

# Micro-credentials and Short Courses Policy

## Fact box

- **Policy owner:** Director, Learning and Teaching
- **Policy category:** Academic: Course Development
- **Policy status:** Approved
- **Approval body:** Academic Board
- **Endorsement body:** Learning & Teaching Committee
- **Related policies:**
  - [Admissions Policy](#)
  - [Assessment Policy](#)
  - [Course Progression Policy](#)
  - [Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)
  - [Higher Education Monitoring and Moderation of Grades Policy](#)
  - [Validation Policy](#)
- **Last amended:** 29th Nov. 2024
- **Relevant HESF:**

## Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to outline broad guiding principles in relation to the development, accreditation, delivery, assessment, issuance, quality assurance, and governance of Alphacrucis University College (AC) AQF aligned micro-credentials and non-credit bearing short courses.

## Scope

This policy covers all AC micro-credentials and short courses. It applies to staff and third-party partners with related responsibilities, as well as learners enrolled in a micro-credential or short course

## Policy

### Definitions

**Micro-credential:** a certification of assessed learning or competency, with a minimum volume of learning of one hour and less than an AQF award qualification, that is additional, alternate, complementary to or a formal component of a formal qualification (*adopted from National Micro-credentials Framework, 2021*). Micro-credentials are a credit bearing shorter form of learning.

**Micro-credential Bundle:** a cohesive group of micro-credentials designed to demonstrate achievement of an overarching set of learning outcomes that can contribute to an AQF qualification.

**Continuing / Lifelong learning:** “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” (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2nd ed. (January 2013), p. 97 (<https://www.aqf.edu.au/>)).

**Digital Badge:** digital verification showing learning outcomes achieved and other relevant metadata in relation to a micro-credential.

**Short course:** differentiated from a micro-credential in that a short course is non-credit bearing and therefore non-stackable.

**Stackable learning:** micro-credentials are stackable (able to be aggregated) towards further study.

**Specified Credit:** Credit granted for one or more specific subjects/units in a course of study, on the basis of previously meeting the learning outcomes in nominated subjects/units.

**Unspecified Credit:** Credit granted on the basis of previously meeting particular course learning outcomes as opposed to the learning outcomes in nominated subjects/units.

**Unit of Exchange:** In the absence of an agreed national framework for the recognition of micro-credentials, an appropriate unit of exchange has been determined by Academic Board. This unit of exchange is credit points as already utilized by AC.

## Policy

The purpose of AC micro-credentials and short courses is to meet the continuous needs of individual learners in relation to their upskilling, re-skilling, and career development. They have been designed to achieve AC's strategic objectives in relation to sustained advancement through the delivery of concise, relevant, innovative, excellent academic programs that provide a high-quality learning experience.

AC Micro-credentials and short courses are:

- developed for post-school and adult learners
- designed by discipline experts or experienced practitioners in consultation with industry where relevant, to ensure they are fit-for-purpose in relation to practical workplace benefits
- transparent, accessible, and flexible such that learners can customise their continuing learning journey in order to compete effectively in the labour market
- delivered by discipline experts or experienced practitioners, either online, on campus, or in blended mode
- delivered in English or language other than English as appropriate to learners
- delivered by AC or via a third-party arrangement
- assessed against learning outcomes
- verified via metadata on digital certification such as a badge or other means
- subject to internal quality assurance systems
- promoted on the AC website and elsewhere as appropriate
- not AQF qualifications
- additional, alternate, complementary to or a formal component of a formal qualification

Additionally, micro-credentials are:

- assigned a credit point value and corresponding volume of learning in hours

- stackable in so far as two or more AC micro-credentials may be aggregated to contribute to an AQF award using the unit of exchange
- approved by Learning and Teaching Committee

Credit offered towards an AQF award on the basis of micro-credentials will usually be Unspecified Credit, unless a Micro-credential Bundle has been approved by Learning and Teaching Committee.

Additionally, AC is guided by the following principles in the design, delivery, and issuing of micro-credentials:

- learners can apply for credit and recognition of prior learning towards a micro-credential, under existing policies and procedures
- AC endeavours to create micro-credentials that are readily recognisable by other Australian providers for the purpose of granting credit toward another credential
- AC endeavours to recognise micro-credentials issued by other Australian providers where a common or comparable unit of exchange exists

#### Supporting guidelines

National Micro-credentials Framework

<https://www.dese.gov.au/national-microcredentials-framework>

Guidance for portability of Australian Micro-credentials (Universities Australia, 2021)

Microsoft Word - Guidance for portability of Australian microcredentials - v1.docx  
(universitiesaustralia.edu.au)

Australian Core Skills Framework

Australian Core Skills Framework - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government (dese.gov.au)

Australian Skills Classification

Australian Skills Classification | National Skills Commission

Digital Credentialling: Implications for Recognition of Learning Across Borders (UNESCO)

Digital Credentialling – Implications for the recognition of learning across borders | ILO/Cinterfor  
([oitcinterfor.org](http://oitcinterfor.org))

Making micro-credentials work for learners, employers and providers (Oliver, 2019)

Making-micro-credentials-work-Oliver-Deakin-2019-full-report.pdf

#### Related legislation

TEQSA Act (2021)

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (legislation.gov.au)

NVCER Act (2011)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (legislation.gov.au)

#### Procedures

#### **Micro-credential Approval Procedure**

In order to obtain approval for a new micro-credential, a proposal is made to the Learning and Teaching Committee by the Head of School, Program Director, or other person as appropriate. The proposal must follow the guidelines contained in this policy and must specify:

- A title for the micro-credential
- Outline of the content of the micro-credential
- Learning outcomes
- AQF alignment
- Volume and duration of learning
- credit point value
- Type, mode and detail of assessment
- Delivery mode
- Whether the micro-credential requires professional recognition or accreditation
- The cost of developing the micro-credential
- The strategic or business case for the micro-credential
- Target student cohort
- Admission criteria

If the Learning and Teaching Committee is satisfied that the micro-credential is consistent with AC's policy guidelines, the micro-credential will be academically endorsed.

Once academically endorsed, the proposal will be forwarded to the Provost for approval to develop. The Provost will consider the strategic or business case and the viability of the proposed micro-credential.

Once approved by the Provost, the micro-credential may be developed using AC's designated platform and development guidelines.

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### **Short Course Approval Procedure**

In order to obtain approval for a short course, a proposal must be submitted to the Executive.

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