complete the micro-credential programme, whether in weeks, months, semesters, or any other relevant time unit, according to the general organisation and total number of contact hours. Indicate here the total duration of the programme, including all planned activities, as well as the assessments and other related components.</p>  |
| <p><b>Type of delivery</b><br/><i>(online / face to face / blended / hybrid)</i></p>  | <p>Describe how the programme is delivered, whether it's fully online, face-to-face in a physical location, a combination (blended), or a mix of both (hybrid).</p> <p><b>Online:</b> all instruction and learning activities take place over the internet. Students access course materials, lectures, assignments, and interact with instructors and peers through online platforms.</p> <p><b>Face-to-face:</b> all instruction and learning activities involve traditional, in-person classroom instruction.</p> <p><b>Blended:</b> online activities and face to face activities. In case of blended, mention the division of contact hours for each type.</p> <p><b>Hybrid:</b> synchronous activities both for face to face and online participants at the same time.</p>   |
| <p><b>Implementation period</b><br/><i>(from..., to...)</i></p>   | <p>Provide the start and end dates of the programme's availability. This helps applicants know when they can enrol.</p> <p><b>DD/MM/YYYY – DD/MM/YYYY</b></p> <p>Start and end date of the activity, including the assessment and all included activities and components of the micro-credential programme.</p>  |





| Section category   | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Number of students / learners</b><br/><i>(minimum &amp; maximum number)</i></p>                  | <p>Mention the minimum and maximum (if any) number of students / learners (for face to face and blended activities division of local and incoming students) that can enrol in the micro-credential programme. The number must be based on the decisions of the coordinating university (and partner universities, if case) and the regulations and practices at the coordinating university and the issuing country, as well as other factors to be considered for the successful implementation of the programme (logistics, financial, extension of learning groups, etc.).</p>  |
| <p><b>Practical work required to achieve the learning outcomes</b><br/><i>(expressed in hours)</i></p> | <p>State the number of hours dedicated to practical activities necessary to achieve the programme's learning outcomes. While the existence of such activities is not mandatory for all types of micro-credential programmes, it is recommended especially for programmes dedicated for professional re-skilling and up-skilling, as it better connects the learning outcomes with specific professional contexts.</p> <p><i>Example: To successfully achieve the learning outcome students are expected to dedicate a total of approximately 40 hours to practical activities. These practical activities include. Database Design Project (20 hours) and Database Security Simulation (20 hours).</i></p> |
| <p><b>Objectives of the micro-programme / micro-credential</b></p>                                     | <p>Clearly outline the educational goals and what students can expect to learn or achieve upon completing the micro-credential programme. This section is not for enlisting the competences or the learning outcomes (present later in the grid), but for expressing the overarching the learning objectives of the programmes.</p> <p><i>Example: Acquire advanced SQL querying skills to efficiently retrieve and manipulate data from relational databases.</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Prerequisites</b><br/><i>(minimal requirements for students' enrolment)</i></p>                  | <p>Enumerate any conditions or fundamental criteria that prospective students must fulfil to enrol in the programme (this is also linked with the characteristics of the target group and must be correlated accordingly). This may encompass prerequisites like educational credentials or relevant prior experience, which can range from possessing a degree to having completed a higher school education, as well as coming from specific professional environments.</p>  |
| <p><b>Selection criteria</b><br/><i>(if any)</i></p>   | <p>If there are criteria for selecting students, such as a competitive admissions process, maximum number of students, other motives, describe them here. Please be aware that, in some cases, due to existing practices and regulations in different higher education institution and/or countries, no selection is allowed if the applicants fulfil the admission criteria. In some cases, the selection criteria can become admission criteria, based on the specific needs of the expected target group and the objectives of the micro-credential programme, and must also be closely correlated with the prerequisites for applying to the programme (if case).</p>                                  |



