Chances and Challenges of Recognition Standards of Micro-credentials to increase Student Mobility

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DHBW
Baden-Wuerttemberg
Cooperative State University

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Erasmus+

Overview

1. EU4DUAL
2. *Strategy*
3. *Challenges*
4. *Chances*
5. *Discussion*

EU4DUAL - A UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE TO BUILD THE FIRST TRANSNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR DUAL EDUCATION

MISSION

To educate future generations of young Europeans through practical training based on the dual-study model of education, closely linked to companies and organizations in order to support the business transformation of European regions.

Partners

Mondragon Unibertsitatea (ES)

Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg (DE)

FH Joanneum (AU)

Savonia AUS (FI)

ESTIA Institute of Technology (FR)

John von Neumann University (HU)

PAR University College (HR)

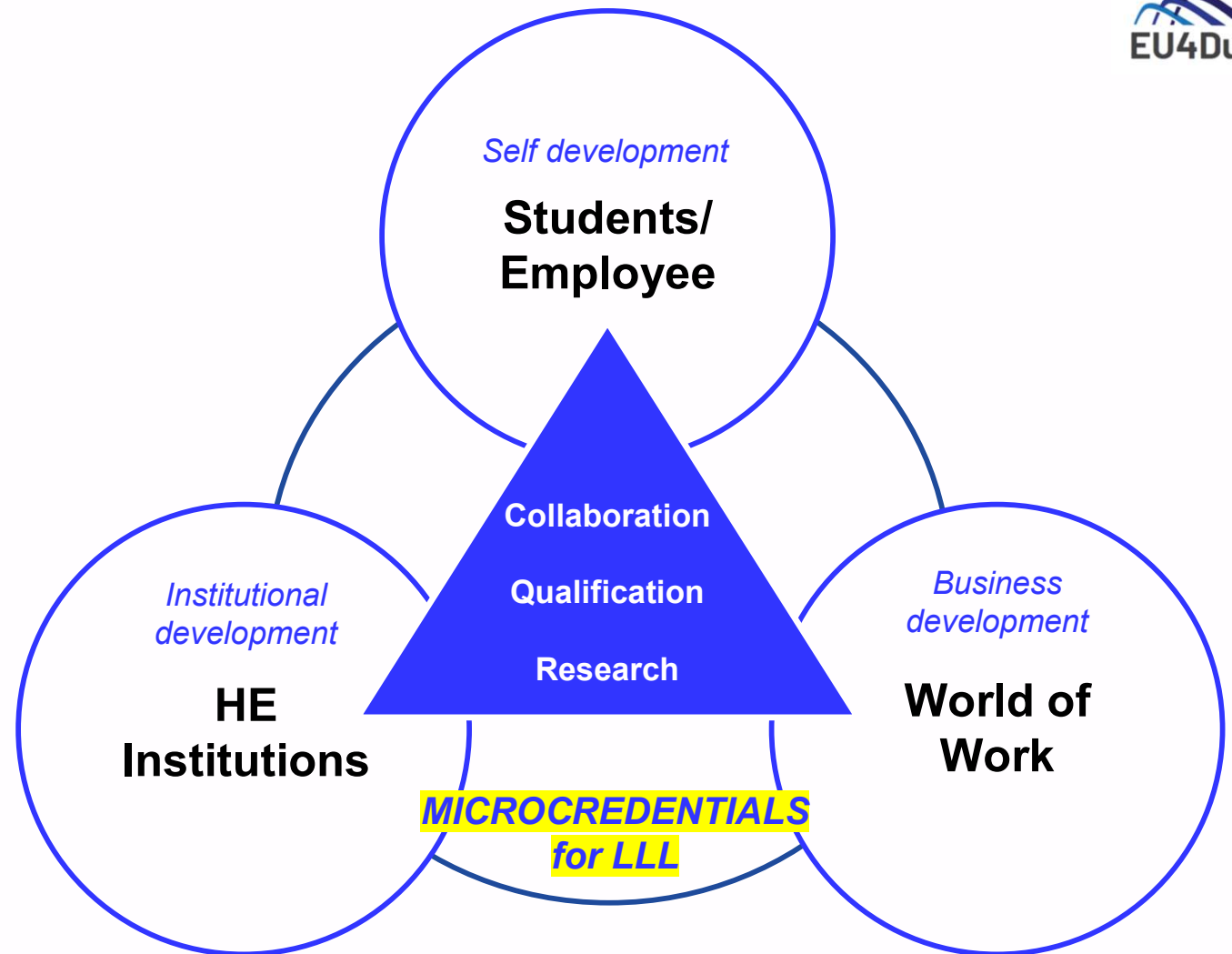Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MT)

