



MICRO-CREDENTIALS SCHEME

PILOT LAUNCH

www.the-bac.org/micro-credentials-scheme/



Welcome



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About BAC



**Established in 1984 by the UK government,
Department of Education and the British Council**

**Registered 'Not for Profit' social enterprise and limited
company**

**Voluntary accreditation through six different schemes
in the UK and internationally**

Independent inspectorate of technical experts

The logo for ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) consists of the lowercase letters 'enqa' in a blue, sans-serif font, followed by a small orange dot.

**European Association
for Quality Assurance
in Higher Education**

The logo for EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) features the lowercase letters 'eqar' in a blue, sans-serif font, followed by four blue diagonal lines.

**European Quality
Assurance Register for
Higher Education**

The logo for INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) features a stylized graphic of three interlocking circles in green, blue, and yellow, followed by the text 'INQAAHE' in a blue, sans-serif font.

**International Network for
Quality Assurance
Agencies in Higher
Education**

OUTLINE of the session

- What are MCs and why are they increasingly important
- Why a MC scheme for BAC; How can it benefit providers
- BAC plans for the MC Scheme
- Details of the pilot
- Characteristics of the scheme
- Standards and Indicators - MC specific + other indicators
- Outcomes/benefits from the scheme
- Q&A

WHAT ARE MICRO-CREDENTIALS

What are Micro-credentials?

- an umbrella concept to cover all instances of short (certified) portable learning which forms part of an educational environment and, hence, may fall under external quality assurance arrangements now or in the future (**micro-credential-type education in all its guises**)
- modular, portable, stackable, with flexible formats, support for re-skilling/up-skilling, contributor to Lifelong Learning, employability agendas, labour market boosters

WHAT IS NEW?

- Intensifying of funding streams proposed
- Labour market emphasis on lifelong learning
- Diversifying of learner profiles and learner motivations
- Proliferation of providers, including higher education developing MCs
- Preoccupations for recognition (stackability and portability)
- Interest of governments and agencies to consider quality assurance

⇒ **Safeguarding of student experience**

⇒ **Public reassurance**

⇒ **Comparability and consistency**

European Education Area

Quality education and training for all

[Home](#) [About EEA ▾](#) [Focus topics ▾](#) [Education levels ▾](#) [What's new? ▾](#) [Resources](#)

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Outline of the proposal

'Building Blocks'



Common definition of
micro-credentials

Standard elements

Principles for the design
and issuance of micro-
credentials

Recommendations



Development of
ecosystems for micro-
credentials

Deliver on the potential of
micro-credentials

Commission Support

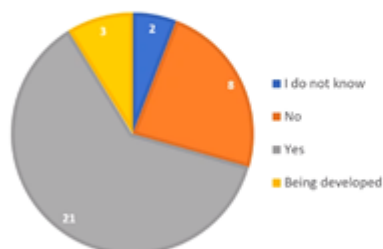
Focus



Education, training and
skills policies

Active Labour Market
Policies

Countries that offer or are developing micro-credentials



Constitutive elements

- Information on the learner: identification of the learner
- Information on the provider: information on the provider, including country; information on the awarding body institution, including country (if different), including a signature or seal of the provider and/or awarding body institution
- Information on the micro-credential: title, date of issuance or date of assessment, verification of authenticity
- Information on the learning experience: learning outcomes, workload (in ECTS, when possible), assessment and form of quality assurance
- Information on the QF level: NQF level (when possible), QF-EHEA and EQF level (if self-certified/referenced), ISCED level & subject area code, SQF level (if needed)
- Form of participation in the learning activity
- Access requirements



A micro-credential is a small volume of learning certified by a credential. In the EHEA context, it can be offered by higher education institutions or recognised by them using recognition procedures in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention or recognition of prior learning, where applicable. A micro-credential is designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills or competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials have explicitly defined learning outcomes at a QF-EHEA/NQF level, an indication of associated workload in ECTS credits, assessment methods and criteria, and are subject to quality assurance in line with the ESG.

WHY A MC SCHEME FOR THE BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

KEY CHARACTERISTICS



Why is BAC launching a MC Scheme?

- Provider base covers independent, further and higher education in UK and internationally
- Has experience with accrediting providers of short courses (not necessarily leading to certification)
- Is chairing the ENQA Working Group on the Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials

What the Scheme is?

- Voluntary, not linked to any regulatory requirements
- Open to UK and international providers of MCs
- There are no restrictions on the size or nature of the MC provision
- Applied at institutional level, for the whole of the MC provision
- Tests the robustness of the management and quality assurance arrangements for MCs
- Provider can apply before/during/after MC delivery
- Provider can change MC provision during accreditation cycle of 4 years

What the Scheme is NOT?

- Not inspecting programme by programme or course by course
- Not inspecting subject/discipline content

KEY INDICATORS



Where will the focus lie?