| Section category  | Description and examples  |
|---|---|
|   | <i>Example: motivation letter, CV, interview, bachelor thesis, etc.</i>   |
| <b>Language(s)</b><br><i>(also mentioning the minimum level required)</i> | <p>Indicate the language of the activities foreseen in the micro-credential programme, as well as the minimum level the applicants must possess to be able to participate and successfully graduate the programme, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)<sup>9</sup> levels or other similar language level reference system. In the case of two or more languages, enlist them mentioning also how these languages will be used throughout the entire duration of the programme.</p> <p><i>Example: minimum level in French B2, English level C1 recommended; all discussions will take place in English, but some of the reading resources are in French.</i></p>  |
| <b>Tools for synchronous / asynchronous communication and learning</b>    | <p>Indicate what platforms and/or tools will be used for ensuring the teaching and learning activities included in the programme, as well as those used for synchronous and/or asynchronous learning and communication (by case). This information is important so that learners can be aware in due time of the required platforms and tools and request support if encountering any technical obstacles. Also, it would be recommended that the coordinating university provides also short guides / resources to use the selected platforms / tools, so that learners can access them and use to connect to the teaching and learning activities and communications.</p> <p><i>Example: Moodle, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Mentimeter, Kahoot, etc.</i></p> |

### 3.3. Activity Content

| Section category | Description and examples  |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Scope</b>     | <p>Define the overall scope of the micro-credential programme, considering what specific area or topic it covers. The scope must be short and concise, correlated with the programme's main topic. While the scope may be easily mistaken as the objective of the programme (present earlier in the grid), the scope is more connected with the programme's content, while the objective is general and is more linked with the professional / academic outcome(s) of the programme.</p> <p><i>Example: This micro-credential focuses on Data Analytics in Healthcare; This micro-programme will provide you with a better understanding on economic globalisation in 21st century.</i></p> |

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>



| Section category  | Description and examples  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Competences</b></p>   | <p>Indicate the competences acquired by the learners upon graduating the micro-credential programme, in terms of learning outcomes and contents. Programme designers can use the European list of key competences<sup>10</sup> as a starting point and further detail from that point, or other lists of competences considered suitable for better describing the finalities of the programme (such as the occupations' descriptors, for example). The listed competences must be specific, restrictive, and closely linked with the programme's contents and activities.</p> <p><i>Example: Upon completion, students will be competent in statistical analysis, data visualization, and healthcare data interpretation.</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Learning units / modules / activities / components</b></p>  | <p>Mention and describe the different learning units / modules / activities / components that build up the micro-credential programme. As modularisation is at the core of building micro-credential programme in higher education, it is recommended that the micro-credential programme is designed in different learning units / modules / activities / components that are interconnected (mentioning the exact sequence and/or connection between them) and all pursue the achievement of the planned competences and learning outcomes. In the next section of the grid, "Description of the learning activity", each of the learning unit / module / activity / component will be described individually, while this section is only for mentioning them and their connection with the others.</p> <p><i>Example: there are four learning units in this micro-credential; there are three modules in this micro-programme, each one comprising two learning units; for achieving the micro-credential certificate, learners must graduate all four learning units in a successive order: Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 3, and Unit 4, each unit being a prerequisite for the next one (Unit 1 for Unit 2, and so on).</i></p> |
| <p><b>Description of the learning unit / module / activity / component</b><br/><i>(A separate section will be filled for each learning unit / module / activity / component included in the micro-credential programme)</i></p> | <p><b>General description</b> of the learning unit / module / activity / component, mentioning here title (and number if case) and a short description of the main topic(s) and planned activities.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Student workload</b>, expressed in number of hours, divided by number of contact hours and individual student workload. Please consider that the total amount of the workload of all learning units / modules / activities / components must be equal to the overall workload mentioned earlier in the grid.</p> <hr/> <p><b>ECTS credit points</b> for each unit / module / activity / component, based on the specific workload mentioned one row above. Please consider that the total amount of credit points of all units / modules / activities / components must be equal to the credit points awarded to the students at the end of the micro-credential programme.</p>   |

