

# Engaging with Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning

MELLearn-PDS4BST-EPALE Intensive LLL  
Programme - Development of Basic  
Skills – Opportunities and Limitations in  
the Age of Learning

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**Dr Helen Murphy Head of School (Dean)  
Education and Lifelong Learning**

**setu.ie**  
**INSPIRING FUTURES**



# SETU South East Technological University

## Ireland

Ireland's newest University established in 2022

Two former Higher Education Institutes of Technology (Waterford and Carlow)

- 18,000 students
- 1/3 of our students are lifelong learners (adult learners – over 23)
- A multi-campus University based across the South East of Ireland
- Faculty of Education and Lifelong Learning
- Specialisms; adult learning, professional development for adult educators, RPL (recognition of prior learning), lifelong learning)

# Lifelong Learning @SETU – 7,000 learners



Access



Upskilling



Knowledge Economy



Ageing Population



Green  
&  
Digital

Micro  
credentials

RPL

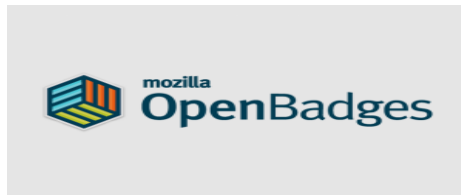
# Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning

## What did we have before Micro-credentials?

2004/5 Introduction of modularisation and semesterisation in the IOT sector in Ireland (part of the Bologna Process)

2005 Minor and special purpose awards at NFQ 6 to 9 (WIT and ITC)

2011



2015 – Concept of micro-credentials gains interest in HE

2020 – A European Approach to Micro-Credentials

2022 – EC Memo on Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability

2023 – European Post Bologna Working Group on Micro-credentials



QQI early exploration into  
Micro-credentials in Higher  
Education, 2014–2020

# An Introduction to Micro- credentials

## Definition:

A micro-credential is a **proof of the learning outcomes** that a learner has acquired following a **short learning experience** (EC, 2020).

Micro-credentials can offer **lifelong learners access** to **flexible third-level provision** and assist Universities in responding to accelerated **global skills needs** and new fields of learning.

There are number of **standard elements** to describe a micro-credential. These include the **learning outcomes, the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes and the type of assessment**.

They can **complement degree programmes**, act as **stand-alone units of learning**, or can be **stackable** and cumulate into a larger credential (MICROBOL, 2021)



‘The **record of the learning outcomes** that a learner has acquired following a **small volume of learning**.

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, and 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**

(EU, Commission, 2020)



# European Perspectives on Micro-credentials

2020

## EUROPEAN SKILLS AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS, SOCIAL FAIRNESS AND RESILIENCE



The 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights are the beacon guiding us towards a strong social Europe that is **fair, inclusive and full of opportunity**.

The Commission has already presented several actions based on each principle of the Pillar, with additional actions planned to further strengthen social rights in the EU.

With the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), the Commission has set out concrete initiatives to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights. The delivery on the Pillar is a joint effort by EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society.

2017

### PAGE CONTENTS

**Chapter I: Equal opportunities  
and access to the labour market**

**Chapter II: Fair working  
conditions**

**Chapter III: Social protection  
and inclusion**

## Chapter I: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market



### 1. Education, training and life-long learning

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.

Related Commission action: [European Skills Agenda](#)

## The benefits of the European Green Deal

The European Green Deal will improve the well-being and health of citizens and future generations by providing:



# European Policy Underpinning Micro-credentials

## The European Council Recommendation on Micro-credentials (2022)

- Micro-credentials can be used to complement and enhance education, training, lifelong learning and employability ecosystems.

## A Vision for a European Education Area 2025 (EC, 2020)

- Promoting lifelong learning and mobility by agreeing on a European approach to micro-credentials

## The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 (EC, 2020)

- Supports the work on the Digital Single Market and the New Skills Agenda for Europe (Skills for jobs in a green and digital economy through a European approach to micro-credentials).

## The EU Green Deal (EC, 2020)

- Pro-active re-skilling and upskilling are necessary to reap the benefits of the ecological transition.

## The European Pillar of Social Rights (2017)

- Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successful transitions in the labour market.



