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NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR LAUNCHING MICROCREDENTIALS (Albania)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASCAP – Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-university Education

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

EMC - European MOOC Consortium

KAAZHP - Accreditation Commission of Professional Development Activities

MOOC - Massive Open Online Courses

NFM – National Frame of Microcredentials

SKZHP - Qualification and Professional Development Sector

SMIP – Management System of Pre-university Information

I. INTRODUCTION

Technological and social developments require changes in all areas of human activity, including in education. Not only that, but the challenge of educational institutions is to anticipate what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes students need in order to face future challenges and labour market demands. In this context, continuing professional development is important so that teachers are up-to-date and apply new approaches in teaching methodology, new subject knowledge, as well as integrate information and communication technology in the teaching process.

In a world characterized by rapid change and the constant transformation of every profession, teachers must continually adapt to effectively prepare the next generation. The evolving role of educators necessitates the development of new professional knowledge and competencies, shifting the focus from traditional teaching methods to collaborative learning experiences. This transformation is crucial to equip students with the skills needed to navigate the challenges of the 21st century and thrive in an increasingly technology-driven and innovative world.

Recognizing this need, the Ministry of Education and Sports has prioritized the establishment of a quality system for continuous professional development of educational employees. In alignment with the pre-university education law no. 69/2012, as amended, and in support of the career framework for the teaching profession in the Republic of Albania, the national framework of microcredentials has been developed. This framework is also supported by the official Guidelines for the Organization and Operation of the Continuous Professional Development System for Educational Employees.

Microcredentials are bite-sized, competency-based recognitions that professionals can earn through demonstrated mastery of particular skills or knowledge areas. Unlike traditional professional development, which may be time-consuming and broad in scope, microcredentials focus on specific, actionable skills that individuals can apply immediately in their work. This targeted approach allows for personalized learning pathways that align with individual professional goals and the specific needs of their roles.

The National Framework for Microcredentials (NFM) aims to establish clear guidelines and standards for the development, assessment, and recognition of microcredentials. By creating a coherent and transparent system, this framework seeks to ensure the credibility and transferability of microcredentials across different professional contexts.

Teachers and other professionals will understand the function of microcredentials, how microcredentials are related to job positions, and how they can advance in a career. When microcredential providers use this framework, they will have access to reliable information on designing and accrediting microcredentials. This will enable them to offer well-structured training activities specifically tailored for teachers and educational staff. Training providers will understand how microcredentials can address specific training needs.

This framework also promotes the importance of collaboration and partnership between employers and education providers in the development of microcredentials. The Ministry responsible for education can use this framework to help support a sustainable approach to microcredentialing and the continuing professional development of teachers.

II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework aims to standardize the creation, recognition, and quality assurance of microcredentials within the national education system. It provides a structured approach to ensure that microcredentials are developed and implemented effectively, with a focus on enhancing the professional growth of educators and meeting the evolving needs of the educational sector. The framework provides comprehensive guidance on designing and accrediting microcredentials, specifically tailored for teachers and educational staff, and is designed for a diverse target audience, including teachers, employers, and educational providers.

A. Objectives of the framework

- **Promote lifelong learning:** The framework supports teachers in making informed decisions about pursuing microcredentials that align with their professional development goals and the needs of their educational environment.
- **Establish a consistent national definition:** It provides a clear and uniform definition of microcredentials, ensuring that these credentials are agile, comprehensive, and harmonized across the educational system, thus facilitating effective collaboration among teachers, providers, and employers.
- **Ensure transparency and consistency:** The framework offers specific guidelines on essential information requirements for microcredentials. This ensures transparency, consistency, and high standards in the creation and implementation of microcredentials within the national education system.

- **Define unifying principles:** It sets out core principles for all stakeholders — providers, employers, and teachers — in the development and delivery of microcredentials. These principles promote a cohesive approach to professional development and educational advancement.
- **Align microcredentials with educational needs:** The framework ensures that microcredentials address the actual needs of schools and educational institutions, thereby fostering further learning opportunities and enhancing future employment prospects for educators.