Koszalin University of Technology (PL)

Overview

EU4Dual

*Student-centred
Skills-focused
Challenge-based*

Self development

**Students/
Employee**

*Institutional
development*

Collaboration

Qualification

Research

*Business
development*

**HE
Institutions**

**World of
Work**

**MICROCREDENTIALS
for LLL**

MC Definition – The European approach

Def.: Micro-Credentials

"A micro-credential is the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards.

Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs.

Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity."

European Commission (2021)

Recognition by World of Work

"Overall, respondents across all stakeholder categories agreed that the most important characteristics of a high-quality micro-credential was the **recognition / acceptance by employers** followed by quality assurance based on transparent quality standards; recognition by education and training organisations and recognition by national authorities. The participants considered availability in native language and their usefulness for cross-border mobility (portability) to be the least important aspects."

(European Commission 2022, p. 15)

Analysis of the Commission proposal on micro-credentials for the German education system

Strengths

- Potential for flexibilisation
- Improvement of the adaptability of the training system
- Reinforcement of lifelong learning
- Strengthening of market-oriented continuing training provision

Weaknesses

- Vague definition in the Commission proposal
- Absence of differentiation by educational sectors
- Outstanding issue of the subsidiarity of European actions

Opportunities

- Entry of institutes of higher education into the continuing training market
- Greater individualisation of continuing training provision

Threats

- Increase in the pressure for modularisation
- Financial/administrative expense
- Structural changes to the education system
- Legal certainty
- Quality assurance
- Alignment of MCs to the DQR
- Validity of existing qualifications

Figure from: Hippach-Schneider, U.; Le Mouillour, I.: Micro-credentials: a European initiative for lifelong learning – new and yet familiar (Translation from the German original: Microcredentials: eine europäische Initiative für das lebenslange Lernen – neu und doch bekannt. In: Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis – BWP 51 [2022] 3, S. 35–39 – URL: www.bwp-zeitschrift.de/dienst/veroeffentlichungen/de/bwp.php/de/bwp/show/17968)