## National and EU initiatives and projects

**EBSN**

**DDS-MAP (EU4Health)**

**EU-Conexus (European  
University Alliance)**

**ALSO**

- **Micro HE**
- **MicrocredX**
- **Microbol**
- **MicroCreds (IUA)**

# Considerations for HE Lifelong Learning for Micro-credentials

Context (SETU Framework for Micro-credentials approved in May 2022 at Academic Council)

## PORTABLE/STACKABLE/VERIFIABLE.....

- Why introduce a framework for micro-credentials? Who is the target learner?
- What is the rationale (national and EU policy, learner needs etc) Is the MC for Access, Upskilling, Progression, Employability?
- How much learning is required? ie how long is a micro-credential? How does it differ from a minor or special purpose award?
- What quality assurance processes need to be put in place? High degree of flexibility and accelerated approval process
- What system/infrastructure needs to be put in place? Student Information System
- How much will they cost? What resources will be required?
- **WILL MICRO-CREDENTIALS ASSIST US IN MEETING NEW EU TARGETS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING PARTICIPATION?**

# Constitutive Elements of Micro-credentials

<b>Learner Information</b>	<b>The learner needs to be identified and records kept within the awarding body</b>
<b>Provider Information</b>	<b>Information on the provider, including country; information on the awarding body or institution, including country (if different), including a signature or seal of the provider and/or awarding body or institution</b>
<b>Micro-credential information</b>	<b>Title, date of issuance or date of assessment, verification of authenticity</b>
<b>Learning Experience</b>	<b>Learning outcomes, workload (in ECTS), assessment and form of quality assurance</b>
<b>EQF Level</b>	<b>EQF level, ISCED level &amp; subject area code</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>Form of participation in the learning activities and access requirements</b>

# SETU Micro-credential projects

**EBSN** – Erasmus+  
**EU-CONEXUS** – European  
University alliance  
DDS/MAP – **EU4Health**

# ERASMUS+ 2020

## 6 MOOCS & OERS – MICRO-CREDENTIALS



Waterford Institute of Technology  
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE



Basic Literacy



Facilitating the Learning Process



Empowering Adult Learners of Basic Skills



Approaching Digital Teaching & Learning



Digital Basic Skills Programs for Adults



Diversity & Interculturalism

Each course

EBSN

25 hours

Microcredentials

1 ECTS

8 weeks



# Choosing Instructional Design Framework

## Carpe Diem

- +Collaborative approach
- +Suited EU Development
- +Fluid
- +Blueprint for persona building
- +In house experience

Use Cases

TU Delft/ Gilly Salmon Handbook



# CARPE DIEM

6 steps towards future-orientated, student-centered LEARNING.

## 1 BLUEPRINT

Work with your team to lay out the mission statement for your course and work out what you want to achieve.



## 2 STORYBOARD

Make a visual representation of your learning, teaching and assessments. Use it to work out your schedule and how things fit together. Use the five stage model as a scaffold.



## 3 BUILD YOUR PROTOTYPE

Build your design in the online environment. Develop your e-livities and test them in a real and practical way.



## 4 REALITY CHECK

Have your colleagues test your design and collect the feedback. Test out other participants' designs.



## 5 REVIEW ADJUST

## 6 PLAN YOUR NEXT STEPS

Assess the risks involved with being able to complete the course. Ask yourself what resources you are going to need and set clear deadlines!



## Learning objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to...

## Learning activities

What actions will students perform to meet the objectives?

Discussion, case-study, exercises, group work, quiz, peer-review, etc.

## Assessment

How will students be Assessed?

MCQ  
Creative portfolio

# Collaborative Online Course Design

## 3. Storyboarding

## 2. Constructive Alignment

### Storyboard Q1 Training Course - "Online Teaching for Campus Instructors"

<b>Assimilating</b> e.g. read, watch, listen, think about, observe, review...	<b>Finding &amp; handling information</b> e.g. find, list, use, analyse, classify...	<b>Communicating</b> e.g. discuss, debate, share, collaborate, question...	<b>Producing</b> e.g. create, build, complete, refine, contribute, write, draw, design...	<b>Experiencing</b> e.g. practice, apply, mimic, explore, investigate, engage with, perform...	<b>Adapting</b> e.g. experiment, trial, improve, build on, simulate, model...	<b>Assessment</b>
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## 1. Carpe Diem Process