- Connection to lifelong learning
- Policy specificity for MC-related activities
- Recognition and stackability arrangements, if available
- Design and planning processes (if modules of larger degree, what adjustments)
- Agility in monitoring and review
- Closure triggers and their efficiency
- Transparency on prerequisites for enrolment
- Ability to cater for diverse groups of learners
- Arrangements for intense engagement with the labour market, for all MC stages
- Flexibility on staffing arrangements and appropriateness of appraisal procedures

What evidence may be requested?

- Records of interaction with industry representatives
- Policy on course/programme closures
- Agreements regarding recognition, articulation, stackability and/or internal frameworks

PILOT PHASE



How is it being rolled out?

- Pilot of 4 months, during this time fees are waived for all providers applying
- Pilot launch with stakeholders on **12 October 2022**

What are the financial arrangements after the pilot?

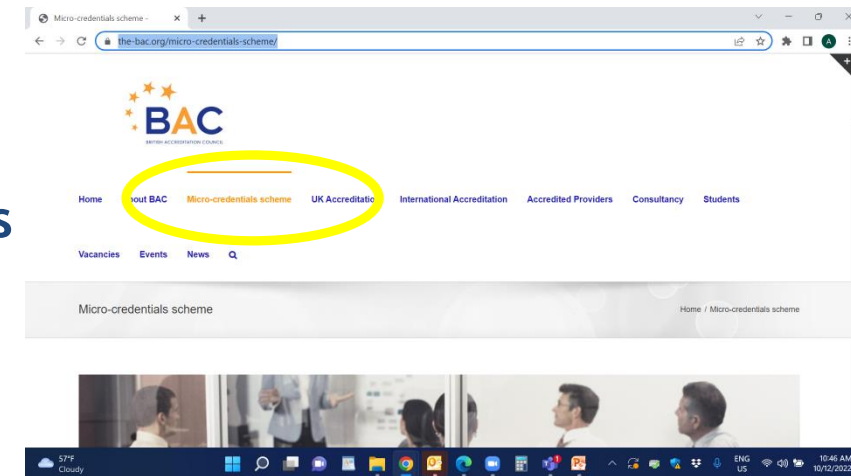
- Annual Accreditation Fee for accredited providers
- Application and inspection fees will apply for new applications

What is BAC asking providers in the pilot to do?

- More intense feedback
- Participate in focus group

What will be beyond the pilot?

- More engagement from other providers => extend provider base
- Offer scheme to national jurisdictions => carry out sector level assessments on MCs
- Propose joint arrangements with other QA agencies => partnerships and collaborations



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OPERATIONAL DETAILS OF THE MC SCHEME

Assessment of eligibility

Status of provider (e.g. BAC accredited)

The MC provision is composed of courses which meet the following characteristics:

- notional workload for the MC: 100-1000 hours;
- form of participation (online, blended, face-to-face) is identified.
- learning outcomes are explicit;
- information on recognition, articulation or stackability opportunities is provided, if relevant;
- mechanisms for the identification of the participant are applied;
- assessment types are clearly outlined;
- certification is issued on achievement of the learning outcomes;

The eligibility criteria are applicable throughout the accreditation cycle and it is the responsibility of the provider to prove that it meets the eligibility criteria.

Application + supporting documents, including self-evaluation

Legal and statutory compliance

Requirement to sign a declaration stating that the institution complies with all relevant statutory requirements in the country of operation, in connection with such matters as:

- Health and safety
- Employment law
- Copyright and Licensing
- Disability provision
- Equal opportunities
- Planning consent
- Data protection
- Public liability

The inspection

tests that the management team is capable of maintaining acceptable standards during the period of accreditation and are operating within the requirements of their local context

Depending on the details of the MC provision:

- online
- face-to-face
- desk-based components - document scrutiny
- interviews
- etc...

Report

Accreditation Committee makes a decision on accreditation

Follow-up

- Substantial changes
- Interim inspection
- Full inspection once the first accreditation cycle is complete

OPERATIONAL DETAILS



IMPORTANT!!!!

Micro-credential accreditation is valid for **four** years.

During this time a provider may choose to modify its MC provision by closing down MC courses, changing them to reflect industry trends or opening other MC courses.

Unless there are significant changes to the quality assurance arrangements for the MC provision, the provider can choose to adjust its MC provision without notifying BAC.

STANDARDS and INDICATORS

STANDARDS and INDICATORS



- Management, Staffing and Administration
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Participant support
- Facilities
- Premises and facilities in the case of face-to-face delivery

Important to consider (selection)

- 1.2 The head of the provider and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out, including in relation to the MC provision
- 1.6 The provider has a written risk management strategy relating to the delivery of MCs, which includes financial planning and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed
- 2.2 Administrative policies, procedures and systems relating to MCs are up-to-date, thorough, well-documented and effectively disseminated across the provider
- 3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of all MC staff
- 6.7 Reports on the MC provision are compiled at least annually and include the results of the provider's performance reviews, an analysis of appropriate data, and action plans that are regularly reviewed with outcomes reported to management

Important to consider (selection)

- 8.9** The academic and/or professional backgrounds and particular support needs of participants are taken into account in the planning and design of the MC course
- 9.1** The provider uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise the interaction between the provider and the participant and to enhance instructional and educational services
- 10.1** Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communication skills which allows them to deliver courses effectively
- 12.3** Feedback is given to individual participants on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery
- 14.7** A suitable policy and effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism

IN SUMMARY



Requirements

- Appropriately qualified staff
- Understanding of risk and how to manage it
- Effective administrative support and staff management
- Formal quality assurance processes to encourage continuous improvement
- Focus on the quality of the student experience and achievement
- Participants are kept safe whilst studying

Specific to MC provision (selection)

Management

1.1 The **MC management structure** is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body and there are appropriate communication channels in place between all staff.