<sup>10</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/key-competences>



| Section category   | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>Teaching and learning methods</b> used in the learning unit / module / activity / component, with a specific accent on the pedagogical innovation practices that foster new approaches to teaching and learning in higher education in these contexts. A possible inventory of innovative pedagogical components in higher education could be accessed <a href="#">here</a>, for example (there are many similar resources, of course).</p> <hr/> <p><b>Bibliography / reading list / references</b>, clearly mentioning which of the resources are part of the compulsory / mandatory list of readings for the successful graduation of the programme and which of them are optional. The reference style used will be the one specific to the programme's main field of study (APA, Chicago, Harvard, etc.).</p> <hr/> <p>For each learning unit, explain the <b>didactical approach</b>, whether it's theoretical, practical, or a combination. Provide an overview of the topics covered and the expected student activities within each unit.</p> <p><i>Example: Learning Unit 1 "Introduction to Healthcare Data" provides a theoretical foundation for understanding healthcare data sources and their importance; Learning Unit 2 etc.</i></p> |
| <p><b>Lecturers</b><br/><i>(names and affiliation)</i></p>   | <p>List the names and affiliations of the lecturers / trainers / instructors who will be teaching / training in the micro-credential programme and mention, if possible, the specific learning units / modules / activities / components for each of the lecturers / trainers / instructors.</p>   |
| <p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p>  | <p>Specify the content learning outcomes, which are the specific knowledge or abilities students should gain. It is recommended to divide the learning outcomes for each learning unit / module / activity / component, where possible, and link also with the ECTS distribution. If the learning outcomes are mentioned only at programme level, partial certification cannot be provided, as there is no proof of the specific achievement of the learning outcomes for each unit / module / activity / component.</p> <p><i>Example: Students will understand how to analyse patient data to identify trends and make data-driven decisions in healthcare; students will be able to have a deeper knowledge on the economic consequences of globalisation in different geographic areas.</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Integration / stackability options</b><br/><i>(stand-alone, independent micro-credential/integrated, stackable towards another credential)</i></p> | <p>Describe whether this micro-credential can be taken as a stand-alone programme only or if it can be also integrated into a larger credential. Explain if it is stackable, meaning it can be counted toward another credential, such as a degree, etc., and the relationship with other components of the larger credential.</p> <p><i>Example: this micro-credential can be taken independently or as part of our Master's in Healthcare Data Science programme.</i></p>  |



| Section category   | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Assessment method(s)</b></p>   | <p>Assessment method(s) used to prove and evaluate the student performance and acquisition of the planned competences and learning outcomes foreseen for the learning unit / module / activity / component (written/oral examination, portfolio, individual / team project, tests, essay). Assessment is mandatory when awarding ECTS credit points and must be part of the design of the micro-credential programme. Various assessment methods can be used, as well as different types (formative, summative, initial, etc.) throughout the programme and the included learning units / modules / activities / components. If assessment is used only at the programme level (and not for each learning unit / module / activity / component), partial certification cannot be provided, and the assessment must ensure the achievement of all learning outcomes included in the programme.</p> <p><i>Example: assessment will be based on a combination of quizzes, a final project, and peer-reviewed assignments.</i></p> |
| <p><b>Assessment criteria</b></p>  | <p>Clearly outline the evaluation criteria in use to assess the student performance. Clearly outline the evaluation techniques employed to assess the student performance, with an emphasis on the acquisition of competencies and skills (mathematical methods/physical models and theories ability to indicate/analyse specific examples ability to use specific problem-solving methods ability to analyse the results, etc.).</p> <p><i>Example: quizzes will be multiple-choice, the final project will require data analysis and a report, and peer-reviewed assignments will assess collaboration and critical thinking.</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Supervision and identity verification during assessment</b><br/>(<i>unsupervised with no identity verification, supervised with no identity verification, supervised with identity verification, etc.</i>)</p> | <p>Explain how assessments will be supervised and whether identity verification measures will be implemented. Specify if assessments are unsupervised with no identity verification, supervised without identity verification, or if there are other methods in place.</p> <p><i>Example: assessments will be supervised through online proctoring with identity verification to maintain academic integrity.</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Composition of final mark</b></p>  | <p>Indicate how the final mark will be composed, also mentioning percentages and/or weights of each component, especially where the mark is not only based on the assessment, but on other types of contributions to the programme (active participation, volunteering activities, observation, projects, etc.).</p> <p><i>Example: final exam / project, etc: 40%; assignments during semester (practical activities / projects, essay): 25%; class participation: 10%; intermediate exams (during semester): 25%.</i></p>  |