By addressing these objectives, the framework seeks to create a robust system for the development and recognition of microcredentials that supports educators' continuing professional growth and meets the dynamic demands of the Albanian educational system.

III. SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The National Framework for Microcredentials (NFM) encompasses all microcredentials designed and delivered by accredited providers within Albania. These providers may include universities, higher education institutions, professional organizations, and training agencies. The framework acknowledges the diversity and breadth of microcredential offerings, recognizing their varied applications across different professions and sectors.

The framework applies to microcredentials across all professional fields and educational contexts. It is designed to accommodate the diverse range of microcredentials available, from those offered as standalone qualifications to those that are part of larger award courses, such as professional skill sets or modularized higher education curricula.

While the framework provides a structured approach to the development, evaluation, and recognition of microcredentials, it complements existing education policies and regulations. Specifically, it aligns with:

- **Teacher Framework Document:** Guidelines and standards for the teaching profession.
- **Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022:** A European approach to microcredentials for lifelong learning and employability (2022/C 243/02).
- **Law No. 69/2012:** "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania," which outlines the legal foundation for the pre-university education system.

- **Legal Act No. 16, dated 28.07.2021:** "On the Organization and Operation of the System of Continuing Professional Development of Educational Employees," which governs the continuing professional development of educators.

The framework is intended to be dynamic, with mechanisms for periodic review and updates to reflect evolving educational and professional trends. This ensures that the framework remains relevant and responsive to the needs of learners and the demands of the job market.

IV. KEY TERMS DEFINITIONS OF MICROCREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK

According to the European Commission, microcredentials are short learning experiences that provide learners with specific skills or knowledge and are often intended to be stackable towards larger qualifications. The EU Council Recommendation on a European approach to microcredentials for lifelong learning and employability (Council of the EU, 2022) ¹ provides the following definition of microcredentials:

"Microcredential is defined as a record of the learning outcomes that a learner has achieved after completing a short-term training programme. These learning outcomes should be assessed on the basis of transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning activities leading to microcredentials should be designed to provide learners with specific knowledge, skills, abilities and competences that meet the social, personal, cultural needs of the individual or the labour market requirements. Microcredentials are the achievement of the learner, can be widely used and are portable. They can be stand-alone or combined into larger qualifications. They should be accompanied by quality assurance in accordance with harmonised standards in a particular industry or field of activity"

In the report "Making Sense of Microcredentials" by Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (2021), Pichette et al. define microcredentials as small, focused qualifications that validate specific skills or knowledge acquired through short-term, targeted educational activities. Their research emphasizes the efficiency and practicality of microcredentials in recognizing particular competencies quickly and effectively.

It is worth noting that microcredentials come in various forms, including nanocredentials, which focus on very specific skills and can be earned quickly; standard microcredentials, which

¹ Council of the EU (2022). Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability. <https://bit.ly/3SaYFrJ>.

validate broader sets of competencies acquired through short-term educational activities; and macrocredentials, which cover extensive knowledge and skills over longer periods, often equivalent to traditional degrees. These different types provide flexible and stackable options for learners to advance their education and careers.

Nanocredentials: Nanocredentials are even more granular than microcredentials, representing the completion of highly specific tasks or short courses. These credentials provide quick recognition for narrow skill sets and can often be stacked to form microcredentials.

Macrocredentials: Macrocredentials encompass a broader range of skills and knowledge, often equivalent to traditional degrees or comprehensive certifications. These credentials cover extensive educational content and prepare learners for diverse professional roles.

The following section includes various references for the definition of **microcredentials**, sourced from academic literature, official guidelines, and reputable organizations.

