

Integrating Microcredentials into National HE Systems: *An Exploration in Türkiye*

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Special Thanks: British Council Türkiye



Global Interest in Microcredentials



Australian Government **SUCCESSFUL GRADUATE**.COM **STUDY AUSTRALIA**

**Study Australia
Work Readiness
Program**

**FREE micro-credential for
international students!**

workreadiness.studyaustralia.gov.au 🔍



The Status of Microcredentials in Canadian Colleges and Institutes

Environmental Scan Report

April 2021



Turkish Higher Education



8.3 million students

184,702 academics

208 universities

Centralized governance

(Council of HE, 2022)

Current Microcredentials in Turkey?

No

officially

called

micro-credentials!



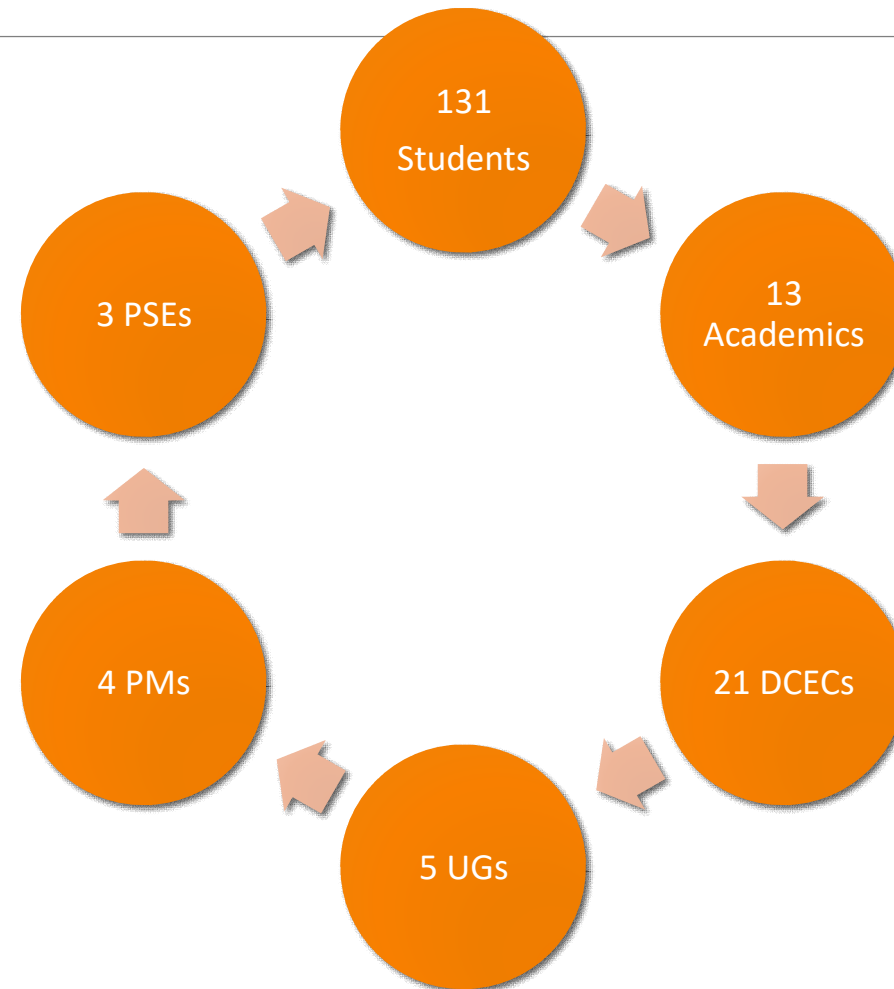
An Explorative Research on MCs in Türkiye

to understand the value of micro-credentials

as a *potential* credentialing system



An Explorative Research on MCs in Türkiye



An Explorative Research on MCs in Türkiye



&



Perception towards Microcredentials



Flexibility



Supplementary to university curricula



Upskilling & Employability

Concerns

Who will provide microcredentials?



Concerns

How to assess learning in microcredentials?



Concerns

**How to assure quality
of microcredentials?**



Concerns

Recognition & transferability
of
microcredentials?



Concerns

**At what level of higher education
to integrate microcredentials?**



The Road Ahead



Step by step: A pilot with a group of universities?



Active involvement of central actors



Administrative & Financial & Promotional Planning

Thank you...



Microcredentials:

Something new?

Something important?

John Brennan

Microcredentials: what are they?

“In various guises, microcredentials can be said to have been around for a while, although that particular name is new. Higher education providers have a long history of running short courses, with or without credit, and aimed at various audiences.” QAA, 2021

“There has been an explosion of microcredential initiatives across higher education systems in recent years, sometimes independently, sometimes within an alliance of higher education institutions, and at other times in collaboration of firms, employers, or industry bodies.”

