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Recommendations by the MCE high level expert group on micro- credentials and programmes qualifications and the learner perspective



UNIVERSITÀ TELEMATICA
INTERNAZIONALE UNINETTUNO



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Executive Summary

The "D2.3 Recommendations by the MCE high level expert group on micro-credentials and programmes qualifications and the learner perspective" is a comprehensive exploration and analysis of the role, impact, and potential of micro-credentials (MCs) in the context of lifelong learning and professional development. Funded by the European Union, this document is a deliverable under the ERASMUS project, focusing on the validation of reports and gathering recommendations from high-level authorities to operationalize European Council recommendations on lifelong learning and employability.

The document meticulously investigates learners' motivations and preferences concerning micro-credentials, addressing a noticeable gap in understanding the learning needs associated with these new learning formats. It synthesizes findings from a systematic literature review, focus group studies, and surveys, emphasizing the learners' perspective on micro-credential formats and learning services for continuing education and professional development.

Three distinct learner profiles were identified: the Senior Expert Learner, the Senior Explorer Learner, and the Junior Starter Learner, each with unique learning needs, motivations, and preferences. The Senior Expert values practical, job market-oriented courses and certification for credibility within their occupation. The Senior Explorer is characterized by a willingness to explore new professional avenues, using educational credentials to explore new fields or embark on a reskilling process. The Junior Starter, being in the early stages of their professional journey, highly values certifications to showcase complementary skills needed for career advancement.

The document underscores the ambiguity surrounding the term "micro-credential" and emphasizes the need for clear definitions and recognition guidelines to ensure learners fully understand the offerings. It also highlights a pronounced demand for practical content not typically covered in traditional degrees and a preference for flexible, modular, and applicable learning experiences.

Several recommendations are proposed to optimize the design and implementation of micro-credentials in universities. These include active promotion of MCs, modularization and flexibility in learning pathways, establishment of systematic quality assurance procedures, consideration of diversity and inclusivity in design and delivery, collaboration with stakeholders for recognition and accreditation, exploration of diverse funding models, and incorporation of the learner's perspective to balance market demands and learner satisfaction.

In conclusion, the document provides a multifaceted approach to micro-credentials, emphasizing their potential to create an inclusive, flexible, and high-quality learning environment conducive to lifelong learning. By adopting the recommendations provided, universities can align micro-credentials with market demands, learner needs, and preferences, thereby contributing to the advancement of lifelong learning and professional development.

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Introduction

This document is a deliverable, specifically the number 2.3, developed in the frame the MCE project. Its aims are from the one hand the validation of the reports, and the results, developed within the work package 2, led by the University of Catalunya (UOC); and from the other hand, to gather recommendations from the high- level authorities’ part of the project to enable MCE’s partner institutions to better operationalize the European Council recommendations on lifelong learning and employability.

The High-Level Authorities (HLA) group is composed by leadership staff belonging from each of the MCE’s partners’ institution, and more specifically people specifically dealing with the design of institutional policy and strategy in relation to micro-credentials, and, in general, with modularization of continue education and professionalization.

Figure 1 below details the role covered by the HLA group involved.

What is your position/role at your university?

14 responses

Project manager of LL	Teacher	Dean & Professor
Vice rector of formation	No confident	
Director of the International Office	Teacher	Director Academic Affairs
Vice-rector for Quality and Innovation	International relations strategy, communications	Head of Study Quality and Development Office
Researcher	Advisor	Director labor market prospecting and analysis unit

Figure 1- High- Level Authorities representatives

To validate these results and gather the recommendations reported in this document, on September 19th, 2023, was held an online workshop, facilitated through the use of interactive tools to gather structured feedback. Before this event each participant was informed about the structure and objectives of the meeting through electronic correspondence, together with the information, each HLA invited also received the final copy of D2.1 and a ‘camera ready’ version of D2.2.