SOURCE	DEFINITION
European Commission	<i>Short learning experiences that provide specific skills or knowledge, often stackable towards larger qualifications.</i>
Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario	<i>Small, focused qualifications validating specific skills or knowledge from short-term educational activities.</i>
Smith (2020)	<i>Certifications representing specific skills or knowledge from short, targeted educational experiences.</i>
ICDE	<i>Formal certifications for specific skills or competencies through structured educational or training programs.</i>
Digital Promise	<i>Short, focused qualifications for specific skills or knowledge, often through digital platforms.</i>

In addition, this framework contains several terms, the definitions of which are provided below.

Continuing professional development for educational workers of pre-university education is the process through which educational workers update their knowledge, skills and develop their professional competences, in order to provide quality educational service to all students.

Continuing professional development activities are all activities that aim to meet the needs of educational employees in fulfilling their professional responsibilities and obligations. Continuing professional development activities of educational workers are accredited and non-accredited.

Providers of professional development activities of educational employees are: higher education institutions, for-profit and non-profit entities, foundations, as well as other institutions that in their charter have as their object continuing professional development, training, certification and the provision of credits for educational workers.

Participants in continuing professional development activities are all educational employees, such as: employees of local educational units, school principal, vice principal, head teacher, teacher (including the general culture teacher of professional education), assistant teacher, etc.

Moodle: Moodle is an open-source learning management system (LMS) designed to create and manage online educational environments. It provides tools for course creation, content sharing, communication, and assessment, enabling educators and students to interact, collaborate, and track progress in a virtual learning space.

Badges: A digital representation of a microcredential that can be shared online. Badges often include information about the skills earned, the issuer, and the criteria for earning the badge.

Accreditation is the process of approving the continuing professional development activity as an "accredited activity" that is based on the assessment of the fulfilment of criteria and predetermined procedures by the accrediting provider.

V. PRINCIPLES OF MICROCREDENTIALS

Microcredentials are an innovative approach to education, offering targeted, flexible learning opportunities that validate specific skills and competencies. To ensure that microcredentials deliver maximum value to teachers, employers, education providers, and other stakeholders, it is essential to adhere to a set of guiding principles. These principles help shape the development, implementation, and recognition of microcredentials, ensuring they are effective, relevant, and beneficial for lifelong learning. The following section outlines the core principles that underpin successful microcredentials.

- **Stackable and modular:** Microcredentials should be designed to be stackable, allowing learners to combine them to form larger qualifications or degrees. This modular approach provides flexibility and encourages continuing learning.
- **Industry-relevant:** Microcredentials should align with current industry standards and demands, ensuring that the skills and knowledge gained are applicable and valuable in the job market.
- **Quality Assured:** The quality of microcredentials should be ensured through rigorous standards and regular review processes. This includes ensuring that the content, delivery, and assessment methods are of high quality.

- **Recognized and transferable:** Microcredentials should be recognized by various institutions and organizations, facilitating the transfer of credits and acknowledgment of skills across different educational and professional settings.
- **Flexible and adaptable:** Microcredentials should be flexible in terms of delivery modes, including online, hybrid, and in-person options, to accommodate different learning preferences and schedules.
- **Learner centric:** The design and implementation of microcredentials should prioritize the learner's needs, goals, and preferences, ensuring an engaging and supportive learning experience.
- **Evidence-based:** Microcredentials should be grounded in research and evidence, ensuring that the skills and knowledge provided are based on best practices and current knowledge.
- **Inclusive and equitable:** Microcredentials should be accessible to all learners, regardless of their background, and designed to support diverse learning needs.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING MICROCREDENTIALS

This section provides clear guidelines for providers on how to design effective and high-quality microcredentials. These guidelines for designing microcredentials are also applicable to all providers of teacher professional development activities in Albania. By following these guidelines, providers can ensure that their microcredentials are aligned with industry demands, deliver measurable learning outcomes, and offer a valuable and recognized credential to learners. The guidelines cover all aspects of microcredential design, from initial needs assessment to curriculum development, assessment, credentialing, and continuous improvement. By adhering to these standards, providers will contribute to a robust and cohesive national framework for microcredentials, fostering lifelong learning and enhancing workforce development and teacher professional development.

