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## **Strengthening the international dimension of universities in South-East Asia through the development of micro-credentials and their recognition**

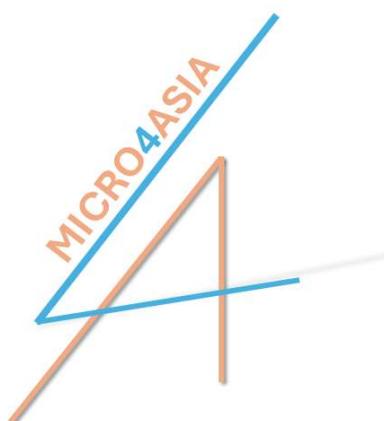
### **MICRO4ASIA**

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Led by Masaryk University (MU), co-leader National University of Laos (NUOL)

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# **Comparative Analysis Report: Micro-credentials in Higher Education in Asia**



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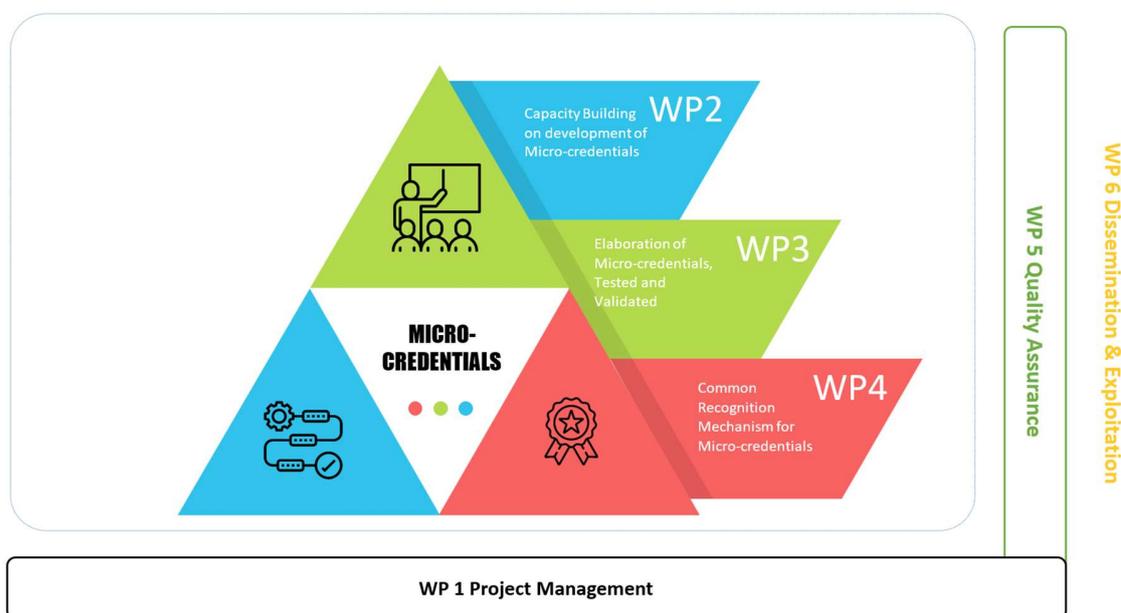
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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose of the Report

This Comparative Analysis Report is produced as Deliverable D4.1 within Work Package 4 (see Figure 1) of the MICRO4ASIA project (<https://www.micro4asia.eu/>). It consolidates the evidence base required for Task 4.1 (introductory workshop on recognition of micro-credentials in Europe) and Task 4.2 (comparative benchmarking and extrapolation of common denominators for the Common Recognition Mechanism). The report’s overarching purpose is to inform the design of a robust, transparent and context-sensitive Common Recognition Mechanism (CRM) that can support consistent recognition decisions for micro-credentials across participating higher education systems.

Figure 1: Project Workpackages



Drawing on a survey implemented across selected Asian countries and supplemented by targeted desk research and stakeholder inputs, the report maps how micro-credentials (and functionally comparable short learning offers) are currently conceptualised, documented, quality assured and recognised. It synthesises key findings to identify current trends, emerging practices and transferable best practices, and it provides an overview of the common elements used to describe micro-credentials, including learning outcomes, course structure and workload, assessment approaches and criteria, and the attribution of credits where applicable.

This analysis is positioned directly against MICRO4ASIA’s wider objectives to support the adoption of micro-credentials as instruments for internationalisation and lifelong learning; to strengthen higher education responsiveness to labour market needs through the development of competence-based micro-credentials; and to foster institutional cooperation and mutual recognition frameworks in Vietnam, Laos and their wider regional and European partner



networks. By clarifying the shared denominators and the critical points of divergence across national contexts, D4.1 provides the analytical foundation for subsequent CRM development and validation.

The report also leverages methodological insights from earlier Erasmus+ capacity-building work in the region, including MICROCASA, where comparative mapping and stakeholder consultation were used to strengthen institutional capacities for designing and recognising micro-credentials. This continuity supports comparability across initiatives and helps ensure that the MICRO4ASIA CRM is aligned with established European approaches while remaining applicable to local regulatory and institutional realities.

## 1.2. Scope of the Study

This comparative study adopts a multi-country scope in order to support benchmarking and the extrapolation of common denominators relevant to the development of the MICRO4ASIA Common Recognition Mechanism. The analysis covers the following higher education systems: Armenia, Cambodia, China, Georgia, India, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Myanmar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

The institutional scope encompasses both higher education providers and the principal bodies involved in recognition, regulation and quality assurance. Accordingly, the survey and supporting evidence draw on inputs from public and private universities and other tertiary institutions (including specialised institutes and continuing education units), as well as from ministries and regulatory authorities, quality assurance and accreditation agencies, and where relevant employer and professional stakeholders engaged in continuing and lifelong learning. The data collection and initial comparative benchmarking were undertaken during the early implementation of Work Package 4 (project months 5–14), following the introductory workshop on European practice in micro-credential recognition (month 10). Targeted updates and fact-checking were incorporated up to January 2026.

## 1.3. Definitions

This report uses a number of terms in a consistent manner to enable comparison across national systems. The definitions below are applied for analytical clarity and are intended to be intelligible not only to higher education institutions and learners, but also to third-party users such as employers, industry representatives and other external stakeholders.

**Assessment criteria** – The published standards, rubrics or benchmarks used to judge the quality and sufficiency of learner performance against the learning outcomes. Assessment criteria should be clear and transparent and may be expressed as pass/fail requirements, grade descriptors, marking schemes, competency checklists and/or analytic rubrics. Example: a project rubric specifying criteria such as technical accuracy (40%), appropriateness of method (20%), interpretation and justification (30%), and presentation/communication (10%), with defined performance levels for each criterion.<sup>3,7</sup>



**Assessment method(s)** – The approach(es) used to generate and evaluate evidence of whether the learner has achieved the stated learning outcomes. Assessment methods may be diagnostic, formative and/or summative, and may be conducted in-person, online or in the workplace. At an operational level, assessment evidence is commonly generated through observation, product evaluation and/or questioning. Examples include: proctored written examinations; timed online quizzes; applied projects/case studies; portfolios of work products; practical demonstrations or skills tests (including simulation); and workplace-based assessment supported by supervisor observation and sign-off.<sup>3,7</sup>