This document is drafted following the same structure of the workshop. Firstly, presents the main results of D2.1 and D2.2; secondly report on the general feedback of the HLA on the two deliverables and thirdly reports the recommendations.

D2.1 and D2.2 in summary

The primary focus of reports D2.1 and D2.2 was to investigate learners' motivations and preferences concerning micro-credentials. While extensive literature has analyzed the perspectives of providing institutions and employers, there has been a noticeable gap in understanding the learning needs and preferences associated with these new learning formats. This gap in the literature was the primary motivation for the focus group study (FG).

D2.1 Meta-research on the learner perspective on micro-credential formats and learning services for continuing education and professional development

We conducted a systematic literature review to understand the current state of the art regarding learners' perspectives on micro-credentials. Given the rapid evolution of this field, our review was limited to literature from 2018 to 2022. We employed the PRISMA approach and searched databases such as Scopus, ISI Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Due to the lack of consensus on the terminology for micro-credentials during this period, we utilized a broad range of search terms. Additionally, our colleagues and partners from the MCE Project assisted in identifying relevant papers. After a rigorous review and filtering process, 48 papers were selected for detailed analysis.

The first report emphasized that most data in the literature were collected through surveys administered during or after a micro-credential course, with a significant focus on MOOC offerings. Interestingly, the term 'micro-credentials' was infrequently used, with MOOCs being the more common terminology. The primary drivers for undertaking micro-credentials, as identified from 41% of the analyzed papers, were just-in-time needs and employability. Other motivations included curiosity (32%) and flexibility (32%). In terms of course satisfaction, learners showed a preference for online, asynchronous, and short learning experiences.

However, it's crucial to note that these preferences might be influenced by the predominant online nature of MOOCs. Furthermore, while drivers for micro-credentials were well-documented, only 4% of the reviewed publications directly assessed learners' preferences. This highlights a significant gap in the literature, suggesting the need for more comprehensive studies, possibly employing qualitative and mixed-method approaches.

D2.2 Learner preferences and expectations regarding micro-credential programmes

To facilitate data comparison across partner institutions, we designed a semi-structured interview and a survey. A total of 115 participants engaged in 26 focus group sessions, while 129 responded to the survey. Due to data anonymity, it was impossible to identify the 14 respondents who only completed the survey and not participated in the focus group sessions.

The majority of focus group participants were middle-aged learners (36-55 years old), primarily alumni of continuing education programs. The sample consisted of 69 women and 59 men, with most holding either a bachelor's (46/115) or master's degree (40/115). A significant proportion were employed (103/115), with 51 studying part-time. The majority of participants were of Spanish or Dutch nationality.

Focus Group Results

Thematic analysis of the focus group data revealed 22 primary themes. Key findings include:

1. *Familiarity with the term 'Micro-Credential'*: 70 out of 115 participants were familiar with the term, while 59 were not.
2. *Reasons for Pursuing a Micro-Credential*: The primary motivations were the pleasure of learning (93/115), job retention (76/115), and acquiring new knowledge (61/115).
3. *Factors Valued in Micro-Credentials*: Flexibility was the top factor, followed by support from teachers and peers, and university certification. Certificates from commercial entities like Microsoft or Google were less valued.
4. *Benefits of Micro-Credentials*: Key benefits included opportunities for professional development and acquiring specific knowledge and skills. Flexibility and accreditation were also highlighted.
5. *Format Preferences*: Online formats were most preferred, with a duration of 1-3 months, typically delivered on weekends and evenings.
6. *Micro-Credentials vs. VET*: The stackability of academic micro-credentials was seen as a significant advantage over VET offerings.
7. *Preferences for Micro-credentials*. It was investigated the willingness of learners to pay for a micro-credential offered by the university. Out of 115 respondents, 86 expressed a willingness to pay.