1. Needs assessment and industry alignment:

- **Conduct market research:** Identify industry trends, skills gaps, and employment opportunities.
- **Engage stakeholders:** Collaborate with industry partners, employers, educational institutions and professional associations to ensure the microcredential meets current and future workforce needs of teachers.
- **Define target audience:** Determine the specific learner demographics, including their educational background, professional experience, and career aspirations.

2. Clear Learning Outcomes:

- **Specify competencies:** Clearly define the skills and knowledge that learners will gain upon completion.
- **Alignment with standards:** Ensure learning outcomes align with national educational standards and industry certification requirements.
- **Measurable outcomes:** Use specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) criteria for learning outcomes.

3. Curriculum Development:

- **Modular structure:** Break down the content into manageable modules or units that focus on specific skills or knowledge areas.
- **Blend theory and practice:** Combine theoretical concepts with practical applications to ensure learners can apply what they have learned in real-world contexts.
- **Flexible delivery:** Design content for various formats, including online, hybrid, and face-to-face, to accommodate different learning preferences and schedules.

4. Instructional Design:

- **Engaging content:** Use a variety of instructional methods, such as videos, readings, interactive activities, and case studies, to keep learners engaged.
- **Active learning:** Incorporate hands-on projects, simulations, and real-world problem-solving activities.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Provide regular, constructive feedback to help learners improve and stay motivated.

5. Assessment and Evaluation:

- **Diverse assessment methods:** Use a mix of quizzes, practical assignments, and projects to evaluate learning outcomes.
- **Authentic assessment:** Ensure assessments reflect real-world tasks and challenges relevant to the industry and educational sector.
- **Continuous improvement:** Use assessment data to continuously improve the curriculum and instruction methods.

6. Credentialing and Verification:

- **Digital badges and certificates:** Issue microcredentials as verifiable digital badges or certificates that can be easily shared on professional networks.
- **Verification standards:** Ensure credentials are issued through a secure, reliable platform that verifies the authenticity and integrity of the microcredential.
- **Transparent criteria:** Clearly state the criteria for earning the microcredential, including the required assessments and learning outcomes.

7. Support and resources:

- **Learner Support Services:** Provide access to academic advising and technical support.
- **Community building:** Foster a community of practice through discussion forums, peer networking opportunities, and collaboration tools.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure the microcredential is accessible to all learners.

8. Quality Assurance:

- **Accreditation and recognition:** Seek accreditation from relevant educational and institution to ensure the microcredential meets high standards of quality.
- **Regular review:** Establish a process for regular review and updating of the microcredential to keep it current with industry trends and technological advancements.
- **Feedback loop:** Collect and act on feedback from learners, instructors, and industry partners to continuously enhance the microcredential.

9. Marketing and outreach:

- **Clear communication:** Clearly articulate the benefits and value of the microcredential to potential learners and employers.
- **Targeted marketing:** Use targeted marketing strategies to reach the intended audience through social media and professional networks.
- **Partnerships:** Partner with employers, professional associations, and educational institutions to promote the microcredential and its recognition.

Developers of microcredentials for teachers should use the results of the European Massive Open Online Course Consortium (EMC, 2019²), which has outlined key characteristics of microcredentials. These characteristics emphasize the importance of both organizing the learning process effectively and ensuring high-quality education.

VII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Continuing professional development of teachers is an essential element of the education system in the Republic of Albania and is regulated by a series of laws, by-laws and policies. The professional development of educational staff is regulated by instruction No. 16, dated

² EMC (2019). EMC Common Microcredential Framework.

https://emc.eadtu.eu/images/EMC_Common_Microcredential_Framework_.pdf

28.07.2021, “On the operation of the system of continuous professional development of educational staff”. The purpose of the professional development of educational staff in educational institutions of pre-university education is to update their knowledge and develop their competences, in order to provide quality educational service to all students. The forms of professional development of educational staff are: internal professional development; training; professional networks; consultations etc.

