

# Quality Assurance of Micro-Credentials in the European Context

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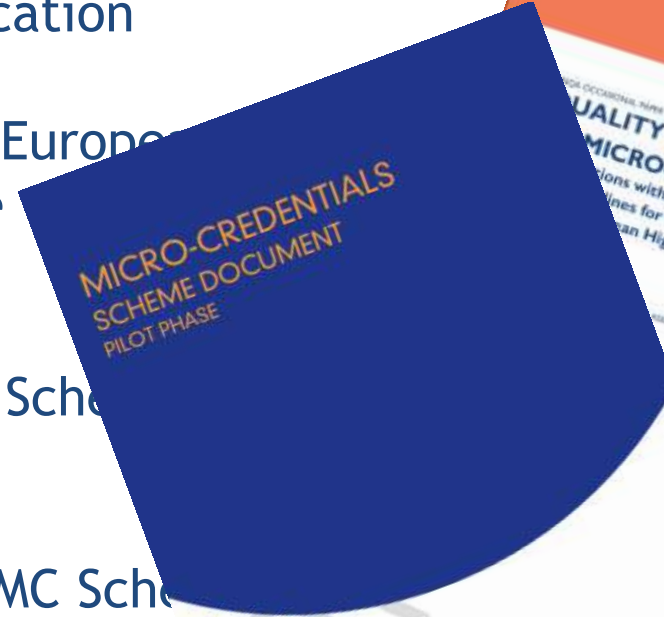
# OBJECTIVES of the presentation today

## Chair of the Working Group on the Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

- offer detail regarding quality assurance in the European context
- highlight aspects reflected in European debate
- outline key recommendations formulated

## Lead designer of Micro-credentials Accreditation Scheme

- rationale of the MC Scheme
- specificities of the external quality assurance MC Scheme
- profile of providers who are engaging with the MC Scheme



# SHORT COURSES ARE NOT NEW!!!

enqa.



## What is new?

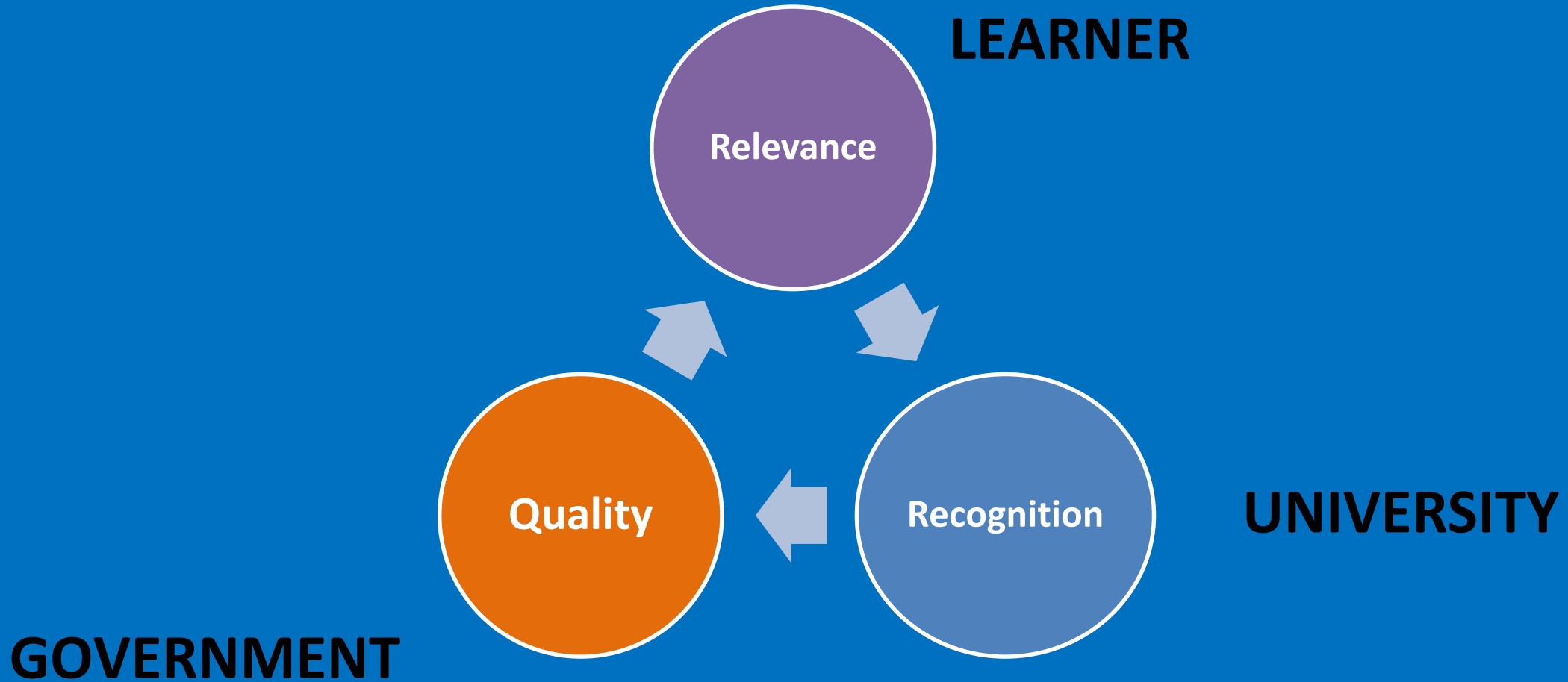
- Intensifying of funding streams proposed
- Labour market emphasis on lifelong learning
- Diversifying of learner profiles and learner motivations
- Proliferation of providers, including higher education developing MCs
- Preoccupations for recognition (stackability and portability)
- Interest of governments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

