



E-learning Course

Module 6: QA and Continuous Improvement

6.2 : QA of Microcredentials - Methods



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Introduction

Duration: app. 120 minutes



QA AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Focus:

- Practical QA approaches, established frameworks, and real-world applications



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Microcredentials demand rapid, fit-for-purpose QA processes:

- Shorter duration requires efficient QA cycles
- Focus should be on learning outcomes and employability
- Diverse provider landscape demands adaptable QA tools



6.2.1 QA for Microcredentials – Specific Needs



6.2.2 QA Frameworks



These frameworks provide structure and comparability across institutions and borders:



- ESG (European Standards and Guidelines)
- MICROBOL QA principles
- National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF/NQF)
- Recognition tools: credential transparency, metadata, digital credentials



6.2.2 : Practical QA Tools and Instruments



These are some important QA tools for microcredentials—adaptable for different phases of course development.

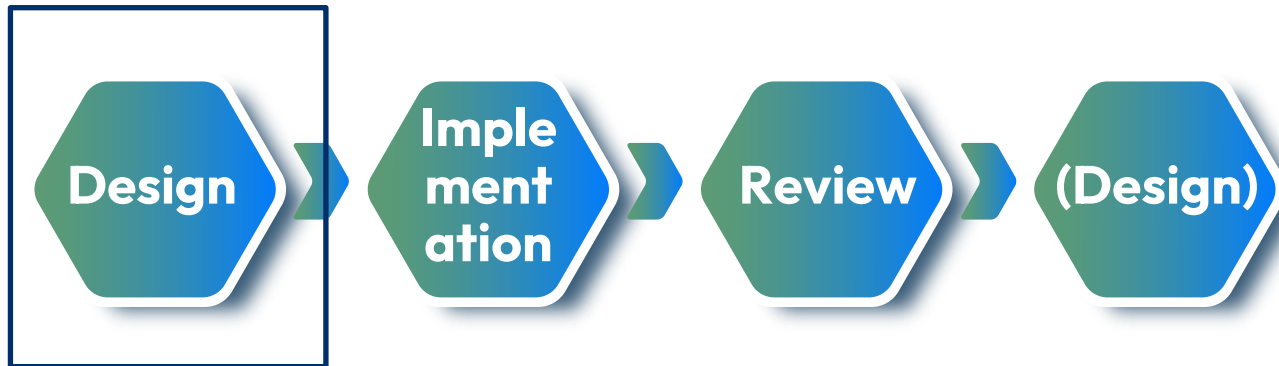


- Learning outcomes alignment with frameworks
- Competency-based assessment rubrics
- Course and provider self-assessment checklists
- Learner feedback tools and evaluation surveys



Design Phase

- Stakeholder involvement
- Needs analysis and market relevance
- Standards alignment



6.2.3 Across the Microcredential Lifecycle

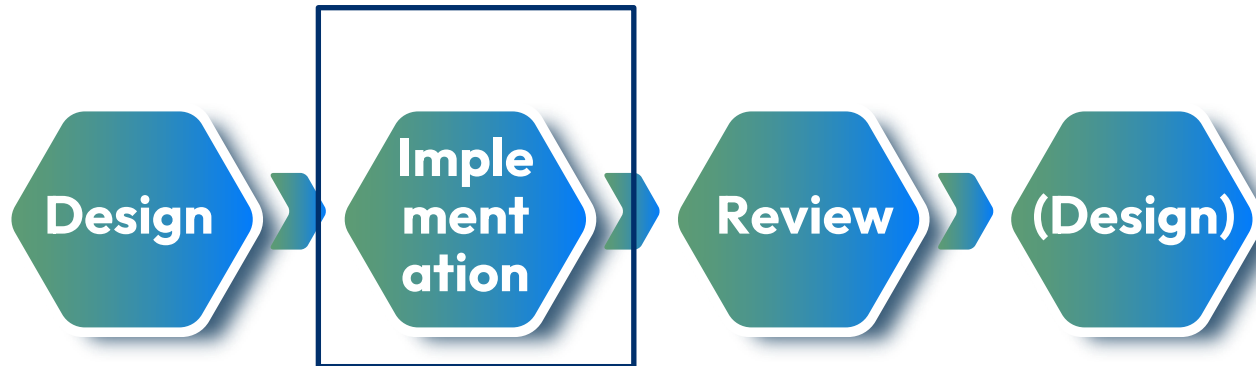


QA must be embedded across all stages—from initial concept to post-delivery evaluation.