This data is noteworthy, especially considering that many participants, during focus group discussions, identified as intrinsically motivated learners. While they might not have been initially motivated by the credential itself, they expressed an interest in the potential value of such a credential in the future. They recognized the volatility of the future, understanding that they might need to reskill or upskill, and that such credentials could be pivotal in achieving those goals. It's worth noting that the credential held more value for those with an immediate need, such as presenting it to a potential employer, changing jobs, or seeking a promotion. Conversely, it was of lesser immediate value to those who were learning purely out of curiosity. In terms of payment, nearly 20% indicated a willingness to pay up to 50 euros for a micro-credential. However, only 8% of those who already held a credential expressed this willingness. As the price increased to more than 201 euros, none of the respondents without a credential were willing to pay, compared to almost 5% of those with a credential. This suggests a distribution leaning towards a higher willingness to pay among those already holding a credential. One respondent noted that while they were not concerned about course accreditation due to satisfaction with their current professional position, they acknowledged the unpredictability of life. They mentioned the potential need for a credential for future promotions, such as becoming the head of a department. Another significant factor is the role of micro-credentials in public service, where they are often considered essential for promotions.

Looking at the data was possible to categorized them and identify patterns and therefore learners' profiles mainly grouped in three educational models that cater to their specific needs (Figure 2).

 Senior routed profile Up-skilling	Senior explorer profile Re-skilling	 Junior starter profile Career starter
		
Drivers: Keep updated professionally, career advancement. Has well-defined career goals.	Drivers: Personal curiosity, exploring new topic/fields or looking to change their discipline.	Drivers: Obtain a job (sometimes the first one) in their desired occupation.
Preferences: Online, (very) short, self-paced, practical and job market oriented.	Preferences: Online, short, asynchronous modularisation (1,2,3 levels).	Preferences: Open to the idea of more hybrid MCs. Demand tutorial or Q&A sessions.
Certification: Help them promote or gain greater recognition in their current positions.	Certification: Preferable, but is not always essential. They sometimes want to try.	Certification: Are highly valued to improve their CV and be attractive for the market
Other: Flexibility and quality updated content are a priority. Not look for socializing.	Other: Connecting with renowned professors and professionals.	Other: Double intention. Complement to their formal education. Door to higher degrees.

Figure 2- Learners profiles identified in our sample

1. *Senior Expert Learner*-- The first category, named the "Senior Expert," typically has over ten years of working experience, likely having completed a degree around 2020, placing them in their mid-30s. This individual has clear professional goals, seeking recognition and promotion within their established occupation. Motivations for this learner are primarily centered around acquiring short, self-paced, practical, and job market-oriented courses. Certification is valued to the extent that it aids in establishing credibility within their occupation amongst peers. Flexibility is crucial for this category due to their busy schedules and familial commitments, and there is a pronounced preference for courses that do not necessitate socializing.

2. *Senior Explorer Learner*-- The second type of is characterized by a willingness to explore new professional avenues. These individuals are not content with their current roles and are eager to explore other paths, using educational credentials to either explore new fields or embark on a reskilling process. For the Senior Explorer, micro-credentials serve as both a testing field and a pathway to potentially secure a new occupation or role. Certification holds varying degrees of importance within this category, being particularly crucial for those undergoing a reskilling process.

3. *Junior Starter Learner* -- The third category is the "Junior Starter," individuals who have recently completed their degrees and are in the process of establishing themselves professionally. For Junior Starters, certifications are highly valued as they can showcase complementary skills needed for career advancement. The importance of certifications is more pronounced in this category compared to Senior Experts, as the latter have already established their credentials through their careers, although they seem concerned about collecting to many degrees in an overqualification detrimental to their resume.

It is, however, imperative that future research endeavors explore further into these classifications to better understand the traces of each category and to facilitate the development of a personalized offering of micro-credentials that responds to the learners needs.

Gathering of feedback and recommendations

Procedure

It was asked to the HLA group to provide their feedback in relation to respectively D2.1 and D2.2. It was asked to give a comment on each document structure; readability; sources; impacts; limits and transferability. The comments were collected in two Padlet reported respectively in the annex 1 and 2. Overall the feedback to both documents were very positive. The same mean was used to collect the HLA recommendations, together with an open discussion online.