Roles and responsibilities of educational institutions, educational staff and providers of professional development activities are:

Ministry of Education and Sports:

- Defines comprehensive policies and guidelines regarding teacher training and professional development, including microcredentials.
- Coordinates with various training providers, including universities and other educational institutions.
- Ensures that microcredentials providers meet the standards and requirements set by this framework and professional development guidelines.
- Monitors the implementation of training programs to ensure their effectiveness.
- Collaborates with various stakeholders to ensure effective coordination and implementation of training initiatives.

Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-University Education:

- Defines the criteria for the provision of microcredentials, the certification of teachers and the transfer of microcredentials.
- Coordinates the development and monitoring of trainings, in cooperation with actors and institutions involved in this process.
- Mentors the training activities carried out at the regional and local level.
- Monitors the performance of educational institutions through regular assessments and inspections related to the effectiveness of training in the learning process.
- Promotes a culture of continuous improvement among educational institutions and supports the implementation of necessary changes to improve the quality of education.

Providers of professional development activities:

- Engage and participate in detailing the trainings in accordance with the capacities and resources they have.
- Cooperate with the ministry and its dependent institutions to implement the professional development programmes.

- Prepare training courses and supporting materials that serve for the development of training in accordance with the criteria defined in legal acts.
- Develop the trainer skills of the teacher participants, identified as training capacities at the local level.
- Develop the training skills of teachers in the fields of training activities, offered within the framework of continuing professional development.
- Mentor the training activities carried out at the regional and local level.
- Prepare reports on the training activities and send them to the relevant institutions.

School management staff:

- Engages in providing data on the level of professional development of educational employees in their institution.
- Builds internal professional development plans for different aspects in the educational process.
- Enables the participation of its educational employees in training activities offered by universities or training agencies.
- Plans activities within the internal professional development that enable the distribution of training to every employee of the institution.
- Distributes training resource materials to all teaching staff.
- Monitors the learning process to evaluate the effectiveness of the trainings.
- Monitors the progress of students, as well as their results in the fields of training activities offered by universities or training agencies.

Teachers:

- Actively participate in professional development activities.
- Exchange ideas and teaching practices that help in professional development.
- Apply in teaching activities the innovative practices, ideas and strategies obtained through trainings, to ensure higher student achievements.
- Monitors the progress of students, as well as their results in the field of relevant training activities, offered by universities and training agencies.

Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities:

- Approves the internal regulation of Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities.
- Organizes meetings according to the activity calendar.
- Approves the document "Declaration of interest for the training of educational employees".
- Sets the deadline for the application of providers of professional development activities.

- Ensures the suitability of activity programs with the professional development needs of educational workers.
- Approves the list of evaluators of professional development activities.
- Accredits professional development activities, based on the quality of their design for the professional development of educational workers in the pre-university education system.
- Submits the annual report of the professional development activities of educational employees to the minister responsible for education.

VIII. STAGES OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS, EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF MICROCREDENTIALS

The process of accreditation of professional development activities of educational workers is carried out by the Accreditation Commission of Professional Development Activities (KAAZHP), which is established by order of the general director of ASCAP, as well as by the qualification and professional development sector in ASCAP.

The process of application, evaluation and accreditation of professional development activities, in which microcredentials are included, goes through several stages as follows:

a) First phase: Application

1. The request for accreditation of microcredentials is made after the publication of the document "Declaration of interest for the training of educational employees" on the website of ASCAP and in the digital system of professional development activities. This document defines the priority areas for the professional development of educational workers, based on the needs identification process that is organized by ASCAP once every four years.
2. The provider of the microcredentials in accordance with the needs of educational employees for professional development submits the application request accompanied by the relevant documentation for the type of activity that will be offered.

b) Second phase: Evaluation of the application file

The application documentation evaluation process for microcredentials is carried out by SKZHP (Qualification and Professional Development Sector in ASCAP) in cooperation with external experts/evaluators and consists of the following procedures:

1. SKZHP examines the documentation submitted by the applicant to assess whether it is complete and detailed, according to the given criteria.
2. SKZHP prepares the database of the completeness of the application documentation for the providers who have applied for microcredential accreditation.