Co-funded by the European Union

CONTENT	TIME	RESOURCES	STATUS
<b>0. Getting started</b>			
Activity 1 <b>Text:</b> introduction about this new phase in teaching, why this course, etc.	5	Context	Éloïse
Activity 2 <b>Video:</b> agenda and instructions on how to use this course, tour of platform.	5	Student guide to Brightspace Create video screen capture	Naomi (&Neill)
Activity 3 <b>Discussion board activity:</b> Participants share their name, course, their biggest achievement, their biggest concern regarding giving their course online, and a picture of their workspace.	10	Icebreaker ideas: <a href="https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newstool102.html">https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newstool102.html</a>	Naomi (&Neill)
Activity 4 <b>Video:</b> What is online learning, differences with f2f learning. Short theoretical background, interview of teachers (2-3 from different faculties) in which they share their experiences.	10	Possible video: <a href="#">Changing role of instructor</a> Possible video: <a href="#">Designing online learning with Richard Culatta</a>	Naomi

## Micro-Credential Blueprint

**MCs 4 Units 8 Weeks 1 ECTS**

**MC Induction Welcome Video and Infographic:  
Hours, Effort, Expectations Assessment, Quizzes**

2 weeks

2 weeks

2 weeks

2 weeks

### Unit 1

Existing Welcome  
Video

Content (videos,  
blogs & text etc) c.5  
effort hours

2 x Moderated  
Discussion Forums

2 x Quiz  
5 questions each

1 x Facilitator led  
Webinar

### Unit 2

Existing Welcome  
Video

Content (videos,  
blogs & text etc) c.5  
effort hours

2 x Moderated  
Discussion Forums

2 x Quiz  
5 questions each

1 x Facilitator led  
Webinar

### Unit 3

Existing Welcome  
Video

Content (videos,  
blogs & text etc) c.5  
effort hours

2 x Moderated  
Discussion Forums

2 x Quiz  
5 questions each

### Unit 4

Existing Welcome  
Video

Content (videos,  
blogs & text etc) c.5  
effort hours

2 x Moderated  
Discussion Forums

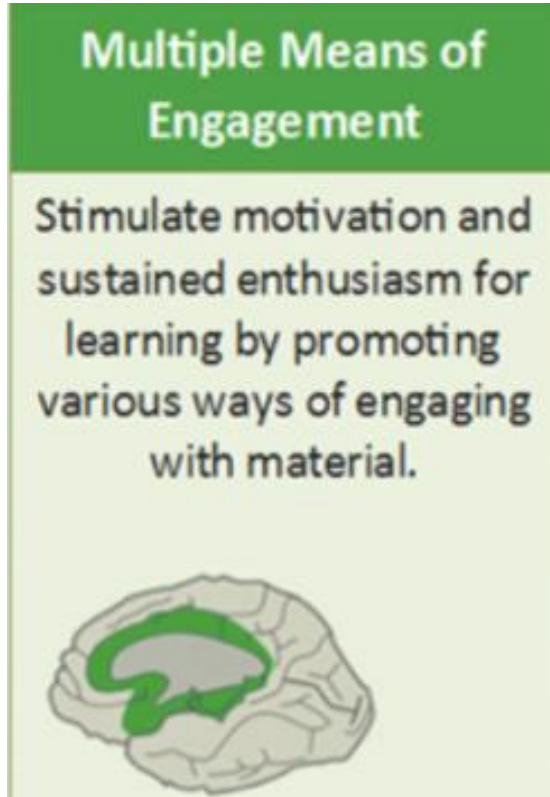
2 x Quiz  
5 questions each

1 x Facilitator led  
Webinar

**25  
Hours**



# Adopting a UDL approach to Micro-credentials




1. Interactive activities included
2. Group discussions via synchronous facilitated webinars
3. Online discussion board
4. Blogs and external resources
5. Videos with accompanying text
6. Tangible takeaways