Implications for Universities

In general, it can be retrieved from WP2 reports that there is some ambiguity surrounding the term "micro-credential". If universities choose to use this term, they must ensure clarity in its definition so that learners fully understand the offering. The primary motivations for seeking micro-credentials, as identified in our study, include personal interest and career objectives, with upskilling and improving one's current job situation being paramount. Social and academic motives played a secondary role in our sample. It's essential to emphasize that these findings are based on a small sample, and thus, cannot be generalized.

There is a pronounced demand for practical content not typically covered in traditional degrees. Many learners find that some postgraduate courses tend to reiterate undergraduate content and are overly theoretical. They express a need for practical, applicable, and timely learning. Additionally, there's a preference for flexible courses requiring up to 10 hours per week. Learners also appreciate the modularization of micro-credentials into different levels and learning pathways. While official credentials are valued, and many are willing to pay for them, there's skepticism about their recognition by other institutions or companies.

Micro-credentials hold significant potential. For them to be genuinely empowering, they must be recognized by both universities and employers. Establishing a common framework is crucial to ensure a universal understanding of what a micro-credential represents in terms of purpose and skills.

The findings suggest that universities might consider implementing different educational models to cater to these diverse learner needs. One model could maintain the traditional structure but in smaller, more flexible units with built-in pathways leading to shorter qualifications. This model would be particularly beneficial for Senior Explorers and Junior Starters. Another model could focus on offering applied, just-in-time courses that complement traditional degrees, catering primarily to Senior Experts and Junior Starters seeking career advancement.

Furthermore, the studied reported predominantly focused on populations with undergraduate and master's degrees, and there is a pressing need to explore the motivations and needs of underserved populations, including those without degrees and those more likely to be unemployed. Understanding the diverse drivers and expectations of these learners is crucial for developing appropriate educational offerings and business models.

The research carried out in WP2 identified the diverse drivers and expectations of different categories of lifelong learners. It is crucial to understand these variations to organize institutional offerings according to the needs of these diverse learner populations.

Recommendations:

1. **Promotion and Communication:**

Universities should actively promote MCs to attract diverse learner demographics and stakeholders, including employers and authorities, ensuring widespread awareness and accessibility. A targeted promotion and communication strategy can help in achieving this.

Recommendation: Universities should invest in robust marketing and outreach campaigns to raise awareness about the value and relevance of MCs among potential learners, employers, and other stakeholders

2. **Modularization and Flexibility:**

HEIs should consider the modularization of learning pathways, offering flexibility and diverse options to accommodate different learning needs and preferences. This includes creating pathways leading to diplomas and others focusing on upskilling and reskilling.

Recommendation: Universities should design MCs with flexibility in mind, allowing learners to choose pathways that best suit their needs, whether it's for upskilling, reskilling, or pursuing a diploma.

3. **Quality Assurance:**

Establishing systematic quality assurance procedures is crucial to gain the trust of learners and employers. A robust quality assurance system will validate the value and impact of MCs for individual learners and ensure the delivery of high-quality learning experiences.

Recommendation: Establish a rigorous QA system for MCs to ensure their credibility and acceptance among learners, employers, and other stakeholders

4. **Diversity and Inclusivity:**

Policies should acknowledge the diversity of learners, ensuring that the design and delivery of MCs are inclusive and cater to specific needs. This includes considering the diversity of age, learning models, sectors, and disciplines.

Recommendation: Design MCs with a focus on inclusivity, ensuring they cater to the diverse needs of learners across different age groups, disciplines, and backgrounds.

5. **Recognition and Accreditation:**

Further work is needed on the recognition of MCs by both HE providers and employers. Clear and straightforward recognition guidelines and a common framework that allows for exemptions and transferability are essential. The impact of MCs will significantly depend on the possibility to deliver them with the same accreditation standards, such as ECTS, as regular programs.