**Common Recognition Mechanism (CRM)** – The MICRO4ASIA project’s proposed framework of shared criteria, indicators and procedures for the consistent, transparent and proportionate evaluation of micro-credentials. The CRM is intended to support recognition decisions across participating systems and institutions and to enable informed use by third parties (e.g., employers, industry bodies and professional associations) by specifying evidentiary requirements and a consistent decision logic.<sup>1,2</sup>

**Credits / credit system** – A quantified measure of learning volume linked to learning outcomes and associated workload, expressed in national credit points and, where applicable, aligned with a regional reference system. In the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), 60 credits typically represent the workload of a full-time academic year and one ECTS credit commonly corresponds to approximately 25–30 hours of work (noting that national implementations may vary). Example: a micro-credential awarded 2 ECTS credits would typically represent roughly 50–60 hours of learner workload.<sup>3</sup>

**Digital credential / digital badge** – A verifiable electronic representation of a credential that carries embedded metadata (e.g., issuer, achievement/learning outcomes, assessment criteria, evidence, credit value, issue date and recipient identifier), enabling secure sharing, automated verification and improved portability. Digital badges issued according to the Open Badges standard are typically digitally signed and can include links to evidence and alignments to standards or frameworks. Example: a digital badge includes the issuer, criteria and links to an assessed portfolio artefact, and can be verified via a signature/verification service.<sup>8,9</sup>

**Learning outcomes** – Explicit statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do on successful completion of a micro-credential. Learning outcomes provide the basis for curriculum design, assessment, transparency for learners and third parties, and (where applicable) level referencing within qualifications frameworks. Example: “Apply basic regression techniques to a dataset and interpret the outputs to inform a decision.”<sup>3,4</sup>

**Micro-credential** – A record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes are assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria and the credential is underpinned by appropriate quality assurance. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable; they may be stand-alone or combined (stacked) into larger credentials and may be credit-bearing, subject to national and institutional arrangements. Example: a certificate and transcript, or a digital badge containing embedded metadata and a verification link.<sup>1,8,9</sup>



**Portability** – The extent to which a micro-credential can be understood, trusted and used across different institutions, jurisdictions and labour-market contexts. Portability is strengthened by transparent documentation (e.g., learning outcomes, workload/credits and assessment information) and by verifiable digital formats that facilitate secure sharing and validation. Example: a learner shares a verifiable digital credential with an employer for recruitment and with another university for consideration of credit recognition.<sup>1,8,9</sup>

**Qualifications framework** – A structured system of reference levels used to classify and describe learning achievements, typically through learning-outcomes-based level descriptors. Qualifications frameworks support comparability and recognition across institutions and sectors by clarifying the complexity and demand of learning. Examples include the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and, in Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf). The AQRf is an eight-level reference framework and uses learning outcomes as the basis for its level descriptors. Example use: a micro-credential may state that its learning outcomes align with a national qualifications framework (NQF) level that is referenced to the AQRf, supporting cross-border interpretation.<sup>4,5</sup>

**Quality assurance** – The internal and external processes used to assure that the design, delivery, assessment and certification of micro-credentials meet defined standards and are fit for purpose. Quality assurance commonly includes governance arrangements, staff and resource checks, course approval and monitoring, validation of assessment design, moderation/verification of marking, feedback and complaints processes, and periodic review; where applicable, it also includes external review, accreditation and/or audit. Examples: (i) internal approval of the micro-credential specification by an institutional committee; (ii) assessment moderation and/or an external examiner process; (iii) periodic review (e.g., every 2–3 years) informed by learner feedback and completion/achievement data; and (iv) external accreditation or audit by a recognised quality assurance body.<sup>1,6</sup>

**Recognition mechanism** – A structured and standardised process through which micro-credentials are interpreted, verified and formally acknowledged as credible evidence of learning achievements. In the MICRO4ASIA context, the recognition mechanism is designed to be usable not only for academic recognition by higher education institutions (e.g., credit transfer, exemption, admission or progression), but also for recognition by third parties such as employers, industry, professional bodies and regulators. Third-party recognition may support recruitment, role assignment, promotion, compliance requirements and continuing professional development decisions. A recognition mechanism therefore combines (i) authentication/verification of the credential and issuer, (ii) evaluation of its quality, level and relevance, and (iii) a decision on the intended use of the micro-credential.<sup>1,2,10</sup>

**Stackability** – The capacity for micro-credentials to be accumulated and combined towards a larger credential or qualification under defined rules, pathways and credit/level requirements. Example: three related micro-credentials (each 2 credits) may be stacked to satisfy a 6-credit elective module within a degree or a short certificate, subject to institutional regulations.<sup>1</sup>



**Workload / learning hours** – The estimated time a typical learner needs to complete all learning activities required to achieve the defined learning outcomes, including contact time (e.g., lectures, seminars, supervised practice), independent study, assessment preparation and (where applicable) work placements. Example: “40 learning hours” comprising 12 hours of live online sessions and 28 hours of independent study and assessment work.<sup>3</sup>

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## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Study design and analytical approach

This report applies a comparative, multi-country approach to map and benchmark the policy, institutional and procedural conditions that shape the recognition of micro-credentials in selected Asian higher education systems. A mixed-methods design was adopted to triangulate documentary evidence with stakeholder-reported practice. The methodological choices were aligned with MICRO4ASIA Work Package 4 (Tasks 4.1 and 4.2), which require the identification of common denominators and transferable practices to inform a Common Recognition Mechanism (CRM) that is transparent and workable for higher education institutions, learners and third parties such as employers, industry bodies and professional associations.

### 2.2. Data collection methods

Three complementary data collection methods were used:

- Desk research and policy analysis, focusing on national higher education governance, recognition authorities, credit and qualifications frameworks, quality assurance arrangements, and published guidance relevant to micro-credentials or functionally comparable short learning offers.
- Telephone and online interviews with designated contacts at higher education institutions and, where relevant, national authorities. Interviews were conducted using a structured guide to ensure comparability across countries (Appendix 2).
- A written questionnaire mirroring the same structured interview guide. This option was used where scheduling constraints or institutional preferences prevented a synchronous interview; responses were integrated into the same analytical template as interview data.

### 2.3. Sampling strategy and coverage

Country and stakeholder sampling followed a purposive strategy designed to secure coverage of systems with sufficient sectoral scale and policy relevance to micro-credential recognition. Analysts selected countries from an initial list of Asian states and applied the following exclusion criteria: (i) countries with gross domestic product below USD 15 billion; and (ii) countries with fewer than 15 higher education institutions. Therefore, an influential case sampling was taken. Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines were additionally excluded from primary fieldwork because they were addressed through the MICROCASA project.

Fieldwork combined desk research with structured stakeholder outreach. Interviewers were expected to contact administrative staff from different HEIs via emails or online calls and interview them. The plan was to contact at least three HEIs in the case of smaller countries and five HEIs in the case of major countries. In several cases, relevant national bodies (e.g., ministries, recognition bodies, or quality assurance agencies) were also approached to clarify system-level arrangements.



From the eligible country pool, more than half of the countries were approached. The final comparative analysis covers 21 countries. However, the survey participation was below expectations (similar to the MICROCASA project). Across these contexts, the evidence base comprises approximately 40 successful contacts obtained through telephone/online interviews and/or completed questionnaires, supplemented by desk research.