Overview
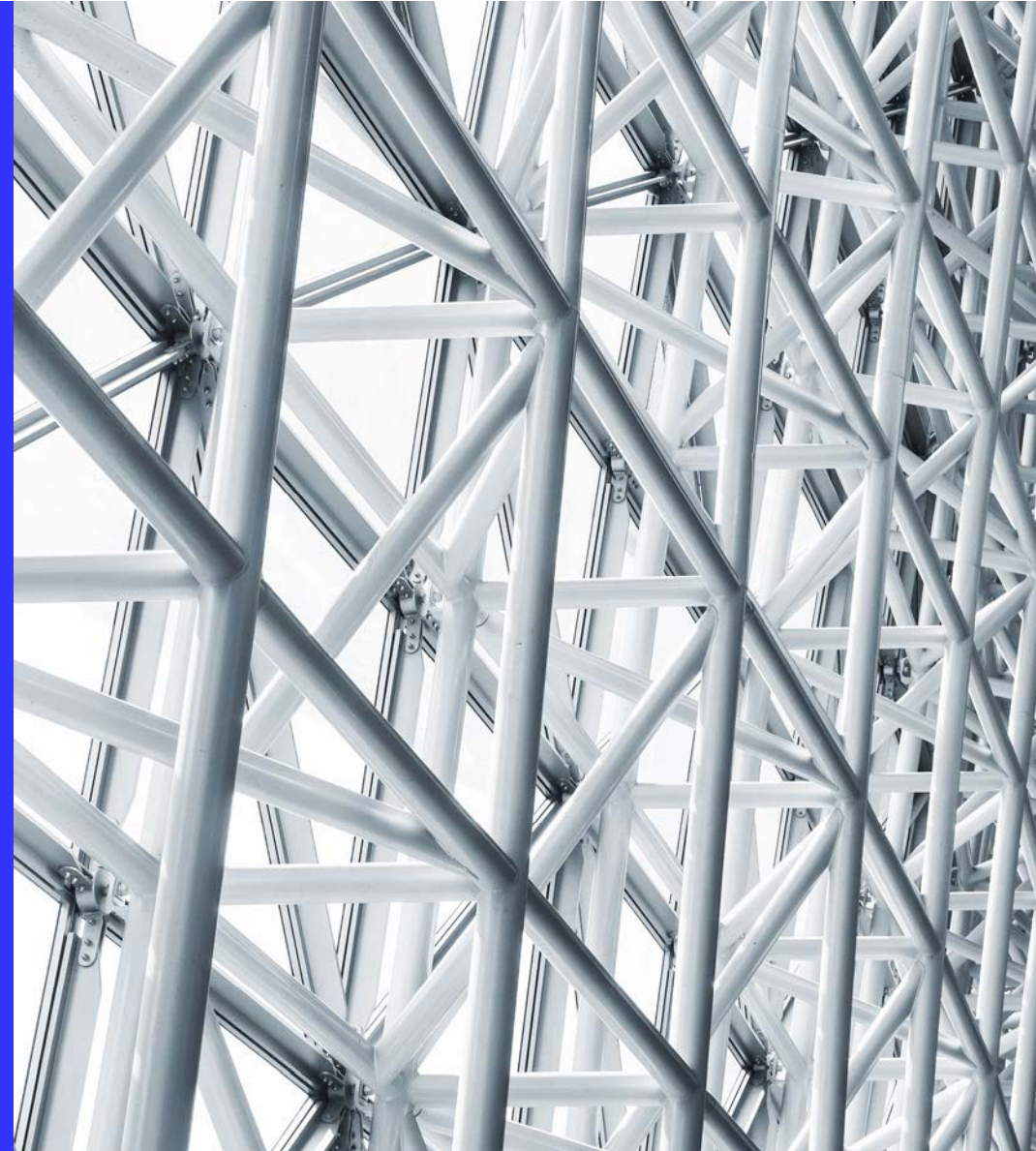
Lack of Recognition

While the Diploma Supplement provides the most crucial information about higher education degrees for international recognition purposes, there is currently no standardised way of describing micro-credentials.

The reasons for a shortage of understanding of micro-credentials and **insufficient trust** in them are due to a **lack of transparency**.

The variability of information makes it difficult for learners, employers, higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies to understand the value and content of micro-credentials and to compare them.

The result is a **lack of recognition** of micro-credentials, whether for further learning purposes or in a labour market context. Therefore, a list of critical information elements that any micro-credential must provide should be developed. This list of critical information elements would constitute an EU standard on micro-credentials.

https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/european-approach-micro-credentials-higher-education-consultation-group-output-final-report.pdf

Overview

Our Approach

Recognition standards set by a clearinghouse

Def.: Clearinghouse

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"A clearinghouse for micro-credentials is a platform that gathers and showcases verified digital badges and micro-credentials earned through various learning activities, such as online courses, workshops, and alternative educational programs.

It serves as a centralized hub that allows learners to share, store, and showcase their accomplishments and competencies, while also helping employers and institutions to identify and validate individuals' skills and knowledge."

https://microcreds.ie/ (2022)

MC Recognition Standards

Chances

Chances of recognition standards of MCs to increase student mobility

Micro-credentials present a chance to offer specialized skills and knowledge that complement traditional degrees, making graduates more competitive in the job market.

By establishing consistent recognition standards and promoting their value, micro-credentials can become a valuable tool for increasing student mobility and fostering lifelong learning.