| Section category   | Description and examples   |
|--|--|
| <b>Minimal requirements for passing the exam / learning activity</b>                       | <p>Mention the minimal requirement for passing the examen and successfully graduating the micro-credential programme and/or each of the learning units / modules / activities / components included in the programme. This could mean a specific mark of percentage, or other specific requirements considered optimal for the programme, also aligned with the existing regulations and practices in place.</p> <p><i>Example: attendance of at least 50% for the lectures and at least 70% for the tutorials; correct solutions to the indicated subjects for obtaining the grade 5 from all activities, part of the continuous evaluation; correct solutions to the indicated subjects for obtaining the grade 5 within the final exam.</i></p> |
| <b>Grading system</b><br>(Ex.: 0 to 10, where 5 is the minimum passing grade; Pass / Fail) | <p>Indicate how students will be graded, the minimum grade for passing, and if applicable, specify the passing grade or grading criteria.</p> <p><i>Example: students must achieve a minimum grade of 70% to pass the micro-programme / micro-credential. Each subject is graded on a scale from 0 to 10 points. To pass a subject it is necessary to get at least 5 points.</i></p>   |
| <b>Other relevant information</b>  | <p>Include any additional information that is pertinent to the course, such as resources, technology requirements, and policies.</p> <p><i>Example: students are required to have access to statistical analysis software such as R or Python. Technical support is available for troubleshooting.</i></p>   |

## 4. Steps for a successful design

Based on the analysed examples and the proposed grid and guidelines, a checklist could be proposed for academics that engage in designing and implementing micro-credential programmes in higher education institutions and that could help them to follow the suitable approach for implementing such programmes in their universities. Of course, as the grid and the checklist are under initial format, further fine-tunings and updates will be made after the piloting of the grid in several European higher education institutions that implement micro-credential programmes.

As the aim of these tools is to assist the design and implementation of these types of programmes, the checklist will not insist on the very initial steps, such as the need analyses, identification of field of study / field of education and training, identification of potential partners, consortium composition, internal initial approvals at university level and so on, as it will concentrate more on a coherent idea already in place that is passed from the idea phase to a ready to be implemented micro-credential programme. As mentioned, further additions and updates will be made to the tools, based on the results of the conducted piloting processes that will be established.

The programme coordinator(s) will complete the checklist in the “Status”, “Outcomes”, and “Comments” columns, while the “Step” and “Description” columns are predefined. As the checklist



will become a central part of the piloting process, we ask programme coordinators to consider any suggestions for improving the checklist and the grid and add them in the “Comments” column of the checklist, as well as to make any additions or suggestions in any of the components of the tools.

#### 4.1. A 12-step checklist for the design of a micro-credential programme

| <b>Step</b><br><i>(Moment in the design process)</i>            | <b>Description</b><br><i>(Short description of each step)</i>   | <b>Status</b><br><i>(Not started / In progress / Done)</i> | <b>Outcomes</b><br><i>(Results of each step)</i> | <b>Comments</b><br><i>(Considerations after each step)</i> |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>1. Identifying the programme proposal</b>                    | Identify the main topic(s) of the programme and it's need in the overall offer of the university, linking it with the university's mission and the main strategic objectives in education and training offerings.   |  |  |  |
| <b>2. Fitting the programme</b>                                 | Acquire the initial approvals at university level (as well as the adequate internal body/bodies that will support the implementation, such as the department, for example) and fit the programme in the university's educational offer (part of the curriculum of some programmes or in the lifelong learning offer of the university).   |  |  |  |
| <b>3. Setting internal team</b>                                 | Based on the internal regulations and practices in place at the coordinating university level, when dealing with micro-credential programmes (if this is without precedent, the regular programme establishment processes should be considered as a starting point), a list of internal personnel and offices will be drafted to support the programme coordinator(s) in the design and implementation process.   |  |  |  |
| <b>4. Drafting the initial format of the programme proposal</b> | The programme coordinator(s), along with other relevant peers / partners (if case), drafts the initial format of the programme, starting with the grid's "Activity Content" section (it sounds paradoxical, considering the order of the sections, yet it is advised to start from the content ideas). The first version of the programme is a starting point for the next steps, so it will be subjected to many updates and improvements. While working on the content component, the programme coordinator(s) also start preparing the list of potential academics / lecturers / trainers / instructors that will be part of the extended team of the programme. |  |  |  |
| <b>5. Revising the first draft of the</b>                       | Internally at the coordinating university, the programme coordinator(s) check the first draft (based on the grid's "Activity Content"   |  |  |  |





