

MICRO-CREDENTIALS

CHALLENGE

EDUCATION AND TRAINING



SCAN CARD · 12

DESCRIPTION

Micro-credentials and short learning units are gaining popularity as flexible alternatives to traditional degree programmes. They allow learners to acquire specific skills quickly, often in cooperation with industry or public sector partners. For universities, they create new engagement opportunities with working adults, employers and local communities — but also blur the boundary between education as a public good and training as a market service.

As micro-credentials proliferate, questions emerge about quality assurance, recognition and coherence within broader learning pathways. Pressure will intensify as demand for flexible, skills-oriented learning grows.

RELEVANCE

Micro-credentials can increase access and responsiveness, but also risk fragmenting learning and undermining the value of comprehensive education.

How universities integrate micro-credentials will shape their future role in skills development and community engagement.

NEED

Universities need clear frameworks linking micro-credentials to broader educational pathways and engagement objectives. Transparency, quality standards and alignment with societal needs are essential to avoid purely demand-driven, short-term offerings.

This requires institutional decisions about how micro-credentials relate to degrees, civic learning goals and long-term educational mission. Without such integration, they may remain disconnected, market-driven offerings with limited contribution to long-term engagement.

CATEGORY

Economic · Legal

SIGNAL STRENGTH

Medium



SCANNING METHOD

Policy · Programme analysis

SOURCES

EC (2020) Micro-Credentials Approach · Council of EU (2022) Recommendation · OECD (2021) Micro-credential Innovations · Pouliou (2024) VET · UNESCO (2022) Common Definition