#### **2.4. Data management and analysis**

To ensure consistency across country profiles and to support cross-country benchmarking, interview notes and questionnaire responses were captured in a standardised country reporting structure (Appendix 3). Where feasible, desk research was used to prefill basic system descriptors (e.g., number of higher education institutions, credit system type, qualifications framework status) and to identify relevant policy sources for validation.

Data were coded against a common set of analytical dimensions aligned to the country chapter structure, including: national recognition authorities; credit systems and conversion practices; qualifications framework usage and mapping; the status of micro-credential strategies and definitions; recognition procedures for courses and micro-credentials; required micro-credential elements; and (where evidenced) digital credentialing approaches. Comparative synthesis was undertaken through iterative review and triangulation of stakeholder inputs and documentary evidence. Where inconsistencies were detected, targeted follow-up and fact-checking were used to improve accuracy and to avoid unjustified precision.

#### **2.5. Ethical considerations and reporting conventions**

Participation was voluntary. Respondents were asked to indicate whether their input could be included in a public report and whether personal and/or institutional identities should be anonymised. Findings are presented at the aggregated or system level, and personal data are not disclosed. Where examples of institutional practice are referenced, these are reported to support transferability and learning rather than to evaluate individual organisations.

#### **2.6. Methodological limitations**

The study is subject to limitations typical of comparative surveys in heterogeneous higher education systems. Country inclusion reflects purposive sampling and practical access to stakeholders rather than full population coverage. Response rates varied by country, and in some cases, evidence relied more heavily on desk research due to non-response or scheduling constraints. Terminology and policy maturity also differ substantially across contexts; consequently, functionally comparable short learning offers may be labelled in different ways (e.g., short courses, certificates, micro-courses, micro-majors). These limitations were mitigated through the use of a common interview guide and country template, and through triangulation across multiple evidence sources (interviews, questionnaires, desk research).



### 3. Country-Level Comparative Analysis

#### 3.1. Armenia

##### 3.1.1 Country Profile

Armenia operates a medium-sized higher education system consisting of 54 higher education institutions, evenly divided between public and private providers. In the academic year 2021/22, total enrolment reached 78,603 students, indicating a relatively compact but stable system. Armenia's accession to the Bologna Process has significantly shaped institutional structures, promoting compatibility with European higher education standards.

The manageable scale of the system facilitates coordination among national authorities, institutions, and quality assurance bodies. However, financial and infrastructural constraints continue to influence the pace at which innovative learning formats, including micro-credentials, are adopted. Overall, Armenia presents a structurally favourable yet resource-sensitive environment for micro-credential development.

##### 3.1.2 National Recognition Authorities

National governance of higher education in Armenia is led by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports, which is responsible for policy formulation, institutional licensing, and oversight of qualifications. The National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance functions as the external quality assurance and accreditation agency, ensuring compliance with national standards. In addition, ArmENIC, the national ENIC-NARIC centre, manages academic recognition and international mobility. Together, these bodies establish a coherent recognition framework for formal qualifications, which could be extended to encompass micro-credentials in the future.

##### 3.1.3 Credit System

Armenia has implemented the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) as its national credit framework since the 2006/07 academic year. One full-time academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits, with one credit representing approximately 25–30 hours of student workload. This workload-based system supports transparency, credit accumulation, and transfer across institutions. The presence of a nationally embedded ECTS framework provides a strong structural basis for allocating credits to micro-credentials, should policy decisions support such integration.

##### 3.1.4 Qualifications Framework

The Armenian National Qualifications Framework is an eight-level framework covering general education, vocational education, and higher education. Levels six to eight correspond to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral qualifications and are aligned with the Dublin Descriptors. Although Armenia has not formally self-certified the framework against the QF-EHEA, learning outcomes and ECTS principles ensure functional alignment. This outcomes-based structure offers a suitable reference point for positioning micro-credentials by level.



### 3.1.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Armenia does not yet have a dedicated national strategy or legal framework for micro-credentials. Current developments are largely driven by participation in international initiatives, particularly Erasmus+ projects<sup>1</sup> focusing on modularisation and flexible learning pathways. These pilot activities indicate growing institutional awareness of micro-credentials, although implementation remains fragmented. Strategic integration at the national level has yet to materialise.

### 3.1.6 Definitions and Standards

There is no nationally standardised definition of micro-credentials in Armenia. Instead, learning units are defined through outcomes-based descriptors within the national qualifications framework and state educational standards. Quality assurance requirements for programmes emphasise coherence of learning outcomes, assessment, and workload. These principles could readily be applied to micro-credentials, although formal standards have not yet been articulated.

### 3.1.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition of formal higher education learning in Armenia relies on ECTS-based accumulation and transfer, supported by transcripts and the Diploma Supplement. Accredited institutions and programmes benefit from clear national recognition mechanisms. Micro-credentials are not formally recognised. However, recognition decisions could be anchored in learning outcomes, workload, level, and quality assurance status. At present, such recognition would occur only on an ad hoc institutional basis.

### 3.1.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Based on existing practices, micro-credentials in Armenia would be expected to specify clear learning outcomes, an ANQF level reference, workload expressed in ECTS, and transparent assessment methods. Issuer identity and accreditation status would also be essential. Inclusion of these elements would enhance transparency and facilitate potential recognition and portability.

### 3.1.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports, the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance, and ArmENIC. Higher education institutions, through their internal quality assurance and academic governance structures,

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<sup>1</sup> Establishment of National framework of Key Performance Indicators for good governance and quality towards inclusive, digital and green oriented higher education in Armenia  
Development of Soft Skills at Higher Education Institutions of Armenia and Georgia in Compliance with the 21st Century Labour Market Requirements  
Transforming Teacher Education for Green and Digital Transition in Armenia and Moldova  
Micro-credentials for Higher Education systems of Georgia and Armenia: South Caucasus lighthouse project  
Reforming Undergraduate Education for Green and Sustainable Development in Armenia and Moldova  
Sustainability and Internationalization capacities to promote modernisation of Newcomers Higher Education in Neighbourhood East Countries



play a central operational role. International partners and donor-funded projects currently act as important catalysts for experimentation with micro-credentials.

## **3.2. Cambodia**

### **3.2.1 Country Profile**

Cambodia's higher education system comprises a mix of public and private institutions of varying size and capacity. Surveyed institutions range from small specialised providers to larger private universities enrolling several thousand students. This diversity reflects a system in transition, with ongoing efforts to strengthen quality assurance and alignment with national qualifications structures.

### **3.2.2 National Recognition Authorities**

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports oversees higher education policy and regulation in Cambodia. The Accreditation Committee of Cambodia is responsible for institutional accreditation and quality assurance. These bodies provide the formal recognition framework within which micro-credentials would need to be positioned.

### **3.2.3 Credit System**

Cambodian institutions operate under a national credit system aligned with the Cambodia Qualifications Framework. Credits are allocated at the institutional level, with limited evidence of systematic mapping to international systems such as ECTS. This constrains credit transferability beyond national borders.

### **3.2.4 Qualifications Framework**

The Cambodia Qualifications Framework provides level descriptors for higher education qualifications, with bachelor's degrees typically positioned at level six. Institutions confirmed alignment with this framework in programme design. The framework could serve as a reference for micro-credential-level assignment.

### **3.2.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

No formal national micro-credential strategy exists in Cambodia. Institutions are developing short courses and micro-courses independently, often supported by international projects. These initiatives remain experimental and lack formal recognition.

