MicroHE: What we have learned about digital and Micro-Credentials

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a credential is a documented statement made about a person (by another person)
Getting the Terminology Right

A learning credential is a documented statement made about a person’s learning (by another person).
Getting the Terminology Right

a **micro-credential**

is a subunit of a credential
Micro-Credentials instantiate learning which has happened at the end of a learning lifecycle.
Defining microcredentials

A system of interoperable building blocks
Micro Credentials are gaining prominence

Mariya Gabriel @GabrielMariya · May 26

🌞 citizens should be able to gain skills at any stage of their #careers.

We support higher #education institutions in offering micro-credentials - flexible & modular short #learning courses.

Today, we launch our 1st consultation group on this topic!

Micro-credentials

YUFE and 8 others
Key Features of Micro Credentials

- Modular
- Stackable
- Portable
- Digital
- Universal

www.microcredentials.eu
Key Features of Micro Credentials

- Open Access
- Standardised Unit of Measure
  - credit system
    - expressed as learning outcomes
- Small
  - (10 ECTS-equivalents max?)

ECTS-equivalent = approx. 10 hours of teaching, and 15 hours of self-motivated study
Key Features of Micro Credentials

Combining vs Stacking
Key Features of Micro Credentials

- Standardised
  - Credit system should express credit values
- Not Too Small
  - (1 ECTS equivalent min?)

Can be combined to create larger credentials

ECTS-equivalent = approx. 10 hours of teaching, and 15 hours of self-motivated study
Key Features of Micro Credentials

- student-held and transferred
  - Recognised by Different Institutions
    - To give access
    - To stack across institutions

- content is quality assured
- envelope is secured

www.microcredentials.eu
Key Features of Micro Credentials

Assuming:
- 1000 Universities
- 50 Courses per Uni

Gives:
- 50000 micro-credentials
- 2 sextillion possible combinations!
  (of 5-credential packages)
Micro-Credentials are Digital Documents:

- Earned in **any mode** but
  - Awarded digitally
  - Stacked digitally
  - Recognised digitally
Micro-Credentials are Digital Documents

- Earned in **any mode** but
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Key Features of Micro Credentials

useful in any formal or non-formal learning

• Applicable in Higher Education, VET, private training, continuing education)
• Can be used to create bridges between different learning contexts
Higher Education is already in the business of Micro-Credentials (as part of qualifications)
Results of Unbundling

Short Learning Programmes
1. Short, between 5 to 30 ECTS, average: 10-20 ECTS
2. Focus is on academic skills/programmes/competence
3. Offered mainly online; face-to-face only optional or if intrinsic part of the programme
4. Exams are taken by offering universities
5. Must be accredited, level (for example, BA/MA) needs to be mentioned
Results of Unbundling

MOU on SLPs signed by:
UniDistance, Switzerland, Università Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO, Italy, The Open University of The Netherlands, Open University of Cyprus, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Hellenic Open University, Greece, Open University of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, Universidade Aberta, Portugal, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spain, Fernuniversität in Hagen, Germany, Open University, United Kingdom, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Digital Credentials

The Case against Paper

www.microcredentials.eu
Key Features of Micro Credentials
Key Features of Micro Credentials

Introduction to Project Management Principles and Practices

A 4-course, on-demand Specialization authorized by University of California, Irvine Extension, and offered through Coursera.
Complicated Credentials are devalued

If it costs an employer more to verify a credential than to test the skills, the credential is effectively worthless.
Lack of Standards leads to Exclusion
Signing
Intermediaries charge rent
- expensive and time consuming to acquire
- hard to use and share
- hinder *Open Education* by failing to evidence flexible learning pathways in a transparent manner
- exclude the people who need them most
- can be abused by networks of intermediaries
- do not inform policy
Policy Initiatives #1

Digital Education Action Plan - Action 3 Digitally-Signed Qualifications

Storing and sharing qualifications online
9. Common European **skills data space**

The skills of its people are Europe’s strongest asset. In a global race for talent, the European education and training systems and labour markets need to quickly adapt to new and emerging skills needs. This requires high-quality data on qualifications, learning opportunities, jobs and the skill sets of people. Over the past years, the Commission has put in place a range of open standards, reference frameworks and semantic assets to increase data quality and interoperability. As announced in the Digital Education Action Plan, the Commission also developed the Europass Digital Credentials framework to issue credentials to learners in a secure and interoperable digital format.

The Commission will:

- Support Member States in the development of digital credential transformation plans and in the preparation of re-usable data-sets of qualifications and learning opportunities (2020-2022);
- Establish a governance model for the on-going management of the Europass Digital Credentials Framework in close cooperation with Member States and key stakeholders (by 2022).
MicroHE
Components of Our Project

- Understanding prevalence
- Technology standards
- Technology demonstrator
- Forecasting
Our Partners
Understanding Prevalence

HE Institutions Lack Understanding of Micro-Credentials

- Institutions are lacking practical already existing examples of Short Learning Programmes & Micro-Credentials
- Institutional chain of command missing for SLPs/Micro-Credentials (e.g. roles are unclear)
- Business model is missing and considerable share without plans to develop one
Recognition mechanisms enable Micro-Credential adoption

Our study indicated that recognition mechanisms lead to increased intention to adopt Micro-Credentials

"...MCs need to be easily accredited by accreditation agencies."

"...MCs need to be compatible with national/European qualifications frameworks."
MicroHE Metadata Standard
Main Innovations

- Qualifications, Modules and Micro-Credentials to be expressed with same vocabulary across all levels of education
- Captures Formal, Non-Formal learning using same vocabulary
- Allows for credentials of different types from different providers to be bundled into larger credentials
Evolution of Standards

Europass Learning Model

- W3C Verifiable Credentials (extended)
- MicroHE Metadata Standard (retired)
- Qualifications Metadata Schema (retired)
Technology Demonstrator

The first European issuer of blockchain-secured stackable ECTS credentials that are university and student owned, and verifiable anywhere, anytime.

GET STARTED

GET IN TOUCH
‘Self-Sovereign’ model for managing MCs

- Allows user to collect micro-credentials from different institutions in the network and save them in the same wallet
- Allows user to collect a batch of credentials and request a new credential on the basis of them from any institution within the network
- Credentials stored on the blockchain

credentify.eu
Forecasting Key Drivers for Transformation

- Flexible and Personalized offerings
- Resolving skill Mismatch
- New Learner Paradigms
- Synergies between HEIs and Employers
- Demonstrating granular competence
- Improved quick cycle education access to the disadvantaged
- Redefining Recognition
- Societal Impact
Forecasting Impacts of Micro-credentials

Drivers Facilitating Microcredential Adoption
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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You can download this presentation at:
https://www.microcredentials.eu