| <b>Step</b><br><i>(Moment in the design process)</i>           | <b>Description</b><br><i>(Short description of each step)</i>  | <b>Status</b><br><i>(Not started / In progress / Done)</i> | <b>Outcomes</b><br><i>(Results of each step)</i> | <b>Comments</b><br><i>(Considerations after each step)</i> |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>programme proposal</b>                                      | section) and collect relevant feedback from the respective bodies at university level. At this stage, the programme coordinators already consider asking for feedback related to the second section of the grid, “Activity Design”, especially related to the administrative checks needed to ensure the successful implementation of the programme: period, ECTS, qualification, format, number of students (aspects that are not entirely under the decision of the programme coordinators). |  |  |  |
| <b>6. Designing the next version of the programme proposal</b> | Based on the initial round of feedback and suggestions, the programme coordinators update the “Activity Content” section of the programme grid, while starting to work on the second section, “Activity Design”. At this stage, it is recommended to already include an extended team in the discussions, such as, for example, the team of academics / lecturers / trainers / instructors that will be part of the programme (even if, at this moment, the list may not be final).            |  |  |  |
| <b>7. Working on the programme details</b>                     | While moving closer to the first complete draft of the programme, the programme team also prepares the first section of the grid, “General Information”, being supported again by internal team at coordinating university, especially for aspects such as: tuition & fees, students’ enrolment, quality assurance, certification, ECTS recognition, digital components & tools, etc.  |  |  |  |
| <b>8. Fine-tuning the programme proposal</b>                   | A complete first draft is submitted for feedback and final checks to the internal team at the coordinating university, as well as for feedback from partners and extended academic team. A refined version is prepared based on the received feedback and it is ready for the next steps.  |  |  |  |
| <b>9. Quality assurance &amp; accreditation</b>                | With support from internal team at coordinating university, the micro-credential programme is submitted for quality assurance processes that will underpin the programme, based on regulations and practices in place. Depending on the coordinating university and issuing country, the process can be internal or external and   |  |  |  |



| <b>Step</b><br><i>(Moment in the design process)</i> | <b>Description</b><br><i>(Short description of each step)</i>  | <b>Status</b><br><i>(Not started / In progress / Done)</i> | <b>Outcomes</b><br><i>(Results of each step)</i> | <b>Comments</b><br><i>(Considerations after each step)</i> |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | will require a specific timing and some additional resources to be considered.   |  |  |  |
| <b>10. Marketing and promotion</b>                   | The programme, once successfully approved by internal / external body/-ies dealing with quality assurance processes and accreditation, the micro-credential programme is being prepared for dissemination and promotion, with the support of the internal team at coordinating university. Based on the specific regulations and practices in place, a timeline is set for the dissemination, applications, registrations, and selections processes needed to prepare the first student intake in the programme. This timeline can differ depending on the target group, implementation period, format, prerequisites, and many other factors. |  |  |  |
| <b>11. Launching the programme</b>                   | The programme is successfully launched and takes its first student intake, developing the planned activities and components based on the descriptions in the design and implementation grid.   |  |  |  |
| <b>12. Evaluating and updating the programme</b>     | After the first intake(s), the programme coordinators, with the support of the internal team at the coordinating university, assess the programme (feedback from students, academics, other inputs, etc.) and check what needs further improvements and makes them accordingly. The grid can be used for this purpose also, as a new version of the grid could become the descriptive document of the new edition of the micro-credential programme.   |  |  |  |



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#### 4.2. Template for a micro-credential certificate

Considering the main recommendations of the European Approach for Micro-Credentials<sup>11</sup>, the existing practices in place and the level of information considered relevant and necessary to provide certification for learning as part of micro-credential programmes, we propose a possible template for a micro-credential certificate, in case the European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDCL) platform is not used for this purpose or that can be used as a starting point when designing the provider's template in the EDCL platform, as can be seen below.

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Logo</b> | <b>Logo</b> |
|-------------|-------------|

## MICRO-CREDENTIALS CERTIFICATE

### Information about the provider

**Name of issuing organization / institution / university**

*Insert text here...*

**Internal department / structure / body responsible for providing the micro-credential**

*Insert text here...*

**Country / region**

*Insert text here...*

**Postal address**

*Insert text here...*

**Main contact details**

*Insert text here...*

**Website**

*Insert text here...*

**Micro-credential coordinator**

(name and contact details)

*Insert text here...*

## HEREBY CERTIFIES THAT

### Information about the student

**Full name**

*Insert text here...*

**Personal identification number /**

**Passport number**

*Insert text here...*

**Date of birth**

(DD / MM / YYYY)