Recommendation: Collaborate with stakeholders, including employers and other educational institutions, to establish a universally accepted recognition and accreditation system for MCs.

6. Employer Engagement:

To facilitate specific policy changes, insights into employers' perspectives on the validation of learning are essential. A comprehensive understanding of employer needs and expectations will help in aligning MCs with market demands and ensuring their relevance and applicability in the professional domain.

Recommendation: Similar to the point above, it is worth collaborate with employer because is a key stakeholder of the process.

7. Funding and Business Models:

It is imperative to define clear business models or policy-based funding models for MCs. Information on funding sources, whether fully or partially state-funded, is crucial for the strategic planning and sustainability of MCs in HEIs.

Recommendation: Explore diverse funding models for MCs, including state funding, private partnerships, and learner fees, ensuring accessibility and affordability for all potential learners.

8. Learner's Perspective and Market Driven Approach:

Policies should also consider the learner's perspective, ensuring that MCs are not only market-driven but also cater to the needs and preferences of the learners. This approach will help in achieving a balance between market demands and learner satisfaction.

Recommendations: Involve students in your policy development and or invest in study that could capture their needs and preferences

These recommendations suggest a multifaceted approach, emphasizing the importance of promotion, quality assurance, diversity, recognition, employer engagement, and funding in the design and implementation of policies for micro-credentials in universities. The hope is that by adopting these recommendations, universities can create an inclusive, flexible, and high-quality learning environment beneficial to lifelong learning.

