Micro-credentials Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy sets out the principles and procedures for development, approval, delivery and quality assurance of the University's micro-credentials.

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to participants and prospective participants in a Macquarie University micro-credential offering.

(3) This Policy applies to all staff of Macquarie University and its controlled entities (including directors and third parties), involved in the development, approval, delivery and quality assurance of micro-credentials.

(4) This Policy does not apply to Award Courses of the University.

(5) Where the offering of a micro-credential involves an arrangement with a third party, this Policy must be read in conjunction with:

   a. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Guidance Note: Third-Party Arrangements;
   b. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (particularly clauses 1.3.6, 1.5.6, 3.1.4, 5.2.4, 5.4.2 and 6.1.3c);
   c. Australian Qualifications Framework, Standard 2.1.4; and
   d. relevant external accreditation requirements.

Section 2 - Policy

(6) A micro-credential is a certification of an individual's discrete learning and achievements. Micro-credentials are often aligned to industry or other professional needs and, in some instances, can be combined to provide credit towards formal qualifications.

(7) Micro-credentials are usually certified through assignment of a digital badge and associated information.

(8) Micro-credentials must be designed and governed according to the University's Micro-credential Framework (refer Appendix A Micro-Credential Framework).

(9) Micro-credentials are established following the submission of a business case that captures the justification. Micro-credentials are approved in accordance with the governance arrangements in Appendix A Micro-Credential Framework.

(10) Micro-credentials will usually be an open "public" offering. However, in some circumstances, micro-credentials will have restricted entry, for example an industry partner offering.

(11) A micro-credential designed and delivered with a partner must adhere to this Policy.

(12) A micro-credential must follow the approved naming convention specified in the Procedure.

(13) A micro-credential will not exceed 20 credit points (300 hours) of participant learning (formal, informal or non-formal). Micro-credentials are subject to evaluation through the University's quality assurance processes (i.e. student experience, academic quality and standards, and / or financial performance).

(14) A micro-credential can be designed as an articulation pathway to a specific Award Course.

(15) Micro-credentials completed for credit may count as formal credit in an Award Course where an articulation and / or related credit arrangement has been established.

(16) For the purposes of institutional and governmental reporting obligations, a participant in a Macquarie micro-credential does not meet the definition of an Award Student.

(17) [Appendix A Micro-Credential Framework](#) provides an overview of the University's micro-credentials, how they will be governed, potential participants, and details of the digital badges that may be assigned.

Section 3 - Procedures

(18) When designing and delivering micro-credentials, the following principles must be adhered to:

   a. a micro-credential must align with the strategic directions of the University and the relevant Faculty / Department / School / Office;
   b. a micro-credential must be financially viable, with due consideration given to development and delivery costs and other factors as appropriate to the Faculty / Department / School / Office;
   c. the duration of time required for design and approval of a micro-credential will depend on a number of factors including level of resourcing required to develop the business case and the micro-credential, and to complete the Approval Template and necessary endorsement and approval requirements;
   d. a micro-credential that is designed and / or delivered through a Third-Party Arrangement must comply with University policies and procedures;
   e. admission requirements to the micro-credential will be determined as part of the business case, including the endorsement / approval process;
   f. any recognition of Informal, Non-formal, or Formal prior learning must be consistent with University policies and procedures;
   g. the status of participants must be considered when designing a micro-credential. For example, Macquarie University Library's subscribed resources are only available to current Macquarie staff and students. This is a licence condition of these resources. As a result, micro-credential participants will not have the same access to Library eResources as current Macquarie students. Consequently, the use of open access resources to support unrestricted access to information for micro-credentials is advisable;
   h. in addition to licensing considerations, teaching material is subject to copyright considerations. Material used to teach micro-credential courses cannot be used in the same way as material used to teach Macquarie students. Australian copyright law includes a number of special exceptions and licences for the educational use of material. These are frequently relied upon by teaching staff when using other people's material to teach a course to Macquarie students. The majority of these do not apply to micro-credentials primarily because the participants are not enrolled in the same way as students undertaking an Award Course;
   i. if credit is to be awarded, learning outcomes aligned to the relevant [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) level must be developed; task(s) must be set to assure the attainment of the learning outcomes, and credit must be based on the principle of the number of indicative hours it will take for individuals to successfully complete the micro-credential. The basis for the assignment of credit is fifteen (15) indicative hours of student learning equals one (1) credit point; and
   j. a micro-credential must be delivered and administered in accordance with the requirements of the University's

[Micro-Credential Terms and Conditions](#).

(19) Micro-credentials are categorised into the following four types:

   a. micro-professional;
   b. micro-scholar;
   c. micro-extra; and
   d. micro-recognition.

(20) Details of the four types are provided in [Appendix A Micro-Credential Framework](#).

Approval

(21) The Faculty / Department / School / Office proposing the micro-credential is responsible for ensuring that the micro-credential progresses through the designated approval process including completion of the micro-credential Approval Template and development of the business case.

(22) The Faculty / Department / School / Office proposing the micro-credential is responsible for ensuring that appropriate consultation with all key and potentially impacted stakeholders is undertaken.

(23) The Approval Template must be endorsed by Head of Department / Head of School / Head of Office and approved at Faculty / Office executive level. (The Delegations of Authority currently say by Executive Dean / Managing Director).