1.3. The provider has a written statement of its **mission and goals** that guides its activities, is communicated to all stakeholders, effectively implemented and regularly reviewed and includes the rationale for delivering MCs and their integration with lifelong learning objectives.

1.5. The provider takes concrete steps towards securing recognition of its MCs which may lead to **articulation or stackability** arrangements.

1.7 The provider has a clear written policy on **MC course closures** that sets out the specific triggers and/or criteria for closing down the course

Specific to MC provision (selection)

4.2. Information on the credentials awarded is **comprehensive, accurate and up to date**, and includes details on **recognition, articulation or stackability** opportunities, as appropriate.

Recruitment and admission

5.1. Entry requirements for each MC course, including those relating to **level of language ability and/or digital literacy**, where applicable, are clearly stated in the course descriptions.

Course Performance

6.1. Policies for quality assurance cover MCs in an appropriate way and provide a **balance between agility and value for recognition**.

6.3. **External stakeholders, including industry partners**, are invited to contribute to performance assessments.

Specific to MC provision (selection)

Course management

7.2. There are established processes which enable the provider to verify that the participant who is registered on the course is the **same person who attends, completes the course and receives any course credit**.

7.5. For online or blended delivery, **synchronous and asynchronous requirements**, in terms of time and effort, are clearly detailed and provided for and effectively communicated to participants.

7.8. For online or blended delivery, there are effective arrangements in place to ensure **connectivity, accessibility and security**, and to guarantee content and delivery protection through appropriate back-up and storage.

7.9. The certificate given to participants on completion of the MC course includes the **necessary information** to enable the participant to make effective use of it in their next educational steps or their career journey.

Specific to MC provision (selection)

Planning and Design

8.1. The design of MCs is **explicitly planned** and considers features to enable the MC to deliver on the learning outcomes.

8.2. Any decision to **break a degree into stand-alone components** is supported by a clear rationale and accompanied by any necessary adjustments.

8.4. MC courses are designed, in terms of **workload and effort**, to take account of participants' likely external commitments so as to allow them to fully engage with the course and develop the required knowledge and skills

8.5. MC courses are designed with a clear view on options for **stackability and recognition**, for example by other educational providers to allow for progression opportunities and/or by industry to facilitate employment or promotions, as appropriate.

8.6. MC course materials are designed for a **specific and clearly stated level of study**.

Specific to MC provision (selection)

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

10.2. Trainers need to have a **good understanding of and strong relationships with the sector** related to the MC course they are teaching and a good knowledge of its specific practices

13.1. There are effective systems in place for **examination security and administration**, including to ID verification and examination conduct monitoring to safeguard authenticity

Facilities

16.3. The provider has suitable arrangements for the **legal use of any software or technology** for its MC delivery, including licensing and copyright.

IN SUMMARY



Requirements

- Explicit learning outcomes
- Clearly identified level of study
- Appropriate assessment, to demonstrate learning outcomes achievement
- Certificate issued with key characteristics
- Options for stackability and recognition
- Continuous engagement with industry representatives/labour market

Pilot details

Will there be a fee?

- During the pilot, there is no cost for the application and inspection process.
- There will be an annual accreditation fee for providers awarded accreditation.
- The pilot will last four months (October 2022 - January 2023)

What is the accreditation process?

There are four main stages:

- Enquiry and eligibility assessment
- Application, self-evaluation and inspection planning
- Inspection and report writing
- Accreditation Committee decision

What is BAC asking providers in the pilot to do?

- More intense feedback
- Participate in focus group

To make an enquiry
contact us at
info@the-bac.org

Or visit our website
www.the-bac.org

www.the-bac.org/micro-credentials-scheme/

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

FINALLY....



To find out more contact us at British Accreditation Council
info@the-bac.org



Thank you!

info@the-bac.org

HELPFUL LINKS



BAC Micro-credentials Scheme

www.the-bac.org/micro-credentials-scheme/

ENQA Working Group event:

<https://www.enqa.eu/events/online-dissemination-event-external-quality-assurance-of-micro-credentials-27-september-2022/>

Microbol project

<https://microcredentials.eu/about-2/microbol/>

Council of Europe

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

UNESCO

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/defining-micro-credentials-opportunities-and-challenges-shaping-educational-landscape>