# Practical Applications in Micro-credentials

**Multiple Means of Action/Expression**

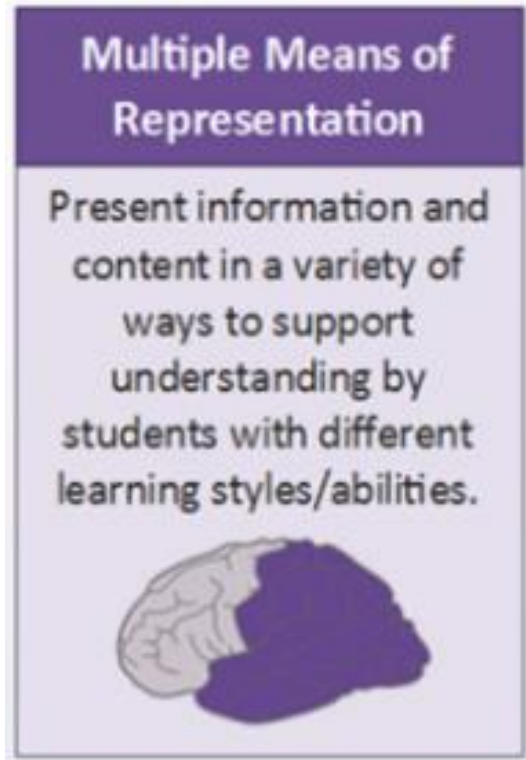
Offer options for students to demonstrate their learning in various ways (e.g. allow choice of assessment type).



1. Allowed submission via discussion fora
2. Padlet integrated for activities
3. Enabled choice in assignment format (video, audio, text)
4. Allowed autonomy in assignment approach

