

WONKHE

Degrees of flexibility

The international landscape for microcredentials

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Microcredentials

RATIONALE

- Accessible learning for any stage of life
- Flexibility to fit around busy lives
- Upskilling those already in work – especially in light of fast-paced technology change
- Supporting workers to move into priority industries – typically health, engineering, sciences
- Foster industry-HE partnerships

QUESTIONS

- Student demand and the factors shaping it, especially financing
- Enabling stackability – coherence and portability
- IAG – and the potential role of AI
- Provider management: design, quality, administration, certification
- Success criteria?



Source: Unesco, 2023 [Link to paper](#)

Australia

National pilot of microcredentials: 25 providers funded by government to deliver 48 different microcredential courses to 2,500 students in health, education, engineering, information technology, natural, physical and behavioural sciences

The National Microcredentials Framework (2022) explored current practices and produced recommendations on what was needed to create a coherent and nationally consistent approach.

- Enabling but not prescriptive
- Supportive of industry and learner needs
- Accessible and transparent
- Linked to the Australian Qualifications Framework
- Linked to the Australian Core Skills Framework



A certification of assessed learning or competency with a minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) award qualification, that is, additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of an AQF award qualification”



Australian national marketplace

The Department for Education and Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) launched a national platform designed to support learners to choose the right qualification for them. [The platform:](#)

Hosted over 50 registered providers

Offered over 450 courses

Allowed potential learners to compare microcredentials by price, delivery mode, duration and credit point value, including how they stack towards larger qualifications

[Details of the Microcredentials Pilot can be found here](#)

The logo for 'microcred seeker' is displayed on a dark blue background. It features a teal icon of an open book to the left of the text. The word 'microcred' is in a bold, teal, sans-serif font, and 'seeker' is in a white, sans-serif font below it.

microcred
seeker



Ireland

The MicroCreds initiative is led by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) in partnership with 7 institutions across Ireland, funded by the Higher Education Authority.

So far the project has supported 20,000+ learners and developed more than 600 accredited microcredentials

Microcredentials carry ECTS credits (mostly 5 or 10), are internationally recognised and some are explicitly stackable towards professional diplomas or PGT degrees



MICRO CREDITS

**GAME-CHANGING
CAREER GROWTH
JUST GOT REAL**

Short, flexible & accredited courses
www.microcreds.ie

 Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

 HCI Human
Capital
Initiative

 IUA
IRISH
UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION

This project is funded by the Higher Education Authority under Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3, Innovation and Agility.



Ireland

Recognition of a learners' prior learning is built into Ireland's offer. E.g. University College Cork recognises both formal education and experiential learning to make courses more accessible

Subjects on offer with subsidies is more diverse than in Australia.

The HEA learner fee subsidy covers up to 80 per cent of course fees, so is a direct subsidy rather than England's loan-based approach

The microcreds.ie platform is transition from a time-limited project to a permanent national infrastructure



CATALOGUE / AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS / FOOD SYSTEMS