3. SKZHP has the right to reject the application if the file presents a lack of documentation or the microcredential offered is not in accordance with the provider's charter and the needs identified by ASCAP.
4. SKZHP accepts the application for providers who have submitted complete documentation and follows the evaluation procedures. The application documentation evaluation process must be documented with the evaluation documents.
5. SKZHP commissions one or more experts/independent evaluators of the field, from the list of evaluators approved by Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities.
6. Based on the evaluations made, SKZHP prepares the accreditation decisions and forwards them to Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities for approval.

c) Third phase: Accreditation and publication of results

The accreditation process for microcredentials ensures their quality and integrity within the educational landscape. A microcredential earns accreditation only when each component meets the required standards set by the Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities and the national framework for microcredentials. This commission meticulously reviews evaluation formats completed by assessors, determining which microcredentials warrant accreditation and assigning appropriate credits in accordance with established guidelines. While the accreditation commission retains the right to seek clarification from assessors regarding any ambiguities in their assessments, it does not intervene to alter their judgments. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the Secretariat takes charge of preparing accreditation decisions for successful professional activities providers, which are then submitted to the accreditation commission for final approval. Following endorsement, accreditation decisions are officially signed by the chairman and members of the Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities, and the Secretariat promptly notifies winning training agencies within a 15-day timeframe. Accreditation remains valid for up to three years from the date of its signature, with provisions for special cases as determined by the accreditation commission. Even in the realm of online training, accreditation stands, provided training agencies adhere to all outlined criteria and adapt microcredentials to suit digital platforms. Providers of professional development activities receive official documentation confirming the accreditation of their microcredentials, with provisions for reaccreditation outlined in the Instruction.

For microcredentials, the term of the accreditation decision is **three years** from the date of its signing, except in special cases when Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities opens calls for updated programs/modules with new innovations in the

pre-university education system or when the content of the microcredential is not in accordance anymore with the current development of the pre-university education system. The list of accredited microcredentials is published on the official website of ASCAP, as well as registered in the digital system of ZHVP activities. The digital system of professional development activities and the official website of ASCAP will serve as sources of information for all activity providers and educational workers regarding the accredited activities that are offered at the national level.

APPLICATION FOR MICROCREDENTIAL ACCREDITATION

SECTION 1: PROVIDER INFORMATION

1. **Provider Name:**
2. **Institution/Organization:**
3. **Contact Person:**
 - Name:
 - Position:
 - Email:
 - Phone Number:
4. **Address:**
5. **Website:**
6. **Type of Institution:**
 - Higher Education Institution
 - Professional Training Provider
 - Industry/Professional Association
 - Other (Please specify): _____

SECTION 2: MICROCREDENTIAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. **Microcredential Title:**
2. **Program Description:**
 - Objectives:

- Learning Outcomes:
3. **Target audience:**
 4. **Duration:**
 5. **Mode of delivery:**
 - Online
 - Blended
 - Face to face
 6. **Language of instruction:**
 7. **Assessment Methods:**

SECTION 3: ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Curriculum and Content:**
 - Description of the curriculum
 - Outline of modules/units and key topics covered.
2. **Instructional Design:**
 - Description of teaching methods and materials used.
 - Examples of instructional materials (e.g., slides, readings, multimedia).
3. **Qualifications of Instructors:**
 - List of instructors and their qualifications.
 - CVs or résumés of instructors.
4. **Quality Assurance:**
 - Processes for ensuring the quality of the microcredential.
5. **Assessment and Certification:**
 - Description of assessment methods.
 - Criteria for successful completion.
 - Sample certificate or badge.
6. **Support Services:**
 - Description of learner support services (e.g., mentoring, technical support).
7. **Industry or Professional Recognition:**

- Evidence of recognition by relevant industry or professional bodies (if applicable).