6.2.3 Across the Microcredential Lifecycle

Implementation Phase

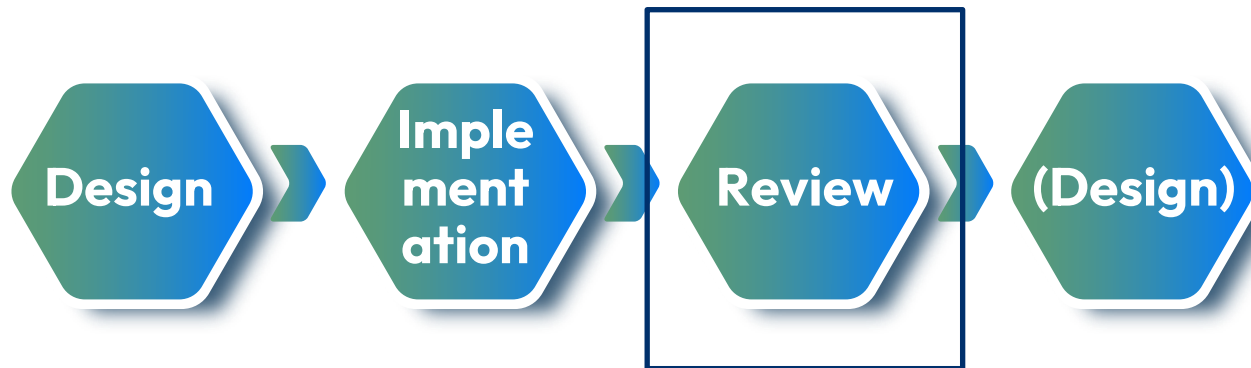
- Instructor qualifications
- Delivery consistency
- Learner support mechanism



6.2.3 Across the Microcredential Lifecycle

Review Phase

- Performance monitoring
- External review or accreditation
- Continuous improvement planning



6.2.4 Case Examples in Practice



Have a look at how other institutions have approached QA!



Example 1:

Albeda College – Co-designing microcredentials

Context:

Albeda College, a regional VET provider in the Netherlands, developed a microcredential to strengthen the link between education and regional labor market needs. The initiative targeted practical skills and workplace relevance for young learners in VET



6.2.4 Case Examples in Practice



Outcomes:

- Strengthened ties between education and local industry
- Provided visible, skills-based recognition for learners
- Increased motivation and public awareness of microcredentials



Example 1 cont.

QA Actions:

- Co-designed learning outcomes with employers, educators, and students
- Issued a digital badge linked to specific competencies
- Promoted transparency through public media coverage

Read the full story:

https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/netherlands_microcredentials_mapping.pdf



6.2.4 Case Examples in Practice



Example 2:

Athabasca University PowerED – Data-Informed QA and Evaluation.

Context

PowerED is Athabasca University's suite of professional microcredentials, focusing on educational technology and pedagogy

QA Actions

- Industry partnerships ensure content relevance.
- Mixed-methods evaluation spanning user satisfaction (Kirkpatrick Level 1 & 2), behavior change, and employer feedback.
- Learning analytics and UX design used to detect engagement trends, usability issues, and continuous improvement areas.



6.2.4 Case Examples in Practice



Example 2 cont.

Outcomes

- Improved learner confidence and workplace skills
- Positive employer feedback on learner performance.
- Iterative design enhanced quality and recognition

Read the full story:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/14/12/1307>



6.2.5 Common Challenges and How to Address Them



Every QA process comes with trade-offs—here are some of the most common issues:

- Limited resources: ➡ prioritize essential QA processes
- Lack of standardization: ➡ use common reference points (e.g., EQF)
- Fast-paced development: ➡ implement lean QA cycles





- QA needs to be implemented **through the microcredential lifecycle**
- QA in microcredentials must be adaptable, efficient, and learner-centered
- Established frameworks can guide practice
- Practical tools help ensure quality at each stage of the credential lifecycle



6.2.6 Key Takeaways



Practical QA isn't about perfection—it's about continual relevance, trust, and impact!

Additional Resources

Part	Title	Type	Duration	Link	Description
All parts	Module 6. Part 6.2: QA Methods for Microcredentials	Training Material, Reading	40 min.	Block.ed Course Platform	Block.Ed study text, accompanying material for the slide presentation
6.2.2	Council Recommendation on Microcredentials: Annex 2	Official EU document	10 min.	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C.2022.243.01.0010.01.ENG	Document outlining EU policy and standards regarding microcredentials. Particularly relevant for this module is Annex II: “European principles for the design and issuance of micro-credentials”

Additional Resources

Part	Title	Type	Duration	Link	Description
6.2.2 and 6.2.3	eCampusOntario's Micro-credential Toolkit , Part IV.	Practical guidelines	10 min.	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/microcredentialtoolkit/	A toolkit with suggestions and guidance for practitioners covering the entire life cycle of microcredentials. Of particular relevance for this module is part IV on “Recognition” which presents different relevant quality frameworks and includes a comprehensive quality assurance checklist
6.2.2	ENQA Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (2015)	Policy document	15 min.	https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/	Basis for quality assurance in higher education in the European Higher Education Area; useful as an overarching reference model for microcredential programmes.

Additional Resources

Part	Title	Type	Duration	Link	Description
6.2.4	ENQA-Report QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS, Chapter IV	Overview Report with case studies	15 min.	https://www.enqa.eu/publications/qa-of-micro-credentials/	The report an overview and examples of how QA of micro-credentials is being addressed in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and provides detailed considerations for the application of the ENQA Standards and Guidelines (ESG) to micro-credentials. Ch. IV, in particular, includes also case studies and further references
6.2.2 and 6.2.3	HRK Report Micro-Credentials at Higher Education Institutions – Strategy. Development and Quality Assurance, Ch. 3	Expert Group Report	15 min	https://www.hrk-modus.de/media/redaktion/Downloads/Publikationen/MODUS/Englisch/EN_Micro-Credentials_at_HEIs_web.pdf	Ch. 3. outlines challenges related to QA of Microcredentials and provides recommendations on how to address them



You have completed the theoretical part of Module X



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