# Difference between Short Courses and Micro-credentials ????????????????



Short Courses	Micro-credentials
<p><b>Purposes:</b> reskilling and upskilling</p>	<p><b>Purposes:</b> reskilling and upskilling stackability, recognition</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Relevance</b></p>
<p><b>Design:</b> objectives; content description; certificate of attendance</p>	<p><b>Design:</b> learning outcomes; level of study robust assessments; certificate of achievement; award of ECTS</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Recognition</b></p> <p>labour market involvement identity validation clarity on recognition options clarity on stackability options closure triggers expiry date</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Quality</b></p>

# Where does the interest lie?



# The Role of Universities

- applying flexibility and promoting modularisation
- collaborating with the labour market
  - ➔ **non-HE providers** (agile, less bureaucratic)
- quantifying learning and communicating achievement
- offering recognition, articulation and stackability
  - ➔ **HE providers** (more transparent, more standardised)

# ENQA Working Group on Micro-credentials



## Membership

Chair: Prof Anca Greere, British Accreditation Council, UK

Members: 18 agencies from 12 countries

Italy, Spain, Turkey, Germany, Sweden,  
Cyprus, Austria, Finland, Belgium, Latvia,  
Portugal, the Netherlands



## Objectives

- to map quality assurance approaches for micro-credentials across the EHEA (focus on the role of external QA and QA agencies);
- to determine specific external quality assurance expectations for micro-credentials;
- to consider ESG applicability in quality assuring micro-credentials;
- to develop guidance on key considerations of quality assurance for micro-credentials

# Situation in Europe

64 responses from QA agencies in the EHEA

≈ 1/3 YES + DEVELOPING

≈ 1/2 FOR FUTURE

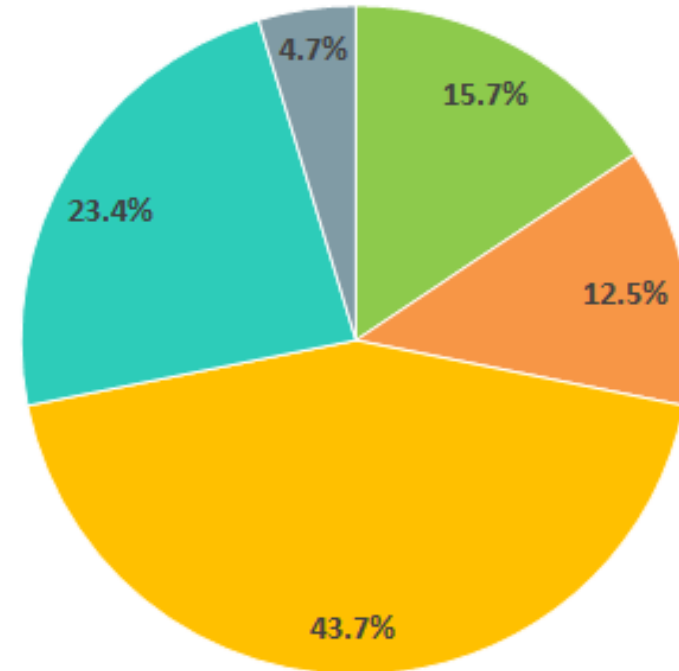
## What does the YES/DEVELOPING mean?

- reliance on internal QA structure
- component of institutional review (sampling)
- comparable to programme review
- specific methodology for MCs

## Why YES/DEVELOPING?

- ... regulatory

Does your agency/organisation currently quality assure MC?



- YES
- NOT currently, but approach is being developed
- NOT currently, but intended to in the future
- NO and not intending to
- Don't Know



# ENQA WG Overarching Recommendations



- Mission and vision to integrate LLI (and other activities) MCs)
- Clear responsibilities MCs
- Policies to coordinate activities
- Professional collaboration
- Recognition of external activities
- Labour market involvement in QA processes
- Internal quality assurance to be more frequent or take different approaches
- Ongoing adjustments need to maintain currency
- Closure triggers need to be explicit (“shelf-life” limited)

Is what we have sufficient?  
**How do we protect our resources?**  
Do we need more?





**A VOLUNTARY  
ACCREDITATION SCHEME  
FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS  
(PILOT)**

**(ЫГОЛ)**

<https://www.the-bac.org/micro-credentials-pilot-scheme/>

MICRO-CREDENTIALS  
SCHEME DOCUMENT  
PILOT PHASE

British Accreditation Council  
Voluntary Accreditation for  
Education Institutions



1.4. The mission, goals and strategy emphasise the **importance of collaborations and partnerships, that have undergone rigorous due diligence** and can effectively support the recognition and stackability aims of MCs.

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.

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.

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

8.2. **Any decision to break a degree into standalone components is supported by a clear rationale and accompanied by any necessary adjustments** (i.e. planning and design)

# FOR THE FUTURE



- **More** thinking on integration of LLL
- **More** effort into models for recognition and stackability
- **More** consideration of dynamics between various types of providers
- **More** agility, flexibility, personalisation and individualisation of quality assurance
- **(Maybe) more** visionary approaches for quality assurance agency collaborations
- ...



...more, more, more...

# THANK YOU!

The logo for ENQA (European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies) is displayed in a large, blue, lowercase font.