### **3.2.6 Definitions and Standards**

Definitions of micro-credentials vary across institutions, generally describing them as short, specialised courses focused on specific skills. Formal standards governing design and assessment are not nationally prescribed. This results in heterogeneous practices.

### **3.2.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Formal course recognition relies on academic evaluation of transcripts and syllabi. Recognition of micro-credentials from other institutions is largely absent. Institutions report no established procedures for assessing external micro-credentials.



### 3.2.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Institutions agree that micro-credentials should include learning outcomes, hours, assessment methods, credits, level alignment, and mode of delivery. These shared expectations could inform future standardisation.

### 3.2.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include public and private universities, academic leaders, and international relations offices. National authorities play a regulatory role, while international partners support pilot initiatives.

## 3.3. China

### 3.3.1 Country Profile

China operates the largest higher education system among the surveyed countries, comprising more than 3,100 higher education institutions and an estimated student population exceeding 48 million. The system includes a wide range of institutional types, from elite research universities to applied and vocational-oriented providers. The sheer scale and diversity of the sector create significant potential demand for flexible and skills-oriented learning formats. At the same time, system size and decentralisation pose challenges for the coordinated development and recognition of micro-credentials.

### 3.3.2 National Recognition Authorities

The Ministry of Education is the primary authority responsible for higher education governance, regulation, and recognition in China. It sets overall policy direction, approves institutions, and oversees qualification structures. While recognition authority is formally centralised, operational responsibility for non-degree and short learning programmes is largely devolved to institutions, resulting in varied practices across the system.

### 3.3.3 Credit System

China applies a scholastic-year-and-credit system, under which institutions define their own credit structures and graduation requirements. There is no single unified national credit system applicable across all higher education institutions. This institutional autonomy limits standardisation and complicates the allocation and transfer of credits for short learning programmes and micro-credentials.

### 3.3.4 Qualifications Framework

China does not operate a comprehensive national qualifications framework equivalent to those found in many European or ASEAN countries. Instead, higher education qualifications are regulated through the Higher Education Qualification Certificate system, alongside a separate National Vocational Qualification system. The absence of a unified framework constrains the systematic placement of micro-credentials by level.

### 3.3.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

China does not employ the term micro-credential in a formal policy sense. However, recent policy directives encourage universities to develop short, modular programmes aligned with



national development priorities, such as artificial intelligence and emerging industries. These initiatives reflect functional adoption of micro-credential-like learning without a consolidated strategy.

### **3.3.6 Definitions and Standards**

Definitions of short credentials vary by institution and programme. Where such credentials exist, they are typically modular, outcomes-oriented, and focused on applied skills. Formal national standards governing micro-credentials have not been established.

### **3.3.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Formal recognition mechanisms apply to degree programmes and accredited certificates. Recognition of short courses and micro-credentials is generally limited to the issuing institution. Cross-institutional recognition of micro-credentials remains rare.

### **3.3.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions identified learning outcomes, learning hours, and assessment methods as essential elements of short credentials. Additional elements, such as credit value or level alignment, are inconsistently applied.

### **3.3.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Education and individual higher education institutions. Leading universities play a prominent role in piloting innovative learning formats. Employers influence programme design but are not formally involved in recognition decisions.

## **3.4. Georgia**

### **3.4.1 Country Profile**

Georgia's higher education system is comparatively compact and includes both state and private providers. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, there were 63 higher education institutions at the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year (19 state and 44 private).

Student enrolment is modest: official statistics report approximately 54.2 thousand students enrolled in Georgian higher education institutions in 2024/2025, with the majority located in Tbilisi. These figures indicate that Georgia's higher education system is substantially smaller than large Asian systems, but sufficiently diversified to support experimentation with flexible credentials.

Georgia's engagement with the Bologna Process has shaped degree structures, quality assurance expectations, and the widespread adoption of ECTS principles. This policy environment provides a favourable basis for modular provision and the structured recognition of short learning units, even though micro-credential policy remains nascent.



### **3.4.2 National Recognition Authorities**

The Ministry of Education oversees higher education policy and governance in Georgia. National quality assurance agencies are responsible for accreditation and institutional evaluation. These bodies provide the formal recognition framework for higher education qualifications.

### **3.4.3 Credit System**

Georgia applies the ECTS across its higher education sector. Bachelor's programmes typically require between 180 and 240 ECTS credits. This system supports transparency and student mobility.

### **3.4.4 Qualifications Framework**

Georgia operates a national qualifications framework aligned with the European Qualifications Framework. Qualifications are structured across bachelor's, master's, and doctoral cycles. The framework offers a suitable reference point for positioning micro-credentials.

### **3.4.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Georgia is developing national approaches to micro-credentials as part of broader lifelong learning and modularisation agendas. Policies align conceptually with European initiatives. However, implementation remains at an early stage.

### **3.4.6 Definitions and Standards**

No formal national definition of micro-credentials has been adopted. Standards remain implicit within existing quality assurance and outcomes-based programme requirements. This limits clarity and consistency.

### **3.4.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Recognition of formal learning relies on ECTS-based credit transfer. Recognition of micro-credentials is not yet systematically regulated. Any recognition occurs on an institutional basis.

### **3.4.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Expected elements include learning outcomes, workload expressed in ECTS, assessment methods, and quality assurance status. Formal requirements are not codified.

### **3.4.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education, accreditation bodies, and higher education institutions. European partners influence policy development. Institutional leadership plays a key role in experimentation.

## **3.5. India**

### **3.5.1 Country Profile**

India hosts one of the world's largest and most diverse higher education systems, comprising thousands of institutions and serving millions of students. The system includes public and



private universities, autonomous colleges, and specialised institutes. Demand for flexible, skills-oriented learning is particularly strong due to rapid economic transformation.

### 3.5.2 National Recognition Authorities

The University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education are the principal regulatory authorities overseeing higher education recognition and quality. These bodies regulate degree programmes and institutional standards.

### 3.5.3 Credit System

India applies credit-based curricula under national guidelines, although implementation varies by institution and discipline. Credit structures are primarily designed for degree programmes. Short credentials and external certifications are not consistently credit-bearing.

### 3.5.4 Qualifications Framework

India has introduced a National Higher Education Qualifications Framework, structured around learning outcomes and levels. Operational integration remains uneven.

### 3.5.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

India does not have a formal national micro-credential strategy. Awareness of the concept is growing, particularly through online platforms and industry-linked certifications. Institutional strategies remain informal.

### 3.5.6 Definitions and Standards

Micro-credentials are generally understood as short, skill-focused certifications aligned with industry needs. Formal definitions and standards are not nationally prescribed.

### 3.5.7 Recognition Mechanism

External certificates may be informally acknowledged for employability but are not formally recognised for academic credit. Recognition remains discretionary.

### 3.5.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Institutions emphasise learning outcomes, hours, assessment methods, delivery mode, and potential credit equivalence. Standardisation is lacking.

### 3.5.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include regulatory authorities, higher education institutions, online platform providers, and industry partners. Coordination among these actors is limited.

## 3.6. Iran

### 3.6.1 Country Profile

Iran's higher education system is characterised by a network of large, comprehensive public universities alongside private and semi-public institutions. Flagship universities such as the University of Tehran enrol tens of thousands of students and play a central role in national research and professional education. The system places strong emphasis on formal degree



programmes, with continuing education and short courses positioned as supplementary rather than integral components of academic pathways.