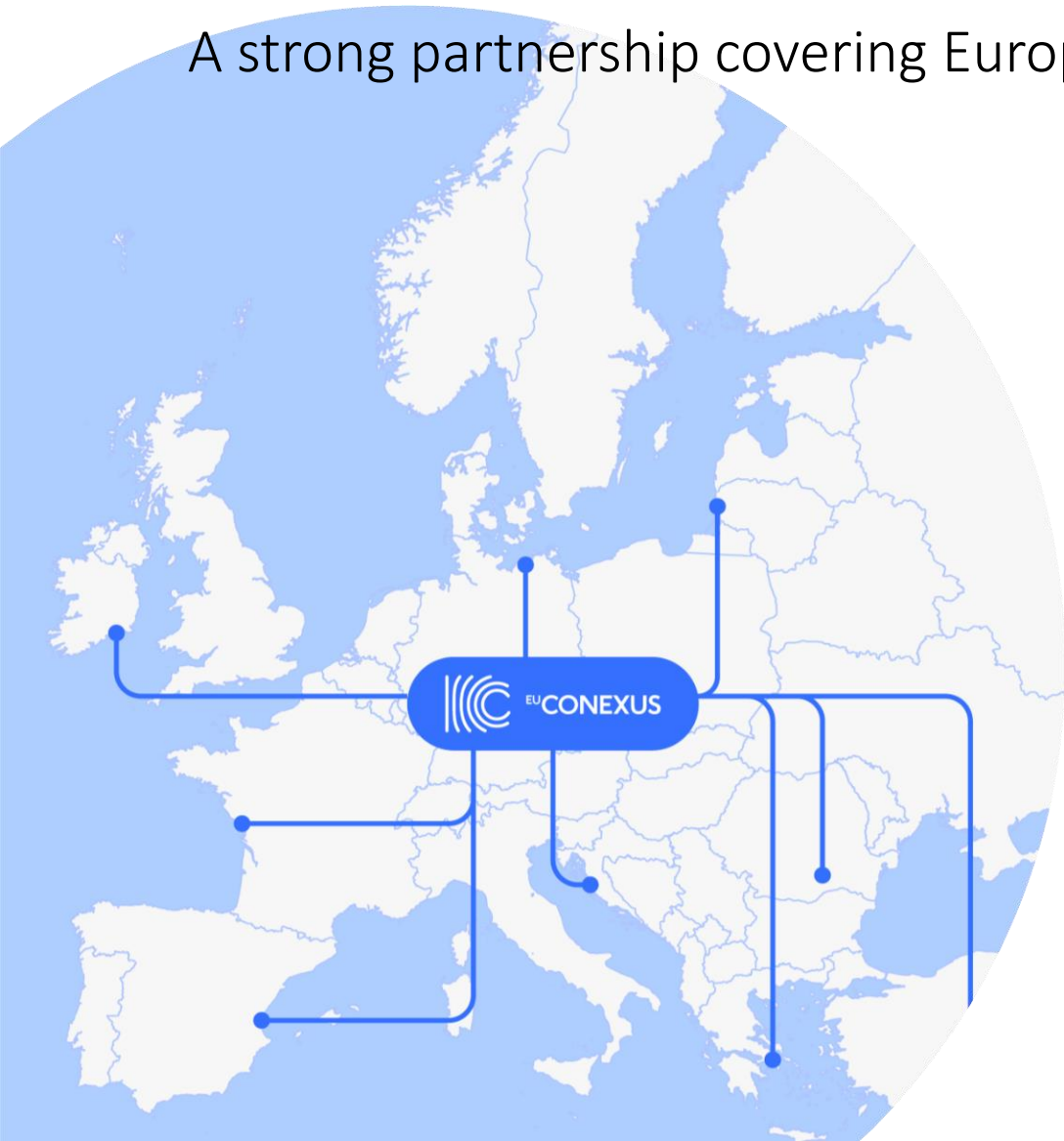


# Practical Applications in Micro-credentials



1. Captioned all videos in course - language accessibility
2. Created 'Download Spots' in every component of course
3. Created PDF & editable MS Word doc for all content: reuse, repurpose

A strong partnership covering European coasts



European University for Smart Urban  
Coastal Sustainability

Development of alliance framework  
on micro-credentials to facilitate the  
roll out and accreditation of micro-  
credentials across the 9 European  
Universities



EU-CONEXUS  
4 Year Project  
2022-2026  
EU Funded  
9 EU  
Universities

**33 Micro-credentials for  
Bachelor (UG) students**  
**20 Micro-credentials for  
Lifelong Learners**

Micro-credential Descriptor		Learning Outcome(s) / Achievement(s)	On suitable to	Entry Requirements (Ireland)	Leaving Certificate or equivalent. Applicants with 3 years work experience in the sector may use the SETU Recognition of Prior Learning process to apply to this micro-credential.		
Proposed Name	Facilitating the			Assessment / Evaluation	Assessment method	%	Outcomes assessed
Micro-credential contact in SETU	Dr Helen Murphy Ms Laura Widger				Continuous Assessment	100	1, 2
SETU School or Department	Department of			Assessment Evidence	Learners will be required to evidence their achievement of the learning outcomes by contributing to discussion forums, completing knowledge checks, engaging with the resources and utilizing the tools, technologies and techniques introduced during the micro-credential.		
Micro-credential contact(s) Email	<a href="mailto:helen.murphy@setu.ie">helen.murphy@setu.ie</a>	Description of the Learning Process	There effort • • • • The level values cultur This micro develo setting	Micro-credential Tags *	Empowering learners, adult literacy, motivating learners, innovative pedagogies, further education training, adult learners		
Delivery Method	This micro-cre learning cont Management expected to ir webinars and learning resou engage with th (live) sessions			(Keywords (skill, context, etc.))	This micro-credential has been developed by the School of Education and Lifelong Learning in SETU, and the University of Pecs, Hungary as part of Erasmus+ funded project “European Basic Skills Network Professional Development series” in partnership with the Directorate for Research, Innovation, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRILLE), Malta, Folkesuniversitetet, Norway, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) and Progress Consult, Hungary. Lead contributors in the development of this micro-credential were Mr Neill Wylie, (SETU) Dr Balazs Nemeth, Ms Edina Kovacs and Dr Krisztina Toth (University of Pecs).		
Target learners	The target lea adult and furt education tea in upskilling te			Stakeholders involved			
Micro-credential Description (rationale and target learners)	The provision digital skills) a inclusive soci economic and	ECTS credit amount	1 ECTS	Head of School or Academic Unit in SETU	Dr Helen Murphy		
		EQF Level	This m Frame and d Centre Techn (NALA Th...				



## Next steps

- **Harness learning from EU and national projects**
- **Assess how micro-credentials can be used in a meaningful way for Lifelong Learners**

**Consider:**

- **Accessibility**
- **Portability**
- **Stackability**
- **Verifiability**

**We need to review if they are meeting needs – from a learner and employer perspective in the context of Lifelong Learning**

**Monitor – Evaluate – Review and amend**



# Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning

## We need to consider:

- **How long is a MC?**
- **Are they Stackable?**
- **Are they recognised by employers?**
- **Are they Portable?**
- **How are they different to other short forms of credit based learning?**

Thank you

Questions?

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**INSPIRING FUTURES**