Annex I feedback on D2.1 provided by the HLA group via Padlet

Padlet

Alessandra Antonaci + 10 • 8d

MCE-HLA- Validation Lit Revj, D2.1
overall feedback

Document's structure	Readability	Sources	Impact	Limits	Transferability
<p>The structure is clear to me. I liked the visuals. Thanks for interesting presentation</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>elaborated document, easy to read, clear structure and presentation of outcomes</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>it is a contemporary topic, thus literature available is limited. But, there are substantial sources to back up the literature review</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>the paper is moving on a green field, the impact can be evaluated only if the EU and Regional Institutions will considerate it for the next policies aimed to give an institutional framework of MC in EU delivered by Accredited Universities</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>[HOU]</p> <p>Perhaps more keywords could be added to the list. As is already written in the report, sometimes one has to mine the information from the text of the paper, even if the paper focus may be different.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>Also I think the report at the end will be a great value creating policies and guidelines at EU level.</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>well structured document</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UAb</p> <p>I also agree that is easy to agree although it is written as an academic work. I.e. unclear if policy makers would have the same opinion. Something to think about having in mind other target audience than academics</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Sources are well described but I suggest mentioning keywords for selection of articles.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>[HOU]</p> <p>Because this is a comprehensive study, it can serve as a starting point for more elaborate research on more elaborate RQs. It indicates clearly the topics of such future research. It also presents definite answers to the three RQs.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUC</p> <p>novelty of the topic, not too many surveys on microcredentials, in our case, most SLPs are stand-alone modules</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>the paper indicate clearly that transferability will be the real value of a European MC framework</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>KTU</p> <p>The structure was clear, results well presented, visualized.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>easy to follow, good evidence of the main objectives of the paper, easy to individuate strength and weakness on the current situation on MC delivered by Universities</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UAb</p> <p>Agree that sources are comprehensive although we as pointed before in other meetings we need to reflect that this is an emergent topic of research and that lit review is grounded in research very much focuses in MOOC in online HEI. I expect a lot to be published in the next couple of years which may change the landscape including already the great work produced in this workpackage with learners preference which is groundbreaking</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UAb</p> <p>I believe the impact will be mainly the novelty of the research. As mentioned before we were all limited by the amount and the scope of the research published before this work was undertaken.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>hard to embrace the different target groups and motivations</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>[HOU]</p> <p>The report provides enough data to help draft a coarse policy regarding the use of MCs and I definitely plan to inform my University about it. However, the policy must be complemented with national data.</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>UNINETTUNO</p> <p>structure very functional to the goal of the paper, presented well the different perspectives of the target population</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>The document is very elaborate. The technical information on the methodology, in particular the article search was rather elaborate. However, the rest of the document could be understood without precise reading of the methodology section. The information on methodology is of course necessary in terms of substantiating the results.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>sources and references are penalised by the lake of literature on this topic, this paper can may improve from sources available for the next studies on MC</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>It is beyond the scope of this research, but the conclusions also call for research into the views of employers on microcredentials. Because this is something that learners are uncertain about. When further developing microcredentials, the employers' need and demands should be taken into account.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UAb</p> <p>As mentioned before in sources, the lit review was grounded in what was published at the time. Then it was difficult to find literature about learners preferences about MC as those were in most cases a mirage. Learners were also not very much aware of this new market. Now we have several experiences within and outside the consortium and we expect new research to be published which may contradict findings from the lit review. See for example the work presented in the first half of this session.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>Talking about transferability I would say requires another research: how micro-credential programs could be integrated into the study process taking into account the "long" training perspective (bachelor/master diploma), flexible learning pathways ect.</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>It was clear and the results are perfectly understandable</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UNED</p> <p>I agree. It was easy to read.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>[HOU]</p> <p>The method that was followed to select the sources is well described. As a result the list of sources is comprehensive and possibly exhaustive, for the time being.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UNED</p> <p>I'm not sure id the data are enough to have a high impact. Probably I cannot assess this correctly.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Anonymous 8d Since it is very much linked to existing MOOC research I am afraid that the review may be a bit influenced by how students perceived MOOC hence why I seem more value in the empirical data.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUC</p> <p>useful to ID some best practices and ideas to generate our own policies and guidelines on the subject matter</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>UAb</p> <p>I agree the structure is very clear and easy to read.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>HOU</p> <p>Well written document and easy to read.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>As I said in the feedback on readability, the process of source selection is described very well. It also showed the limited scope and volume of the literature available, which proves the need to do further research.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>It showed the need of another research on learner's perspectives to get detailed insights. In my opinion the data basis isn't sufficient for high impact.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>The field is still limited. Would be interesting to analyze / describe FLP and a micro-credentials as a part of FLP. As well as integration into study process. Also would be interesting to see the most relevant areas for micro-credential programmes.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UAb</p> <p>The real value for me will be a reflection of both reports/findings since they are complementary. That reflection will help us to start creating policy and guidelines. This reflection could be presented in a form of some sort of recommendations.</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>OUNL</p> <p>The structure of the paper was very clear to me, it was easy to understand.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>It was easy to follow</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>HOU</p> <p>Sources are comprehensive; the paper made us realize that literature in the field is limited. That's another reason why this is a very welcome report.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>Because of the limited amount of previous research, the findings and impact of the review is not very substantial, other than providing reasons to do more research.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>I agree on both comments of UNED and OUNL</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Anonymous 8d Also Agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>Inclusion criteria (language) were excluding other sources and thus impacting the results in a specific way</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>Because of the limited amount of previous research, the findings and impact of the review is not very substantial, other than providing reasons to do more research.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>nothing really comes to mind. As written in the document, most studies are on MOOCs, but this is logical considering the time frame that was chosen. It is a representation of the situation during that time.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UNED</p> <p>I'm not sure id the data are enough to have a high impact. Probably I cannot assess this correctly.</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Anonymous 8d Also Agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>Focus on MOOCs</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>nothing really comes to mind. As written in the document, most studies are on MOOCs, but this is logical considering the time frame that was chosen. It is a representation of the situation during that time.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>Focus on MOOCs</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>The interesting question of course if the findings on MOOCs are transferable to other types of learning/courses. This would require further research.</p> <p>Add comment</p>