SECTION 4: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Curriculum Vitae of Instructors
- Detailed Syllabus
- Sample Assessment Items
- Sample Certificate/Badge
- Quality Assurance Policies
- Letters of Endorsement (if any)

SECTION 5: DECLARATION

We, the undersigned, declare that the information provided in this application is accurate and complete to the best of our knowledge. We understand that the submission of false information may result in the rejection of this application.

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

IX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Ensuring the quality and relevance of microcredentials requires robust monitoring and review processes. This section outlines the key mechanisms for evaluating and maintaining high standards in the design and delivery of microcredential programs. The monitoring and evaluation of CPD activities, including microcredentials, are conducted by the Directorate of Quality Assessment (DVC) within ASCAP. This process involves sampling from the database of accredited microcredentials and following the calendar of activities in the digital professional development system according to evaluation formats. Key steps include:

Guidelines creation: The DVC drafts a specific guide for monitoring and evaluating professional development activity providers. This guide is approved by the Director General of ASCAP.

Activity monitoring: The DVC, in cooperation with SKZHP, conducts sampling-based monitoring of ZHVP activities and the quality of training offered through microcredentials.

Annual reporting: The DVC prepares an annual monitoring report on ZHVP activities. This report is sent to the Accreditation Commission of Continuing Professional Development Activities and the Ministry responsible for education. These measures ensure that CPD activities and microcredentials maintain high quality and effectiveness.

X. DELIVERY AND ISSUANCE OF MICROCREDENTIALS

The process of delivering microcredentials is carefully organized to make it easy for educators to access and understand their professional development options. It all starts with training agencies registering on a specific training portal, where they list the microcredentials, they offer. Before the training begins, the agency provides detailed information on the portal. This includes their contact details, the platform where the training will take place, what participants will learn, how many credits they will learn, and who will be leading the sessions. It is important for providers to get all this information right because incomplete submissions are rejected. This ensures that everything offered on the portal is clear and reliable. Additionally, providers of microcredentials make sure educational institutions know about the upcoming trainings and microcredentials, making them even more accessible. Once a trainer is assigned to a microcredential, the providers sticks to that choice, making sure the program stays consistent and

dependable. This careful approach to delivering microcredentials not only makes things clear and accessible but also creates a great environment for educators to learn and grow in their careers.

Criteria for Microcredential issuance by providers of professional development activities

Based on the results of short-term flexible learning and the assessment of the achieved results, participants should receive a paper or digital document. Microcredentials are issued in the form of certificates, badges or electronic records that contain information about the acquired skills, learning achievements and the issuing organization. They may be specific to a particular professional field, discipline or educational program. In the European Union, in order to arrange information on microcredentials, mandatory and optional elements of microcredentials description are defined, which, in particular, should be reflected in certificates.

Mandatory elements to describe microcredentials:

1. Identification of the learner
2. Title of the microcredential
3. Country(ies)/Region(s) of the issuer
4. Awarding body(ies)
5. Date of issuing
6. Learning outcomes
7. Notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System ECTS credits, where possible)
8. Level (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the microcredential (EQF, QF-EHEA), if applicable
9. Type of assessment
10. Form of participation in the learning activity
11. Type of quality assurance used to underpin the microcredentials

XI. TRANSFER OF MICROCREDENTIALS

In the instruction of the ministry responsible for education "On the operation of the system of professional development of educational employees" it is determined that all the data of the continuing professional development of teachers are entered in the digital register, which is kept in the Management System of Pre-university Information (SMIP) according to the database approved by the ministry responsible for education.

