

The European Digital Credentials Framework and its Use in Practice

PLA on micro-credentials

12 December 2022

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Policy context: European Higher Education Area



Micro-credentials
«We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tools».

Digitalisation
«Digital solutions will facilitate secure, efficient and transparent exchange of data. Joint digital approaches to enhance recognition, quality assurance and mobility are needed».

Ethics
«We reaffirm our commitment to fostering ethics, transparency and integrity [...] and note that the CoE's Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)».



Source: <https://microcredentials.eu>

Reference documents:

- The Survey Report on 'Micro-credentials and Bologna Key Commitments, State of play in the European Higher Education Area'
- Joint Document with Recommendations from the MICROBOL project on QF and ECTS, Recognition and Quality Assurance
- Common European framework for microcredential



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

MicroBOL - Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments

Certificates for micro-credentials can be awarded in many formats. **Digital and digitally signed credentials can facilitate portability, transparency, reliability of information and verification of authenticity**, and as such support a fast and fair recognition process and facilitate stackability.

Micro-credentials should ideally be provided in digital format, according to linked open data and interoperability best practices, and in line with international standard for privacy and data protection, ensuring that the learner has control over what they wish to share and for how long.

(Common [Framework for Micro-credentials](#) in the EHEA - March 2022)

TPG B Work Plan

Thematic orientations (in order of priorities according to TPGB members)

Optimising the potential of digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement.

Recognition of alternative pathways.

Achieving automatic recognition.

Establishing the distribution of work and responsibilities.

Ensuring the fair recognition of qualifications held by refugees.

Establishing the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC.

Transversal sub-topics

Cooperation with higher education institutions.

Synergies with relevant initiatives (EU-funded projects, Bologna Process activities).

Cooperation with the other TPGs.

Work in progress:
Publication on **micro-credentials** and recognition targeted to HEIs in cooperation with other TPGs



Materials available on [EHEA](#) website





Source: www.coe.int

Aim: To assist Council of Europe member states in countering education fraud and promoting and supporting ethics, transparency and integrity in education, thereby assisting them in ensuring the right to education for all learners.

Reference link:

- [Text of the recommendation](#)
- [Article on University World News](#)

Recommendation on Countering Education Fraud

12 Use of digital solutions

Member States should take all necessary measures to **ensure the accessibility and integrity of data relating to students, qualifications and awards through digital solutions** compliant with privacy laws, including secure digital records for students' use and secure document exchange. Wherever technically possible, they should also provide services for **verifying the authenticity of diplomas and professional certificates** that are simple, accessible and multilingual.

Member States should explore the potential of existing digital tools and, where possible, adopt new technologies with the aim of eradicating all forms of education fraud and the activities of fraudulent education service providers.

Adopted by the **Committee of Ministers** of the Council of Europe on 13 July 2022

Initiatives at a global scale

➤ UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education

States Parties commit to adopting measures to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practices regarding higher education qualifications by encouraging the use of contemporary technologies and networking activities among States Parties (art. III.8)

(adopted in 2019)



The infographic features a young man with curly hair and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans, sitting cross-legged on a globe of the Earth. He is holding a yellow folder. The background is dark blue with several circular icons representing education, such as a graduation cap, a diploma, and a globe. The UNESCO logo is in the top right corner. The text is arranged in a vertical stack on the right side of the image.

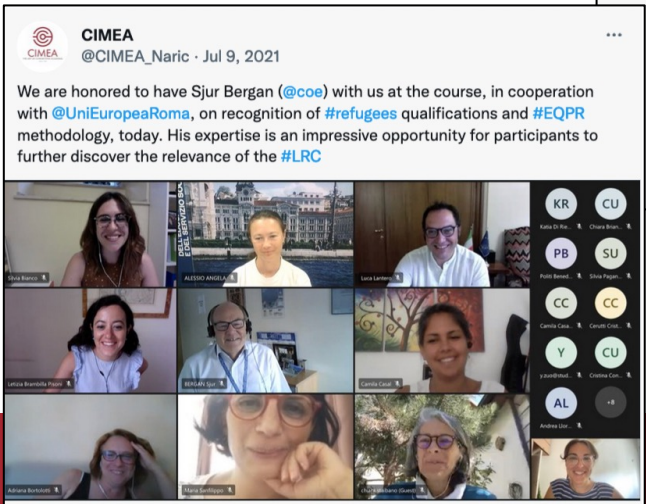
**More than
5 million students
globally are
studying abroad
today**

#HigherEducation

Ebtikar/Shutterstock.com

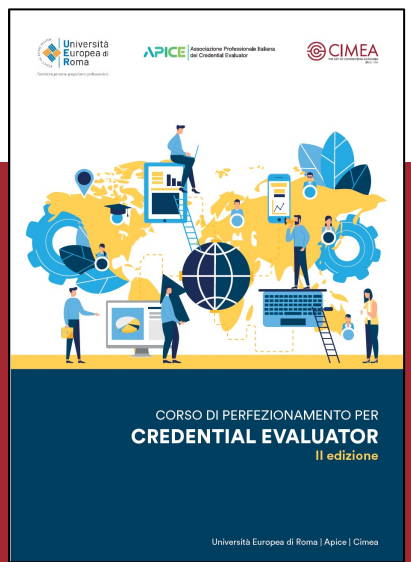
Source: www.unesco.org

A country example: microcredentials for credential evaluators in Italy (2020, 2021, 2022)



- ✓ Scope: to gain advanced professional skills in the management and resolution of problems arising from the evaluation of qualifications and recognition procedures
- ✓ around 120 participants coming mainly from students offices and international relations offices of Italian HEIs
- ✓ A way to build awareness and to push the recognition of micro-credentials in the HE sector

First micro-credentials for credential evaluators
 Joint initiative of CIMEA with Università Europea di Roma



Microcredentials: university certificate for credential evaluators

- Digitalization of credentials supports recognition, as it enables portability, transparency and reliability of information and verification of authenticity.
- CIMEA micro-credentials are registered in the Diplome blockchain service.



To conclude: why joint approaches are needed / 1

"Joint digital approaches to enhance recognition, quality assurance and mobility are needed" (Rome communiqué, 2020).

- **Cooperation** within HEIs at international level to co-construct micro-credentials, but also within higher education, other public authorities, the other sector of society, and the labour market at international level but also within the same system.
- **Build a common ontology.** Joint initiatives support exchange of practices, models, principles and criteria, serving as a basis for interoperability, transparency, and mutual understanding.

To conclude: why joint approaches are needed / 2

- **Connecting the dots:** European Digital Credentials Framework can serve as a basis to create dialogue, links and synergies among existing initiatives (DEQAR database, EBSI, etc.), with the final aim to better serve mobility of graduates.
- **Transparency** and information provision: transparent information provision is key to support recognition of all higher education qualifications, and micro-credentials as well. EDC framework can support dialogue to provide clear and consistent information regarding qualifications, certificates, micro-credentials, and in this sense in a way acting as a kind of boost for Bologna tools.



**International Peer Learning Activity:
Micro-credentials – implementing council recommendation and
digital credential frameworks**

Monday, 12th of December 2022, 09:00 – 16:00

**University of Innsbruck, Kaiser-Leopold-Saal
Karl-Rahner-Platz 3, 2nd floor, room 203, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria**

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Bologna Rome Communiqué 2020

Thanks!



Source: www.uibk.ac.at