Annex II feedback on D2.2 provided by the HLA group via Padlet

Padlet

Alessandra Antonaci • 8 • 8d

MCE- HLA Validation Focus Group study, D2.2
overall feedback

Document's structure	Readability	Methodology	Impact	Limits	transferability
<p>OUK</p> <p>well structured document</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUK</p> <p>elaborated document, easy to read, clear structure and presentation of outcomes</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUK</p> <p>Clear methodology for the surveys and the focus groups. It is a shame that we didnt have too much participants</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>The document is relevant for learner, responding the needs of the learner. But also I think there are place for the other research fields describing the different pathways of the learner.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUK</p> <p>novelty of the topic, not too many surveys on microcredentials, in our case, most SLPs are stand-alone modules</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUK</p> <p>useful to ID some best practices and ideas to generate our own policies and guidelines on the subject matter</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>UAberta</p> <p>Clear structure and easy to understand</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>The document was clear and easy to follow, but it would be easier to read if the document would be more visualized. As well in the document some information are repeated several times.</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>UAberta</p> <p>The focus group gives the chance to get more detailed and direct answers although it would gain if it had more participants</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>Like the previous document it can have a real impact for Universities in order to improve and update the educational offer following needs of students and labour market</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [UAberta] Agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>the impact can be of big value only if Institutions and policy makers will follow-up</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>Would be really valuable if the report could also give / present some views / examples / pathways how micro - credentials could be integrated in the studies.</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [UAberta] agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>KTU</p> <p>It is well-organized, with a clear introduction that sets the tone for the entire piece. It easy to follow the author's argument.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>As the previous document easy to follow</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>[HOU]</p> <p>Using focus groups to gain insight on the findings of the research is always a good idea. Having bigger participation might have been desirable, but still the number of participants can substantiate the findings. Perhaps a second round of asking the participants to comment on the outcomes could help elaborate them more.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>target groups could be more differentiate</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>Number of participants</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>[HOU]</p> <p>As I mentioned in the comments on the previous document, I plan to present the outcomes of the research to my University, so that they are taken into account in the design of our MC policy.</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>good structure</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>It was easy to follow</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>Good method to get insights on learner's perspective. It would have been nice to have a bigger number of participants</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>Results are a very valuable basis when it comes to developing a MC framework in a next step</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>It would be beneficial if there were even more focus groups, which would enable us to have an insight in differences between subgroups, such as age, nationality, economic situation etc.</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>Uninettuno</p> <p>the paper offer a good view of the shaping landscape of the HE in the near future it could be used to understand the evolution of the whole HE system in Europe</p> <p>Anonymous 8d I agree</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [KTU] Agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>OUNL</p> <p>Clear structure, easy to understand.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>Again, this paper was very clearly written. One minor detail is that the same quotes appear to have been used to underpin different motivations.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>The focus group method has delivered much more detailed insights in the motivation of learners. It is very valuable information for us.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>OUNL</p> <p>As I mentioned at the methodology section, the paper provides very relevant insight into learners' motivation. These insights are highly relevant when developing microcredentials framework.</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>KTU</p> <p>Focus groups typically involve a small number of participants, which can limit the generalizability of findings to a larger population.</p> <p>Add comment</p>	<p>FernUni</p> <p>As mentioned in the section before (Impact), it would be good to use the data to develop a valid framework on Micro-credentials</p> <p>Add comment</p>
<p>[HOU]</p> <p>The structure is clear and easy to follow; it reflects well the content of the research.</p> <p>Add comment</p>					<p>OUNL</p> <p>The findings are very relevant for distance education in general, not just for the development of microcredentials.</p> <p>Anonymous 8d [HOU] Good point</p> <p>Add comment</p>

Annex III recommendation provided by the HLA group via Padlet

:Padlet

Alessandra Antonaci + 9 + 1m

MCE- HLA- recommendations

what can be derived from the data

maybe you want to refer to a specific category used before?

title as you like

[HOU] Promotion / communication

In order to attract people to the MCs, they must be able to find out about them! The same holds for employers, authorities etc.