In the digital registry, each teacher has their individual digital portfolio, which is a comprehensive collection of documents, certificates and testimonials that showcase their achievements, experiences, skills and professional contributions as a teacher. The components it contains are:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV): A summary of a teacher's educational background, teaching experience, certifications, professional development, and related skills and accomplishments in a prescribed format.
- Educational diplomas and certificates: Copies of academic diplomas, teaching license, other relevant certificates demonstrating the exercise of the teaching profession.
- Certificates obtained from continuing professional development activities: certificates with credits, certificates for participation in ZHVP activities, etc. This will also include microcredentials.
- Evidence from the educational institution or local educational unit: working in the subject team, organizing activities, participating in professional networks, engaging in other roles and responsibilities as a teacher or as a leader, etc.
- Awards: Evidence of competitions, awards and other professional achievements that highlight the teacher's contributions and achievements, including student results in national and international evaluations, etc.
- Teacher Performance Evaluation: Teacher performance evaluation by the school principal.

Certificates with credits, as well as microcredentials recognized and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Continuing Professional Development Activities, are valid and can be transferred if the teacher takes on new roles and responsibilities during the professional career, such as:

- moves from one school to another,
- appointed mentor for interns and different coordinating roles,
- appointed vice principal or school principal,
- appointed specialist is appointed in the local educational unit,
- appointed director of the regional, national educational unit.

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INFORMATION ABOUT PROJECT

MOOC-based microcredentials for teacher professional development (CRED4TEACH)

The CRED4TEACH project responds to the needs of higher education institutions and educational decision makers in target countries Albania, Montenegro and Ukraine towards providing high-quality, responsive, inclusive, flexible and competence-based training provisions to in-service teachers across various educational sectors. The project's solution is to establish the MOOC-based short training programmes, so-called Microcredentials, to enhance the opportunities for teacher professional development in target countries.

CRED4TEACH OBJECTIVES

- To boost staff skills for the development and delivery of MOOC-based Microcredentials;
- To develop and introduce national and institutional frameworks for the delivery, issuing and recognition of Microcredentials,
- To create, deliver and validate 11 pilot MOOC-based Microcredentials,
- To encourage the wider adoption of Microcredentials for the professional development of teachers and other target groups.

CRED4TEACH EXPECTED RESULTS

- 46 teaching and administrative staff members from Albania, Montenegro and Ukraine upskilled as Micro-credential and MOOC designers;
- 11 MOOC-based Microcredentials, each between 4-6 ECTS, delivered to at least 220 pilot teachers from Albania, Montenegro and Ukraine;
- 3 national and 8 institutional frameworks for the provision and recognition of Microcredentials for teachers;
- 3 national blueprints for the adoption of Microcredentials.

CRED4TEACH PARTNERSHIP

The CRED4TEACH partnership comprises 15 institutions from 7 countries – Albania, Estonia, Germany, Montenegro, Portugal, Türkiye, and Ukraine:

1. Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (Bielefeld, Germany)
2. Universidade Aberta (Lisboa, Portugal)
3. Tallinn University (Tallinn, Estonia)

4. Anadolu University (Eskisehir, Türkiye)
5. Ukrainian Engineering Pedagogics Academy (Kharkiv, Ukraine)
6. Cherkasy State Technological University (Cherkasy, Ukraine)
7. Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University (Melitopol, Ukraine)
8. Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University (Drohobych, Ukraine)
9. National Qualifications Agency (Kyiv, Ukraine)
10. Universitetit te Vlores (Vlore, Albania)
11. Universiteti Shkodres Luigj Gurakuqi (Shkodre, Albania)
12. Agjencia e Sigurimit te Cilesise se Arsimit Parauniversitar (Tirana, Albania)
13. Univerzitet Mediteran Podgorica Privatna Ustanova (Podgorica, Montenegro)
14. Javna Ustanova Univerzitet Crne Gore Podgorica (Podgorica, Montenegro)
15. Agencija Za Kontrolu I Obezbjedenje kvaliteta Visokog Obrazovanja (Podgorica, Montenegro).

CRED4TEACH COORDINATOR

Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (Bielefeld, Germany)

CRED4TEACH lifetime: June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2026 (36 months)

Funding programme: Capacity Building for Higher Education, European Union.