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Discussion on input document 1st session

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Quality Assurance Working Group

6 May

QA Input document - purposes

- serve as a **common input basis** for the today's meeting of the MICROBOL Working Group on quality assurance

- provide a comprehensive overview of the **main points and challenges** emerged in the Working Group meeting held in January 2021

- provide input on **possible solutions and recommendations to overcome these challenges**, highlighting the **way forward** for micro-credentials in general.

Summary of challenges and possible approaches in section 2, detailed suggestions and recommendations in section 3

3.1. Common awareness/knowledge/consensus of what a micro-credential is

Recommendation: support knowledge and enhance awareness of the importance of the European standards for the quality assurance of micro-credentials, create consensus on them, contribute to their implementation and develop good practices.

3.2. Internal and external quality assurance

Recommendation 1: all micro-credentials should be subject to internal QA, independently of the external QA approach.

Recommendation 2: creation of specific "key considerations" for (I)QA of micro-credentials.

Recommendation 3: consider how alternative providers of micro-credentials may be included in the HE-QA system for micro-credentials, following the principles of the ESG.

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3.3. Learners' involvement

Recommendation: include learners in all steps of the development and implementation of micro-credentials.

3.4. Transparency of information

Recommendation: HEIs should provide information on the quality assurance mechanism for awarded micro-credentials. In particular, this should be included on the HEI website and in the micro-credential.

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3.5 Legislation

Recommendation: explore whether a change in legislation is really needed, and if this is the case, plan the relevant changes exchanging information with other countries and keeping into account good practices and experiences at international level.

3.6 Register of micro-credentials and providers of micro-credentials

Recommendation: promote the development of DEQAR-compatible national and other registers of micro-credentials and providers of micro-credentials at all levels.

3.7 Digitalisation

Recommendation 1: explore to what extent micro-credentials should be digitally awarded and user-controlled, as a means to support portability, transparency and reliability of information and verification of authenticity, and build a clear digital strategy in line with other ongoing initiatives e.g. EDCI (Europass Digital Credentials Interoperability) and EDSSI (European Digital Student Service Infrastructure). Start from project and experiences already live and scale it up, taking inspiration for next steps. Develop and improve experiences already available.

Recommendation 2: explore if and how additional aspects need to be considered on the quality assurance of digitally-delivered micro-credentials.

3.8. Alternative providers

Recommendation: explore in collaboration with alternative providers (including companies) if and how QA procedures should be adapted for the provision of micro-credentials in partnerships.

3.9. Peer exchange and support, involvement of all actors, guidelines

Recommendation 1: create occasion for peer support and exchange of practices among stakeholders at international level.

Recommendation 2: a guidebook or set of recommendations for HEIs about transparency should be developed.

Recommendation 3: support the development of a clear policy framework with transparent standards, while at the same time supporting the increased development of micro-credentials in co-creation with all stakeholders.