Add comment

Modularization

UAb - Was surprised by the lack of relevance given by students. Is this because they do not understand the concept or because we are still yet to understand how this will be made in our own countries/institutions

Add comment

Uninettuno - MC for an open university

MC have a great potential for open universities to those adults/senior who's never been able to participate and/or completed a university program. this potential of MC should be emphasized

Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree

Add comment

[KTU] Flexible learning pathways

Flexible learning pathways and how they are delivered at the institution (s) creating a different pathways for our learners including learners perspective. Some pathways could lead to the diploma, some could be adding value for the learner: upskilling, re-skilling.

Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree. Flexibility should also be a staged process and have a temporal dimension, in order to facilitate people to follow their personal path in their own pace

Add comment

OUNL- quality assurance

This is not directly said in the focus groups, but indirectly it is very important to establish the value and impact of microcredentials for the individual learner.

Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree. QA is very important. The systematic application of QA procedures will help HEIs gain the trust of learners and employers

Maria Carmen Pages Serra 8d UOC- I agree, following MC learners over time and assessing their outcomes, relative to a comparable sample of learners that has not taken MCs would be very worthwhile.

Add comment

Type of MCs

3

Maria Carmen Pages Serra 8d Need to discuss within our university whether MCs means being able to provide individual subjects with a certificate (but same contents as before) or/and provide short/very timely, specific courses, possibly complementary to the ones mentioned before.

Anonymous 8d OUNL: I my opinion it should be both.

Anonymous 8d UAb: I guess you miss the point if you do not do the latter :)

Add comment

Diversity

4

Maria Carmen Pages Serra 8d Need to consider that there are a diversity of learners and therefore one size may not fit all.

Anonymous 8d OUNL: I agree. I think it is important to focus on the main conditions, to enable us to then cater to the specific needs of different student. If you have basic quality assurance that can be used for many different types of learning courses, it would make things easier.

Anonymous 8d UAb: would be interesting to compare this though. Diversity of age and model of study will be two very interesting areas to analyse-- This before even starting to discuss other types of diversity

Anonymous 8d [HOU] Also different sectors or disciplines require different approaches in teaching and training

Add comment

FernUni - Learner's perspective

In my opinion it is absolutely necessary to also take the learner's perspective into account. MC should be market driven but need customers at the same time.

Add comment

Section 3

Recognition

UAb - We need further work on recognition as this will be key for adoption. Recognition from HE providers but also from employers

Anonymous 8d FernUni - I agree. It is very much needed to work on the awareness and recognition of MCs

Anonymous 8d OUNL: I agree. This calls for a simple and clear quality assurance system, that enables HE providers and employers to trust and accept microcredentials. That is essential to it's success.

Anonymous 8d Agree

Anonymous 8d [HOU] I agree

Add comment

OUC

More straightforward recognition guidelines for microcredentials. There is still a need to identify best practices/ guidelines on how to measure the impact to learners/participants for a) personal, b) professional development

Add comment

[KTU] Recognition

There is a need for more systematic and agreed recognition process including all stakeholders: university, business/employers

Add comment

Accreditation

In my opinion the impact of MC will depends on the possibility to deliver ECTS as the regular programs does. MC should be able to give exemptions, transferability and common framework

Add comment

Section 4

OUNL - employers

For these findings to lead to specific policy changes, I would really need to have more insights into the employers' perspective. In the research findings I see that quite some learners are uncertain as to if and how their learning is validated by employers.

Anonymous 8d [HOU] This might also call for a publicity and promotion campaign, in combination with QA

Add comment

Section 5

Funding

UAb - We need more information about who pays for the MC. We all have a system in HE that is either fully paid by the state or partially. Should we expect a similar model for MC?

Maria Carmen Pages Serra 8d I agree that defining business models or policy-based funding models for MC is a strategic priority for most HEIs right now.

Add comment

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