(24) A micro-credential that has a credit point component must be endorsed by the relevant Faculty Board, prior to approval by the relevant Executive Dean / Head of Office. Each Faculty will provide a summary report on approved for-credit micro-credentials to Academic Senate via the Academic Standards and Quality Committee and the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee at least annually.

(25) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Programs and Pathways) may approve a micro-extra micro-credential for a period of up three (3) years. At the expiration of this approval, the micro-credential must be re-approved after an appropriate review and endorsement process has been completed.

(26) Any changes or amendments to the structure or delivery of a micro-scholar, micro-professional or micro-recognition micro-credential must be endorsed by the Head of Department / Head of School / Head of Office and approved at Faculty / Office executive level (i.e. by the respective Executive Dean).

(27) Amendments to micro-credential availability and offerings, unless otherwise stated in the legal contract for a Third-Party Arrangement, may be approved at Faculty / Office executive level (i.e. by the respective Executive Dean).

Naming Convention, Representation and Marketing

(28) The title of a micro-credential must unambiguously describe the nature and focus of the micro-credential.

(29) A micro-credential must not include a title currently used for a Macquarie University Award Course. A register of current micro-credential offerings will be maintained centrally in the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Portfolio.

(30) The micro-credential title must be used in all enrolment or marketing material. To avoid confusion, the micro-credential must never be identified or discussed simply as a "course".

Timing of Offering

(31) A micro-credential may be offered at any time following Head of Department / School / Office endorsement and Faculty / Office executive level approval (i.e. by the respective Executive Dean).

(32) The duration of the micro-credential offering (intake period and timeframe for completion) must be documented as part of the approval process and clearly advertised to enrolling participants.

Credentialing

(33) Participants in a micro-credential will usually receive a micro-credential digital badge / certificate upon successful completion of the micro-credential. Figure 1 Examples of Micro-credential Digital Badges shows examples of micro-credential digital badges.

(34) Each micro-credential badge must contain sufficient information to ensure that the learning the participant has achieved is appropriately described. Refer Appendix A Micro-Credential Framework for an overview of the information required for each category of micro-credential category.

Articulation to an Award Course

(35) A Macquarie University micro-credential can be designed as an articulation pathway to a specific Award Course. Approved micro-credential articulation pathways will be recorded in the Curriculum Management System (CMS).

(36) Micro-credentials from other institutions will be managed through the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Assessing Recognition of Prior Learning Applications Procedure.

Quality Assurance

(37) Quality assurance processes are in place and implemented for regular monitoring, review, evaluation and improvement (as required) of micro-credentials, including participant feedback, financial performance etc. Refer Appendix A Micro-Credential Framework.

(38) The performance of participants across different cohorts of micro-credential offerings will be examined as part of existing departmental and institutional grade moderation and cohort monitoring processes.

(39) The schedule for periodic evaluations will be determined by the relevant Executive Dean following consultation with the Head of Department.

(40) The quality assurance, administration and delivery of the micro-credential must be in accordance with the University's Micro-Credential Terms and Conditions.

(41) Any reports or recommendations from a review must be submitted to the Associate Dean, Quality and Standards and as part of quality assurance, enhancement and improvement systems and processes.

(42) The discontinuation of a micro-credential may occur after an in-cycle review of the program or as a consequence of the recommendation of a periodic review.

(43) Curriculum and Planning must be notified of any discontinuation so that any relevant Award Course notes in the Curriculum Management System (CMS) can be amended accordingly.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(44) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(45) Commonly defined terms are located in the University Glossary. The following definitions apply for the purpose of

this Policy.

a. [Australian Qualifications Framework](#) (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

b. Articulation arrangements enable students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and / or credit in a defined qualification pathway (AQF Glossary of Terminology).

c. Assessment is a process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

d. Award student is a student who is enrolled in a specific course that upon successful completion will result in a qualification.

e. Certification is the verification and authentication of a student's entitlement to a qualification.

f. Continuing professional development (CPD) is the learning that practitioners engage in to develop, maintain, broaden and enhance their professional / industry knowledge, expertise and capability. CPD is often a requirement of professional registration or accreditation and is often encouraged by employers due to the likelihood that it will develop the currency and competency of employees.

g. Course / Award Course refers to a sequence of study which leads to a higher education award.

h. Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and/or learning outcomes between different types of learning and / or Awards.

i. Credit arrangements are formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities and are about student entitlement to credit ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

j. Digital badges are digital insignia that can be stored and shared virtually to show accomplishment of learning, skills and knowledge.

k. Formal learning is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

l. Informal learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

m. Learning outcomes are the expression of the set of knowledge and skills, and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

n. Lifelong learning is the term used to describe any learning activities that are undertaken throughout life to acquire knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills within personal, civic, social and / or employment-related contexts ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

o. Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

p. Non-Award student is a student who is enrolled in a unit of study without being currently enrolled in a specific Award Course.

q. Professional learning refers to contexts requiring specialised knowledge, advanced learning, responsibility and autonomy, and requires intensive preparation through learning ([AQF Glossary of Terminology](#)).

r. Qualification is the result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF.

s. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit.

t. Third-Party Arrangement is an arrangement made with another party (in Australia or overseas) to deliver some or all of a higher education course. ([Guidance Note: Third-Party Arrangements](#)).

u. Volume of learning is a measure which identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular micro-credential. For micro-credentials, it is expressed in hours.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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