EU4DUAL
Clearing House

All recognition processes, especially those involving non-traditional credentials, can be sped up through the use of an online database (clearing house) which

- provides comprehensive information on the qualification and credential – **transparency**,

- allows the adequate **identification of institutions** involved,

- **verifies** that **the student** presenting the credential was awarded it by the institution that they claim awarded it,

- contains a repository of all credentials earned by their owner for purposes of **accumulation and portability**.
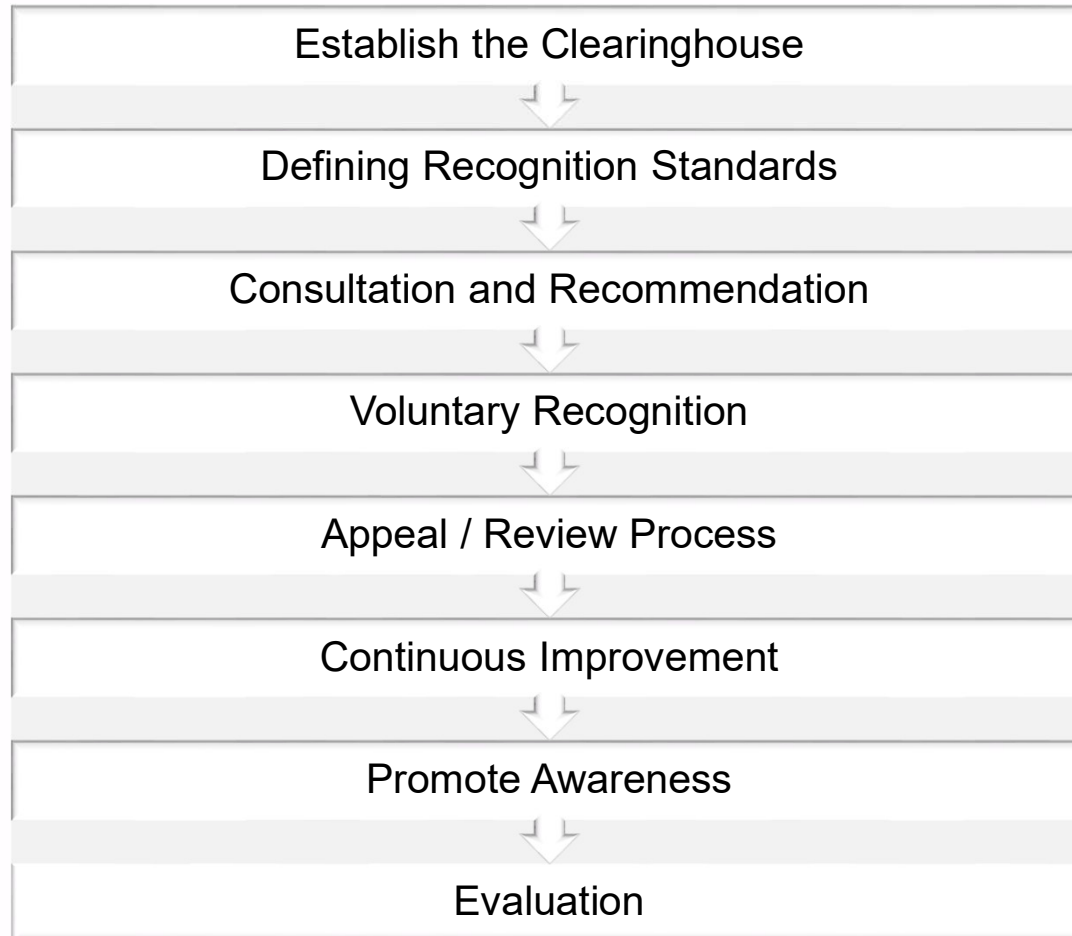
Chances for student mobility

The implementation and recognition of micro-credentials will facilitate and strengthen student mobility e.g. by short-term student mobilities, whether in person or virtually.

Summer & Winter Schools offer an opportunity to participate in highly interactive and international educational activities

Taking short courses and other forms of education resulting in micro-credentials, offered by the Alliance universities in virtual or blended learning format, can also be seen as a measure to customize student education pathways and provide them with international experience.

Greater transparency and portability of micro-credentials has immense potential for enhancing student mobility and career success.

Outlook

Recognition process

Step-by-step guide

Establish the Clearinghouse
Defining Recognition Standards
Consultation and Recommendation
Voluntary Recognition
Appeal / Review Process
Continuous Improvement
Promote Awareness
Evaluation

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Discussion

Increasing Student Mobility & Validation of Prior Learning

Questions

- *Do you know recognition standards in general?*

- *Can you describe the recognition process at your institution?*

- *How to create recognition standards of MCs?*

- *How to create recognition standards of MCs to increase student mobility?*

- *What about validation of prior learning within your institution?*

- *…*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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