

Micro-credentials Validation Process

Context

‘Micro-credential’ means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. The related learning outcomes are assessed using transparent and clearly defined criteria. Micro-credentials can be shared and are portable, whether as standalone achievements or components of larger credentials, e.g., major, or non-major awards. They are often focused on developing employability skills and competencies tailored to societal, personal, cultural, or labour market needs. Nonetheless, they offer desirable flexibility and adaptability for addressing emerging skills needs. The perceived relevance, affordability, and adaptability with capability to facilitate just-in-time training, make them attractive to both learners and employers alike, as they are more likely to be completed.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the guidelines and procedures relating to validation of TU Dublin Micro-credential programmes. Such programmes will lead to a TU Dublin Micro-credential Record.

Scope

A TU Dublin Micro-credential shall bear the following characteristics:

1. Be of 5, 10 or 15 ECTS credits.
2. Do not lead to a formal award on the NFQ.
3. Align to the appropriate NFQ Level, i.e., Level 6, 7, 8 and 9, whereby the NFQ only facilitates possible *Stacking* and for *Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPL)* of competences claimed.
4. Validated through formal *Faculty Approval Processes* with the responsibility for such validation resting wholly with the proposing school, with Approval by the Faculty Board as recommended by its Faculty Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (FAQEC). The validation report will be subsequently noted at the University (UPB).
5. For purposes of academic rigour, the approved and published process provided for [Validation of Programmes under 30 ECTS Credit](#) shall be adopted as Guide, with minor adjustments aimed at achieving process agility and responsiveness to time-bound market demands on development and offering of such programmes (See flexibility details under [Approval Process](#) below).
6. Any schools developing and offering Micro-credentials will seek opportunities for *Stackable Micro-credentials* that lead to formal qualifications across the School, Faculty or University.
7. Schools developing and offering Micro-credentials will aim to provide commensurate RPL within programmes, leading to formal awards on the NFQ.

Special Requirements for Validation of Micro-credentials

Design of Micro-credentials should aim to embody the TU Dublin vision, values, and strategy, by placing emphases on actioning the equity, digital education and sustainability agendas to support students to become effective life-wide learners and responsible global citizens by demonstrating the following (among others):

1. *Identification of skills need*:- evidence of engagement with relevant external partners and the identification of current/anticipated skills gaps, personal, societal and/or labour market needs.
2. *Collaborative partners*:- evidence of a collaborative approach to MC (Micro Credential) design involving appropriate partners, e.g., in the co-design, resource curation, contribution to or endorsement of course content.
3. *Industry approved*:- evidence of alignment to agreed institutional standards, National Quality Frameworks and, where appropriate, recognized within relevant CPD Professional frameworks.
4. *Learner tailored design*:- evidence of an inclusive structured design approach in flexibility of provision, modality, pace and supported personal skills development within different learner pathways.
5. *Authentic learning tasks*:- evidence of the inclusion of meaningful online and/or workplace tasks modelling processes that reflect the application of knowledge or skills within professional contexts.
6. *Authentic Assessments*:- evidence of constructively aligned challenging assessment tasks to support and evidence the development of specific personal attributes, capabilities, and professional skills.
7. *Micro-credentials should enable community of learning*:- where possible there should be opportunities for peer learning.

Validation Process

Whereas TU Dublin's Micro-credentials programmes do not lead to qualifications on the NFQ, they shall be assigned ECTS Credits. The validation process is as outlined below:

1. Micro-credential Programme Proposal Form

The first stage in the development a Micro-credential programme is the completion of the Micro-credential Programme Proposal Form (MCPF), consideration and recommendation by the Faculty AQEC, and subsequent approval by the Faculty Board.

2. Design and Development of a Micro-Credential Programme

To minimise the time required to develop and rollout of Micro-credential programmes, the school can submit the programme document (module descriptor) at the same time as the MCPF.

3. Approval Process

- 3.1 The Faculty Board shall be wholly responsible for the validation of Micro-credential programmes.
- 3.2 The Head of School or nominee submits the approved module descriptor from the Programme and Module Catalogue and a narrative of how the *Special Requirements for*

Validation of Micro-credentials have been addressed, and the MCPF to the Faculty Head of Teaching and Learning who will manage the validation process.

3.3 Decision on the necessity to convene a validation panel or otherwise, shall rest with the Faculty AQEC and the Faculty Board:

3.3.1 If decision is taken to establish a validation panel, the Faculty Board or Faculty AQEC shall determine the membership as appropriate.

3.3.2 If the Faculty Board does not establish a validation panel, the Faculty AQEC at its discretion, may undertake the task or establish a special purpose sub-committee to assume the responsibility of evaluating the Micro-credential and make its recommendation to the Faculty Board.

3.4 The validation panel or the Faculty AQEC will submit a Validation Report, per the prescribed *Micro-credentials Validation Report Template* to the Faculty Board for approval per section 4 below.

4. Consideration by Faculty Board

In considering the validation report for approval, Faculty Board shall make one of the following possible decisions:

1. Approve the Micro-credential as submitted, without amendment.
2. Approve the Micro-credential, subject to Minor Amendments/Editorial Changes and any additional recommendations for consideration.

Note: recommendations shall be attached where it is considered that the programme would benefit from changes, or from a review of certain aspects of the programme over a period, with additional changes made if necessary. While such recommendations shall be advisory in nature, there is an expectation that all recommendations are responded to appropriately and acted upon in a timely manner.

3. Approve the Micro-credential subject to the fulfilment of specified *Conditions*. Recommendations for consideration may also be attached.

Note: *Conditions* shall be attached where it is considered that changes must be made to the Micro-credential or its documentation prior to the commencement of delivery. *Conditions* shall be set where issues are identified that relate directly to academic standard or misalignment to appropriate university regulations or procedures. Conditions should clear on the requisite amendments to address them.

A new Micro-credential cannot go forward to Faculty Board for approval unless a response to the *Validation Report* is submitted with revised documentation, and confirmation by the Faculty AQEC that all *Conditions* have been adequately addressed.

4. Not to approve the programme, and appropriate reasons duly communicated to the proposing school.

5. Noting by University Programmes Board

When noting the validation of Micro-credentials, the University Programmes Board (UPB) will also ensure that the underpinning validation process was appropriate.