(OECD, 2021)

So, what are they?

Microcredentials: some definitions from UNESCO

A microcredential

1. “is a record of focussed learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do.”
2. “includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider.”
3. “has stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other microcredentials or macrocredentials, including the recognition of prior learning”
4. “and meets the standards required by relevant quality assurance.”

Microcredentials: in higher education & beyond

“Microcredentials are offered by commercial entities, private providers & professional bodies, traditional education & training providers, community organisations & other types of organisation” (UNESCO)

Part of, alongside, or instead of higher education?

Microcredentials: still problems of definition

Microcredentials: or 'short courses', 'modules', or 'parts of macrocredentials', 'digital badges' etc

Typical features of a microcredential (QAA):

1. "It is credit-bearing against a recognised level"
2. "It is subject to standard quality assurance mechanisms"
3. "While it carries no upper or lower limits on the amount of credit that a microcredential carries, it should not normally constitute an award in its own right on the qualifications framework."

Microcredentials: who decides?

- National governments?
- National quality assurance agencies?
- Individual providers of microcredentials?
- Individual awarders of microcredentials?
- Learners taking microcredentials?

Balancing diversity with quality, innovation with standards, business with academic values.

What do learners, government, employers, societies want?

Microcredentials: who provides the learning for them?

- Universities
- Other education providers
- Industry bodies and commercial companies
- Organisations such as the British Council, the International Labour Organisation, the World Bank, and Google

- And quite a lot of collaboration

Microcredentials:

Some examples of provider collaborations

(From FutureLearn, with 52 microcredentials)

- Open University & Cisco Networking Academy: Climate Change
- Glasgow Uni & Institute of Leadership & Management: Data Science
- Reading University & Henley Business School: Managing People
- NHS Leadership & Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons: Leadership of Veterinary Professionals

“Our online microcredentials are designed to upskill you for work in rapidly growing industries, without the time & cost of a full degree. They can be used as an independent certificate, & some even offer credit to use towards a degree.” (FutureLearn)

Microcredentials: Who are the learners?

The Open University example:

- In 2021, 4117 students were studying for microcredentials online
- 2614 for postgraduate microcredentials & 1503 for undergraduate
- Age evenly spread between 25 and 60
- Most already graduates (& 30% already postgraduates)
- Studying to progress their careers

Microcredentials: who are the learners?

The Coventry University example

- Coventry University is working with businesses
- “It’s about getting the skills. And just showing participation. A lot are doing the courses because their boss told them to. The badge is a certificate of completion, not necessarily proof of achieving anything.”
- The businesses may not be interested in microcredentials or qualifications generally.
- “We create the learning materials. A lot is not credit bearing.”

Microcredentials: what are the learners acquiring?

- A qualification?
- New knowledge?
- Skills?
- Confidence?
- All of the above?

Microcredentials: who awards them?

- The provider of the course?
- An awarding body (e.g. a university)?
- What about 'stacks of microcredentials' acquired from different institutions?
- What about links with other qualifications? Degrees? Diplomas?
- (And do the learners want/need the qualifications?)

Microcredentials: what's the use of them?

OECD suggests: Microcredentials.....

- are being used to support newly unemployed workers to return swiftly to work, & could help to address structural policy challenges in education systems & labour markets.
- could be employed to support the transition from upper secondary to tertiary education.
- could be used to support the completion of degree programmes.
- can be integrated in diverse & flexible ways into higher education systems to support a range of policy goals.

Microcredentials: what will be their effects?

1. On the learners: lifetime learning, skills for jobs, wider social & educational impacts?
2. On higher education: part of it? alongside it? replacing it?
3. On the economy & society: change & innovation? more or less social equity? greater conformity or greater diversity?

Microcredentials: the future? (OECD)

- Microcredentials can increase the flexibility of education & training provision, and improve its alignment to labour markets.
- There is a risk that microcredential innovations will deepen existing inequalities in access to higher education and lifelong education.
- Learners lack information about microcredential offerings & benefits.
- Widespread recognition of microcredentials by academic institutions is not yet well-established, limiting their portability & stackability.

Microcredentials: what do we know?

“In most countries, learners do not yet have a trusted source of public information that permits them to compare systematically the key features of microcredentials offered by higher education institutions, or indeed, other providers.” (OECD)

(And from a QAA interview)

“ Evidence of success to date is scant.”

“Many would agree that a greater investment and commitment to research is required to better understand the key barriers and enablers to successful microcredentials implementation.”