### **3.6.2 National Recognition Authorities**

Higher education governance in Iran is exercised primarily through ministerial structures and institutional authorities. Recognition and approval of programmes are embedded within formal academic administration rather than specialised national micro-credential bodies. As a result, recognition practices for non-degree learning remain largely internal to institutions.

### **3.6.3 Credit System**

Iran applies a national credit system distinct from ECTS, primarily oriented towards degree programmes. Credits are defined through institutional regulations and national norms. Short courses and in-service training typically fall outside formal credit-bearing structures.

### **3.6.4 Qualifications Framework**

A comprehensive national qualifications framework aligned with international reference frameworks is not fully operational within higher education. Qualification levels are instead defined through degree structures and institutional regulations. This limits systematic positioning of micro-credentials.

### **3.6.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Iran does not have a national micro-credential strategy. Institutions offer short courses and certificates primarily for upskilling, professional development, and staff training. These activities support lifelong learning objectives but are not formally integrated into degree programmes.

### **3.6.6 Definitions and Standards**

Short learning offerings are generally defined as voluntary, non-credit courses delivered outside the formal curriculum. Standards focus on content delivery rather than learning outcomes or stackability. Formal micro-credential definitions are absent.

### **3.6.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Recognition of short courses is typically limited to internal institutional purposes, such as career advancement or professional certification. Micro-credentials are not recorded within official student academic records.

### **3.6.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions emphasise documentation of hours, content, delivery mode, and participation. Assessment requirements vary. Alignment with qualifications frameworks is not standard practice.

### **3.6.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include universities, training centres, and internal academic affairs units. Employers influence demand for short courses but do not participate in recognition mechanisms.



## 3.7. Japan

### 3.7.1 Country Profile

Japan operates a mature and highly structured higher education system comprising national, public, and private universities. Private universities account for a significant proportion of enrolment, including medium-sized institutions such as Tokyo Keizai University. The system prioritises degree integrity and institutional autonomy.

### 3.7.2 National Recognition Authorities

Higher education in Japan is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Recognition and quality assurance are embedded within institutional accreditation and evaluation systems. Micro-credentials are not explicitly regulated.

### 3.7.3 Credit System

Japan applies a credit system based on institutional definitions of contact hours and graduation requirements. Credits are awarded within formal degree programmes. Short learning activities are rarely credit-bearing.

### 3.7.4 Qualifications Framework

Japan does not operate a comprehensive national qualifications framework comparable to EQF-based systems. Degree levels are defined through institutional and ministerial regulations. This constrains formal level referencing for micro-credentials.

### 3.7.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

No national or institutional micro-credential strategy was identified. Awareness of the concept remains limited within surveyed institutions. Innovation in credentialing is cautious.

### 3.7.6 Definitions and Standards

Formal definitions or standards for micro-credentials are not established. Short courses may be offered but are not framed as credentials. Standards remain implicit and institution-specific.

### 3.7.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition mechanisms apply exclusively to degree programmes. Short courses are not formally recognised across institutions. Micro-credentials lack recognition pathways.

### 3.7.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

No agreed set of required elements was reported. Documentation typically includes course completion rather than outcomes or assessment. Standardisation is absent.

### 3.7.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include universities and the national ministry. Employers influence training demand but are not involved in credential recognition.



## 3.8. Jordan

### 3.8.1 Country Profile

Jordan's higher education system is well established and diversified, comprising public universities, private universities, specialised university colleges, and institutions operating under special legislation. The system has expanded steadily over recent decades and serves a large and growing student population, reflecting sustained national investment in tertiary education. Higher education plays a strategic role in national socio-economic development, particularly in relation to employability, innovation, and regional competitiveness. This context has encouraged increasing interest in flexible and modular learning formats, including micro-credentials, as complementary pathways alongside traditional degree programmes.

### 3.8.2 National Recognition Authorities

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is the central authority responsible for higher education policy, governance, and recognition in Jordan. It oversees institutional licensing, strategic planning, and coordination across the sector. Quality assurance and accreditation functions are carried out by the Higher Education Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, which evaluates institutions and academic programmes against nationally defined standards. Together, these bodies form the core recognition infrastructure within which micro-credentials would need to be positioned.

### 3.8.3 Credit System

Jordan applies a credit hour system across most higher education disciplines. Credits are allocated on the basis of contact hours and expected student workload, and they determine progression and graduation requirements within degree programmes. While the credit system is well established for formal programmes, short courses and emerging micro-credential offerings are not consistently credit-bearing, which limits systematic accumulation and transfer.

### 3.8.4 Qualifications Framework

Jordan has developed a National Qualifications Framework structured across ten levels, covering both academic and vocational education. The framework is learning-outcomes based and aims to enhance transparency, quality, and labour market relevance. Although it provides a potential reference for positioning micro-credentials by level, formal procedures for inclusion remain under development.

### 3.8.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Jordan is actively engaged in the development of a national micro-credentials policy, supported by international cooperation initiatives, including European Union programmes. Policy discussions emphasise lifelong learning, upskilling, and alignment with national economic modernisation priorities. While a comprehensive legal framework has not yet been finalised, pilot activities indicate a clear strategic direction.



### 3.8.6 Definitions and Standards

At present, there is no nationally standardised definition of micro-credentials in Jordan. Institutions generally describe them as short, targeted learning units designed to address specific skills or competencies. Quality standards applicable to degree programmes are expected to inform future micro-credential standards.

### 3.8.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition mechanisms are well established for accredited degree programmes through national quality assurance and ministerial oversight. In contrast, recognition of micro-credentials remains limited and largely experimental. Any recognition currently occurs on an institutional or project-specific basis.

### 3.8.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Commonly referenced elements include learning outcomes, assessment methods, assessment criteria, workload expressed in hours or credits, issuer identification, and potential alignment with the national qualifications framework. These elements are widely discussed but not yet formally mandated.

### 3.8.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Higher Education Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, public and private universities, employers, and international partners. Coordination among these actors is expected to increase as national policy develops.

## 3.9. Kyrgyzstan

### 3.9.1 Country Profile

Kyrgyzstan operates a relatively small but reform-oriented higher education system, characterised by a mix of public and private institutions and a close relationship with the vocational education and training sector. Although comprehensive national enrolment figures were not consistently reported, the system serves a modest student population compared with larger Asian countries. Ongoing reforms emphasise alignment with international standards, particularly those associated with the Bologna Process. This reform context has increased interest in modularisation and short, stackable learning formats.

### 3.9.2 National Recognition Authorities

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic is the principal authority responsible for higher education policy, regulation, and recognition. It is supported by state certification and accreditation bodies that oversee institutional quality assurance. Sectoral qualification bodies and higher education institutions themselves also play a role in recognition, particularly with respect to credit transfer and programme approval.

### 3.9.3 Credit System

Many Kyrgyz higher education institutions apply the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System or maintain formal mappings to ECTS. Credit-based degree structures



have been progressively introduced since 2011. This provides a functional basis for recognising short learning units, although specific rules for micro-credentials have not yet been formalised.

#### **3.9.4 Qualifications Framework**

Kyrgyzstan has adopted an updated National Qualifications Framework comprising nine levels. The framework is designed to classify qualifications across education and training sectors and to support progression and recognition. The NQF offers a clear reference point for positioning micro-credentials by level.