CHEESE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

 **UCC**
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

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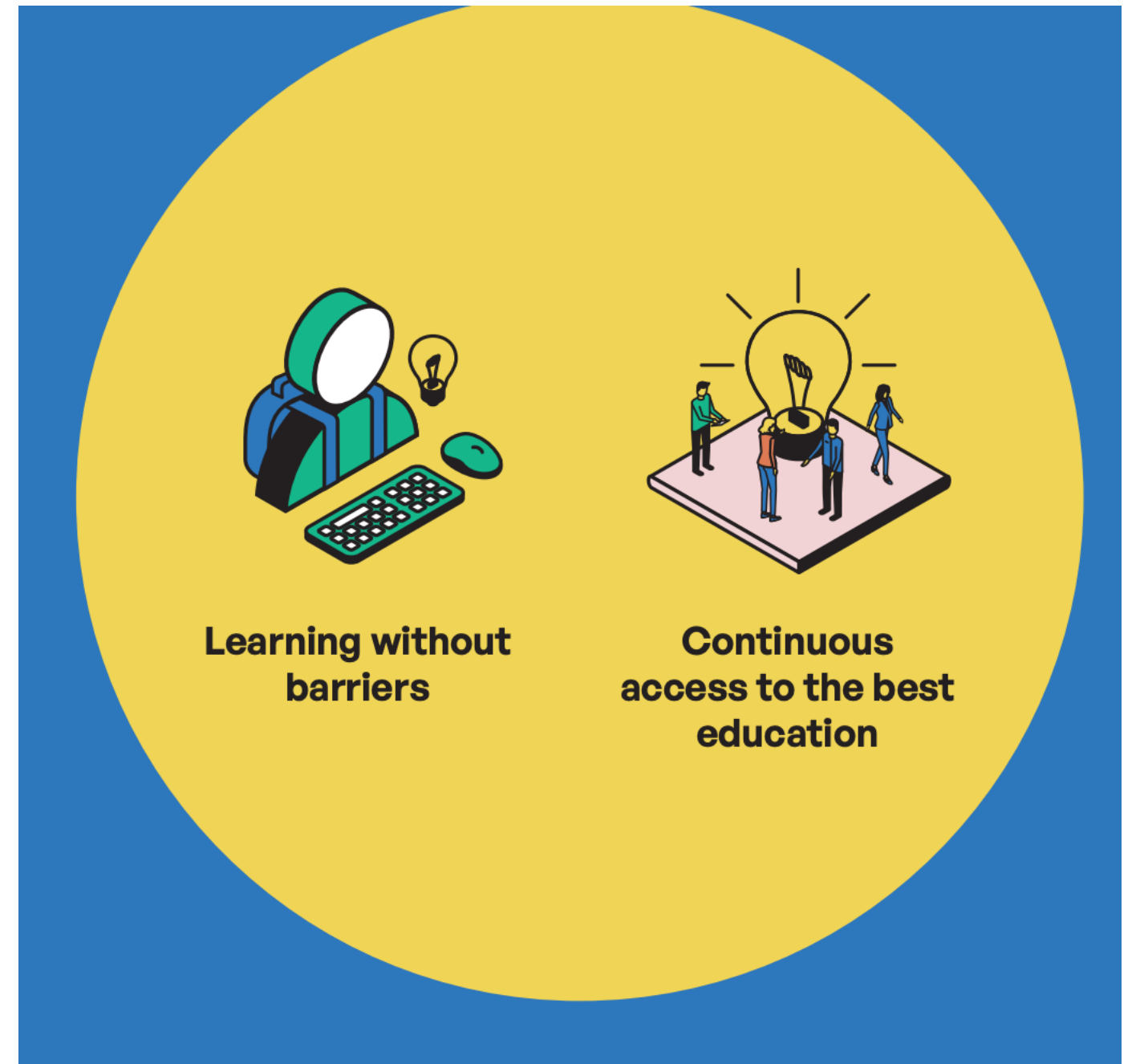
Netherlands

34 institutions (12 unis, 22 colleges) took part in the national Pilot Microcredentials since October 2021.

Credits are issued as compact digital certificates via Edubadges, a national system providing quality-marked and portable records of achievement.

The Npuls (representative body of tertiary education institutions) programme's Flexible Learning Pathways hub has set a goal that by 2030 it should be normal for people to participate in education throughout their life.

Professional bodies can design development paths across different courses and institutions with microcredentials, ensuring learning outcomes are recognised elsewhere.



Canada – regional microcredentials policies

- Ontario announced \$60m+ (CAD) for its microcredential strategy in 2023 changes to now fund eligible students to access 1,900+ microcredential programmes
- eCampus Ontario Micro-credentials Portal provides a centralized discovery platform at provincial level
- British Columbia \$5m for 35 microcredentials addressing government priorities and labour market shortages
 - No national framework
 - Inconsistent definitions across provinces
 - Limited data sharing
 - No coordinated approach to assessment or recognition so there are portability and recognition challenges



WHAT ARE MICRO-CREDENTIALS?

Industry-relevant learning opportunities for everyone.

Whether you're looking to upskill and elevate your career, explore a new career path, or broaden your learning, the Micro-credentials Portal can help you find the right micro-credentials to get you there.

- ✓ **Short**
All courses are less than 12 weeks in duration
- ✓ **Affordable**
Costs less than a degree or diploma
- ✓ **Flexible**
Options to learn where and how you want

[WATCH VIDEO >](#)

What works?

- National infrastructure and frameworks to set out what lifelong learning can and should look like
- Quality assurance frameworks
- Collaboration which allows learners to move between institutions
- Having a clear digital ecosystem that enables learners to find, compare and stack micro-credentials.
- Clear signals to employers that they can trust the credentials – i.e. standardised digital badges or consistent recognisable qualifications