*Insert text here...*

**Country of residence**

*Insert text here...*

**Nationality**

*Insert text here...*

<sup>11</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials>



---

**Contact details**

(email & phone number)

*Insert text here...*

---

**Enrollment / registration number at issuing  
organization / institution / university:**

*Insert text here...*

**Date of enrollment / registration**  
(DD / MM / YYYY)

*Insert text here...*

---

**Has successfully completed the following micro-credential:**

**TITLE OF THE MICRO-CREDENTIAL**

---

**Information about the micro-credential**

**Field of study / field of education and training (ISCED)**

*Insert text here...*

---

**EQF / NQF level**

*Insert text here...*

**Qualification**

*Insert text here...*

---

**Language(s) of instruction**

*Insert text here...*

**Period of implementation**

(DD / MM / YYYY – DD / MM / YYYY)

*Insert text here...*

---

**Awarded ECTS credit points**

*Insert text here...*

**Total workload**

(expressed in number of hours)

*Insert text here...*

---

**Delivery format**

*Insert text here...*

**Location**

*Insert text here...*

---

**Leading to the successful achievement of the following outcomes:**

---

**Information about the learning outcomes**

**Core competences**

*Insert text here...*

---

**Specific learning outcomes**

*Insert text here...*

---

**Additional outcomes (if case)**

*Insert text here...*

---

**Professional provisions (connected with ESCO<sup>12</sup>)**

*Insert text here...*

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en>



**Validated through the following assessment methods and processes:**

**Information about assessment & grading**

**Assessment methods**

*Insert text here...*

**Assessment criteria**

*Insert text here...*

**Minimum requirements for passing the exam / learning activity**

*Insert text here...*

**Composition of final mark**

*Insert text here...*

**Supervision and identity verification during assessment**

*Insert text here...*

**Achieved grade / mark**

*Insert text here...*

**Grading system used**

*Insert text here...*

**Issuing date**

*Insert text here...*

**Issuing location**

*Insert text here...*

**Signature of provider representative**

*(for non-digital certificates)*

**Provider seal**

*(for non-digital certificates)*

**OR**

**Link and information for certificate verification**

*(for digital certificates)*

*Insert text here...*

## CLOSING REMARKS

The grid has the potential to become a useful tool for any academic that wishes to design and implement micro-credential programmes in higher education institutions or educational providers consortia (such as the European Universities Alliances, for example) across the European landscape, starting from the core descriptors mentioned by the European agenda, as well as other important key voices in the field, being also funded on the analysed examples and feedback from specific higher education institutions in Europe already implementing micro-credential programmes. While we still need to define where traditional programmes end and micro-credentials begin, and what is the real, transparent, clear connection between micro-credentials and `traditional` credentials, piloting new models for designing educational opportunities in higher education is a good way to provide sound examples of what could and could not work in this process. While professional needs and societal challenges drive our efforts in building these tools, universities' missions and values still represent strong pillars for building innovation in this field, not neglecting the inspirational efforts of the academic community. For this reason, micro-credentials shift from tools of certification (marking only the finality of the teaching and learning process) to a curricular design philosophy that reshapes the way in which learning is built and delivered in an innovative approach.

We hope that the grid and the connected tools will support the academic community and the universities to enhance the designing and implementation of such programmes, as part of their educational and training offer for all types of students, further opening the universities towards society and its needs. While micro-credentials are often seen as something distinct from the university's goals, universities have the chance to become more present in the professional lives of all types of potential learners, and micro-credentials are there to play their role in such a process.

As the grid is at an initial stage, piloting it in several higher education institutions at European level will, hopefully, bring valuable inputs and improvements to the tools, so that we can propose an operational set of instruments to guide academics and universities in innovating education and training offerings through the `micro-credentials philosophy` and design new learning pathways for all students. As the piloting process will not only assist the design of such programmes, but it will also become better and better with each recorded experience, in a transformative manner, as a living tool for all those interested in designing such programmes. As the new European approaches and strategic perspectives envisage the idea of a policy experimentation concept around the new ways of designing teaching and learning, micro-credentials can indeed represent a real guiding stone through its capacity to steer the overall vision and direction of innovation. Piloting the present grid in higher education contexts, these tools can stand as steps towards applied experimentation, validating and confirming, based on strong and relevant feedback from providers and practitioners, that micro-credentials can become transformative processes across the European educational system.