#### **3.9.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

There is no dedicated national micro-credential strategy in Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, policy discussions and stakeholder consultations increasingly highlight the importance of short, modular credentials for labour market responsiveness and lifelong learning. International cooperation projects have acted as catalysts for conceptual development.

#### **3.9.6 Definitions and Standards**

No statutory definition of micro-credentials has been adopted. Emerging practice recommends defining micro-credentials as short, assessed learning units aligned with NQF levels and expressed in hours or credits. Standards remain advisory rather than mandatory.

#### **3.9.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Formal recognition mechanisms apply to accredited degree programmes under national quality assurance arrangements. Recognition of micro-credentials is not yet systematised. Institutions may recognise short learning on a discretionary basis.

#### **3.9.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Expected elements include learning outcomes, documented workload or credits, assessment methods, level reference, and quality assurance status. These elements are widely discussed but not codified.

#### **3.9.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Education and Science, accreditation agencies, higher education institutions, vocational providers, and employer associations. Donor-funded programmes support pilot initiatives.

### **3.10. Laos**

#### **3.10.1 Country Profile**

Laos maintains a modest higher education system centred on a small number of public universities and specialised institutes. Student populations vary significantly between national flagship institutions and regional providers. Capacity constraints and resource limitations shape cautious approaches to educational innovation.



### **3.10.2 National Recognition Authorities**

The Ministry of Education and Sports is the primary authority responsible for higher education governance and recognition. It oversees institutional regulation and policy development. The ministry also plays a role in lifelong learning initiatives.

### **3.10.3 Credit System**

Higher education institutions in Laos apply a national credit system, typically defining one credit as equivalent to approximately fifteen hours of classroom study. The system supports internal credit accumulation but offers limited international comparability.

### **3.10.4 Qualifications Framework**

Laos operates the Lao National Qualifications Framework, within which undergraduate qualifications are generally aligned at level six. The framework is intended to support progression and recognition.

### **3.10.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

No formal national micro-credential strategy has been adopted. Institutions report exploratory discussions and early planning activities. Micro-credentials are viewed as a future development rather than a current priority.

### **3.10.6 Definitions and Standards**

Micro-credentials are commonly understood as short courses focused on specific skills and learning outcomes. Formal standards governing their design and documentation are not established.

### **3.10.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Formal recognition applies to degree programmes and accredited courses. Micro-credentials from other institutions are not recognised. Institutions have expressed interest in a common regional recognition mechanism.

### **3.10.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions emphasise learning outcomes, hours, assessment methods, credits, level alignment, and delivery mode. These elements reflect shared expectations despite the absence of regulation.

### **3.10.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include public universities, ministry officials, and academic administrators. Regional cooperation initiatives influence future planning.

## **3.11. Lebanon**

### **3.11.1 Country Profile**

Lebanon's higher education system is dense and internationally oriented, comprising one public university and a large number of licensed private institutions. The system serves approximately 180,850 students. Economic volatility has heightened demand for flexible and employment-oriented learning pathways.



### **3.11.2 National Recognition Authorities**

Recognition of higher education qualifications in Lebanon is managed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education through specialised committees. These bodies oversee institutional licensing and programme approval. Governance is centralised but operationally complex.

### **3.11.3 Credit System**

Lebanese institutions apply both American-style credit hour systems and the European ECTS. Bachelor's programmes typically require around 180 ECTS credits. This dual-system environment reflects strong international engagement.

### **3.11.4 Qualifications Framework**

Lebanon is developing an eight-level National Qualifications Framework intended to cover all education sectors. While technical and vocational descriptors are legislated, the general framework remains under development. Full operationalisation is pending.

### **3.11.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Micro-credentials are increasingly promoted as tools for lifelong learning and employability. Universities offer short certificates and skills-based programmes aligned with labour market needs. National initiatives support digital skills development.

### **3.11.6 Definitions and Standards**

Definitions of micro-credentials are institution-specific and focus on short, skills-oriented training. Formal national standards are not yet established. Quality assurance practices vary.

### **3.11.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Formal recognition mechanisms apply to degree programmes under ministerial supervision. Micro-credentials lack a clear legal basis for recognition. Institutions assess them informally where relevant.

### **3.11.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Commonly identified elements include learning outcomes, workload or credits, assessment methods, and issuer identification. Integration into the national qualifications framework is anticipated.

### **3.11.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include public and private universities, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, employers, and digital skills initiatives. Collaboration remains fragmented.

## **3.12. Myanmar**

### **3.12.1 Country Profile**

Myanmar's higher education system comprises approximately 150 institutions, including universities, technological universities, specialist institutes, and colleges. The public system enrolls an estimated 850,000 to 900,000 students, reflecting a large but resource-constrained sector. The system operates under strong ministerial control, with institutional autonomy



varying across providers. These structural conditions shape cautious and uneven adoption of innovative credential formats.

### **3.12.2 National Recognition Authorities**

The Ministry of Education, through the Department of Higher Education, is the primary authority responsible for higher education governance and recognition in Myanmar. University councils and senates exercise delegated authority over academic decisions. Recognition structures are closely tied to formal programme approval processes.

### **3.12.3 Credit System**

Myanmar applies a modular credit system introduced in the late 1990s. Credit units are linked to lecture and practical hours, with defined requirements for bachelor's and master's programmes. Credits may be transferred between institutions, providing a basis for accumulation.

### **3.12.4 Qualifications Framework**

The Myanmar National Qualifications Framework is an outcomes-based framework structured across eight levels. It spans basic education, TVET, and higher education, with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees positioned at levels six to eight. The framework is intended to support comparability and progression.

### **3.12.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Myanmar does not have a unified national micro-credential strategy. Institutional initiatives focus on upskilling, continuing professional development, and donor-supported projects. Some institutions allow micro-credentials to be counted towards degree requirements on a discretionary basis.

### **3.12.6 Definitions and Standards**

Micro-credentials are generally defined as short, outcomes-based learning units with mandatory assessment. Standards are institution-driven and focus on learning outcomes, workload, and verification. Digital credentialing practices remain limited.

### **3.12.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Recognition of formal learning follows departmental and senate approval processes. External courses are assessed based on syllabi, assessment evidence, and level. Micro-credentials may be recognised in limited cases, but procedures are not standardised.

### **3.12.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Core elements include learning outcomes, assessment criteria, workload or credits, delivery mode, and issuer authentication. Metadata inclusion is uneven. Best practice is emerging rather than mandated.

### **3.12.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education, public universities, specialist institutes, and international partners. Donor-funded initiatives support experimentation.



### 3.13. Saudi Arabia

#### 3.13.1 Country Profile

Saudi Arabia operates a large and well-funded higher education system comprising public universities, private institutions, and specialised colleges. The system serves a substantial student population and plays a central role in national development strategies. Higher education reform is closely linked to economic diversification agendas.

#### 3.13.2 National Recognition Authorities

The Ministry of Education is responsible for higher education governance, recognition, and quality assurance. Accreditation bodies operate under ministerial authority. Recognition processes are centrally regulated.

#### 3.13.3 Credit System

Saudi universities apply credit-hour systems for degree programmes. Credit allocation follows institutional regulations within national guidelines. Short courses are typically non-credit-bearing.

#### 3.13.4 Qualifications Framework

Saudi Arabia has developed a national qualifications framework covering the education and training sectors. Implementation within higher education is ongoing. The framework provides a potential anchor for micro-credentials.

#### 3.13.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Micro-credentials are gaining attention as tools for workforce development and lifelong learning. Institutions offer professional certificates aligned with labour market needs. A comprehensive national strategy is emerging but not yet consolidated.

#### 3.13.6 Definitions and Standards

Definitions of micro-credentials vary across providers and emphasise short duration and skills focus. National standards are evolving. Quality assurance remains institution-specific.

#### 3.13.7 Recognition Mechanism

Formal recognition applies to accredited degree programmes. Recognition of micro-credentials is limited and often internal. Clear national procedures have not been established.

#### 3.13.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Institutions identify learning outcomes, hours, assessment, and issuer identity as essential elements. Alignment with the qualifications framework is anticipated. Standardisation is in progress.

#### 3.13.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education, universities, accreditation agencies, and employers. Public-private collaboration influences programme design.



## 3.14. Sri Lanka

### 3.14.1 Country Profile

Sri Lanka maintains a well-established public higher education system governed by national authorities. Public universities enrol over 146,000 students, complemented by affiliated institutes and the Open University. The system is characterised by strong regulatory oversight and structured qualification pathways.

### 3.14.2 National Recognition Authorities

The University Grants Commission is the apex authority responsible for university governance, funding, and recognition. The Quality Assurance Council supports quality assurance processes. The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission oversees vocational qualifications.

### 3.14.3 Credit System

Sri Lanka applies a workload-based credit system under the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework. One credit typically represents 45 to 50 notional learning hours. Credits are awarded upon successful assessment.

### 3.14.4 Qualifications Framework

The Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework comprises ten levels covering undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. It interfaces with the National Vocational Qualifications Framework. The framework supports progression and recognition.

### 3.14.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Sri Lanka does not yet have a national micro-credential strategy. Policy discussions emphasise flexible learning and lifelong learning pathways. Pilot initiatives are emerging.

### 3.14.6 Definitions and Standards

Definitions of micro-credentials are not standardised. Institutions refer to short, skills-focused learning units aligned with learning outcomes. Formal standards are absent.

### 3.14.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition mechanisms apply to accredited programmes through established procedures. Micro-credentials are not formally recognised for credit transfer. Recognition remains limited.

### 3.14.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Institutions highlight learning outcomes, workload, assessment methods, and level alignment as essential elements. These expectations align with framework principles.

### 3.14.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include the University Grants Commission, Quality Assurance Council, universities, and vocational authorities. Coordination across sectors is developing.



## 3.15. Taiwan

### 3.15.1 Country Profile

Taiwan operates a comprehensive and internationally oriented higher education system comprising universities, colleges, and junior colleges. Sector descriptions indicate that there were 149 universities and colleges as of 2021, reflecting a mature and diversified provider landscape.

While Taiwan historically maintained total tertiary enrolment at around the one-million level, demographic decline has become a significant structural factor. The Ministry of Education has reported a sustained reduction in total university enrolment since 2019, with projections suggesting that enrolment would fall below 860,000 in 2025.

These demographic pressures interact with labour-market and innovation policies, increasing the relevance of modular, skills-based learning for both initial education and adult upskilling. Within this context, micro-credential initiatives are best interpreted as part of a broader institutional response to flexibility, reskilling, and targeted talent development.

### 3.15.2 National Recognition Authorities

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of China (Taiwan) is the primary authority responsible for higher education governance, recognition, and quality assurance. It regulates institutional licensing, programme approval, and academic standards. Recognition authority is centrally coordinated.

### 3.15.3 Credit System

Taiwan applies a national credit hour system, under which one credit typically corresponds to approximately eighteen teaching hours. This system is used consistently across higher education institutions. Partial mappings to ECTS exist for international mobility purposes.

### 3.15.4 Qualifications Framework

Taiwan operates the Taiwan Qualifications Framework, which provides level descriptors for qualifications. Integration of micro-credentials into the framework remains exploratory. Compatibility with international frameworks is partial.

### 3.15.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Taiwan does not have a comprehensive national micro-credential strategy. Institutions have piloted micro-courses to provide flexible learning opportunities. Formal recognition mechanisms remain limited.

### 3.15.6 Definitions and Standards

No nationally agreed definition of micro-credentials exists. Institutional pilots define them in terms of learning outcomes, workload, and credit value. Standards are experimental.



### **3.15.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Micro-credentials are not formally recognised within national or cross-institutional frameworks. Recognition is limited to internal institutional contexts. External recognition mechanisms are absent.

### **3.15.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions identify learning outcomes, hours, assessment methods, teaching methodology, credit value, level alignment, and mode of delivery as relevant elements. These are applied inconsistently.

### **3.15.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education and pilot universities. Institutional leadership drives experimentation. Wider stakeholder engagement is limited.

## **3.16. Thailand**

### **3.16.1 Country Profile**

Thailand maintains a large and diverse higher education system, undergoing reform towards greater flexibility and lifelong learning orientation. Public and private universities serve a substantial student population. Digital platforms play an increasing role in education delivery.

### **3.16.2 National Recognition Authorities**

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation oversees higher education policy and recognition. Quality assurance bodies contribute to accreditation and standards. Recognition authority is shared across agencies.

### **3.16.3 Credit System**

Thailand applies credit-based structures in higher education, with defined annual credit requirements. The National Credit Bank System is being piloted to support the accumulation of learning from multiple providers. This represents a significant structural innovation.

### **3.16.4 Qualifications Framework**

Thailand operates both a higher education qualifications framework and a Professional Qualifications Framework administered by the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute. These frameworks support competency-based recognition.

### **3.16.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Thailand is actively experimenting with micro-credentials through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), digital badges, and credit bank initiatives. These efforts are linked to lifelong learning and workforce development policies. A unified national strategy is emerging.

### **3.16.6 Definitions and Standards**

Micro-credentials are defined in relation to short, skills-based learning delivered through digital and non-formal modes. Standards vary across initiatives. Formal codification is incomplete.



### 3.16.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition mechanisms are being developed through the National Credit Bank System and credit transfer arrangements. Professional qualification pathways provide additional recognition routes. Implementation remains partial.

### 3.16.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Common elements include learning outcomes, hours, assessment criteria, credit transferability, and digital certification. These elements are applied selectively.

### 3.16.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include ministries, universities, the Thailand Professional Qualification Institute, online platforms, and industry partners. Collaboration is relatively advanced.

## 3.17. Uzbekistan

### 3.17.1 Country Profile

Uzbekistan operates a large and rapidly reforming higher education system comprising around one hundred higher education institutions and serving more than 1.4 million students. The system has undergone significant expansion as part of broader national modernisation efforts. Reform priorities include internationalisation, student mobility, and alignment with global academic standards, creating favourable conditions for modular and flexible learning formats such as micro-credentials.

### 3.17.2 National Recognition Authorities

Recognition and quality oversight are coordinated by the State Inspectorate for Supervision of Quality in Education. This body is responsible for institutional evaluation, programme quality monitoring, and compliance with national education standards. It provides the formal recognition framework within which new credential formats would need to be assessed.

### 3.17.3 Credit System

Uzbekistan has transitioned to a credit-module system based on the principles of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. Credits represent total student workload, including contact hours, independent study, and assessment. The system promotes modular organisation, student-centred learning, and academic mobility.

### 3.17.4 Qualifications Framework

The National Qualifications Framework for the System of Continuous Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan was approved in 2020. It covers all levels of education and training and is intended to enhance transparency and labour market relevance. The framework provides a reference structure for positioning micro-credentials.

### 3.17.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Uzbekistan does not yet have a dedicated national micro-credentials strategy. However, ongoing reforms emphasising modularisation and flexibility implicitly support micro-credential development. Institutional experimentation is expected to inform future policy.



### 3.17.6 Definitions and Standards

There is no formal national definition of micro-credentials in Uzbekistan. Short learning units are defined through modular descriptors and workload requirements. Existing quality assurance principles could be extended to micro-credentials, although explicit standards are not yet articulated.

### 3.17.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition mechanisms are clearly established for accredited degree programmes. Recognition of short learning units and micro-credentials is not systematised and would currently depend on institutional discretion.

### 3.17.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Expected elements include learning outcomes, workload expressed in credits or hours, assessment methods, modular structure, issuer identification, and potential reference to qualifications framework levels. These elements are consistent with the national credit-module system.

### 3.17.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include the State Inspectorate for Supervision of Quality in Education, relevant ministries, public and private universities, and international partners. Ongoing reforms are likely to intensify stakeholder engagement.

## 3.18. Vietnam

### 3.18.1 Country Profile

Vietnam operates a rapidly expanding higher education system linked to national economic modernisation and workforce development priorities. Recent sector reporting indicates a network of approximately 243 universities nationwide (including both public and non-public institutions).

National enrolment has been reported at close to 2.1 million higher education students, with medium-term planning projecting further growth towards 2030. These scale indicators position Vietnam among the larger systems in the survey and underscore the strategic importance of flexible provision for widening participation and upskilling.

At the institutional level, there is increasing interest in short, employment-oriented learning formats, particularly in digital and applied fields. However, the regulatory and recognition infrastructure remains primarily designed for full degree programmes, which has implications for the formal adoption and portability of micro-credentials.

### 3.18.2 National Recognition Authorities

The Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for higher education governance and recognition. It regulates institutional accreditation and academic standards. Recognition authority is centralised.



### 3.18.3 Credit System

Vietnam applies a national credit system broadly aligned with ECTS, with one credit typically corresponding to fifteen contact hours. This supports internal accumulation.

### 3.18.4 Qualifications Framework

Vietnam operates an eight-level Vietnamese Qualifications Framework aligned with learning outcomes and competency descriptors. The framework is being referenced to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. This enhances regional comparability.

### 3.18.5 Micro-credentials Strategy

Vietnam does not yet have a national micro-credential strategy. Universities increasingly offer short courses within lifelong learning provision. Integration into formal programmes is limited.

### 3.18.6 Definitions and Standards

Definitions of micro-credentials vary by institution and typically describe modular, outcomes-based, short learning. Standards are institution-specific. National guidance is absent.

### 3.18.7 Recognition Mechanism

Recognition of short credentials is limited to issuing institutions. Cross-institutional recognition is rare. Formal mechanisms are underdeveloped.

### 3.18.8 Required Micro-credential Elements

Institutions emphasise learning outcomes, hours, assessment methods, and delivery mode as core elements. Credit value is applied inconsistently.

### 3.18.9 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education and Training and higher education institutions. Pilot universities drive innovation. Employer involvement is emerging.

## 3.19. Oman

### 3.19.1 Country Profile

The Sultanate of Oman operates a mixed higher education system comprising public universities and a substantial number of private higher education institutions. The system includes major public providers such as Sultan Qaboos University, alongside colleges of applied sciences, technology colleges, and private universities and colleges. With an estimated student population of approximately 35,000 in private institutions alone, Oman's higher education sector plays a central role in national human capital development and economic diversification.

### 3.19.2 National Recognition Authorities

Higher education in Oman is governed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, which is responsible for policy development, institutional licensing, and programme oversight. Quality assurance and accreditation are managed by the Oman



Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education. These bodies establish the formal recognition framework for higher education qualifications.

### **3.19.3 Credit System**

Oman applies the Oman Qualifications Framework credit system, under which one credit is equivalent to ten hours of student workload. Several institutions also apply the ECTS to support international compatibility. This dual approach enhances transparency and mobility.

### **3.19.4 Qualifications Framework**

The Oman Qualifications Framework is a comprehensive national framework covering the education and training sectors. It comprises ten levels and supports the classification and comparison of qualifications. The framework provides a potential reference point for micro-credentials.

### **3.19.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Oman has demonstrated growing interest in micro-credentials as tools for employability and lifelong learning. Institutions offer short programmes in areas such as digital skills, cybersecurity, and data science. A national strategy is emerging but not yet fully formalised.

### **3.19.6 Definitions and Standards**

Micro-credentials are generally defined as short, skills-focused learning units. Formal national standards governing their design and assessment are still evolving. Institutional practices vary.

### **3.19.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Recognition mechanisms apply primarily to accredited degree programmes. Micro-credentials are recognised internally within institutions but lack cross-institutional recognition mechanisms. National procedures are under development.

### **3.19.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions identify learning outcomes, workload, assessment methods, and issuer identification as essential elements. Alignment with the qualifications framework is anticipated.

### **3.19.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the national accreditation authority, higher education institutions, and employers. Industry engagement supports relevance.

## **3.20. South Korea**

### **3.20.1 Country Profile**

South Korea operates a highly developed and technologically advanced higher education system comprising public and private universities. The system serves a large student population and is closely aligned with national innovation and industrial strategies. Universities play a central role in skills development and workforce competitiveness.



### **3.20.2 National Recognition Authorities**

The Ministry of Education oversees higher education governance and recognition. Quality assurance mechanisms are embedded within institutional evaluation and accreditation systems. Recognition authority is centralised.

### **3.20.3 Credit System**

South Korea applies a credit-based system for degree programmes, with institutional autonomy in credit allocation. Credits are primarily designed for formal curricula. Short learning programmes are generally non-credit-bearing.

### **3.20.4 Qualifications Framework**

South Korea operates the Korean Qualifications Framework, which classifies qualifications across education and training sectors. Integration of micro-credentials into the framework remains limited.

### **3.20.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Some universities have introduced micro-majors and modular learning initiatives. These efforts are institution-led rather than nationally coordinated. A comprehensive national micro-credential strategy is not yet in place.

### **3.20.6 Definitions and Standards**

Definitions of micro-credentials vary and are often institution-specific. Standards focus on internal academic coherence rather than national comparability. Formal guidance is limited.

### **3.20.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Recognition mechanisms apply to degree programmes. Micro-credentials are recognised internally but not across institutions. External recognition is rare.

### **3.20.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions emphasise learning outcomes, assessment, and documentation. Credit equivalence and level alignment are inconsistently applied. Standardisation is limited.

### **3.20.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education, universities, and industry partners. Employer engagement supports curriculum relevance.

## **3.21. United Arab Emirates**

### **3.21.1 Country Profile**

The United Arab Emirates operates a highly internationalised higher education system comprising federal institutions, emirate-level providers, and international branch campuses. More than 150 licensed institutions operate across the country. The system supports national development strategies and global talent attraction.



### **3.21.2 National Recognition Authorities**

Higher education recognition is governed by the Ministry of Education, with the Commission for Academic Accreditation serving as the federal quality assurance body. Recognition processes are centrally regulated.

### **3.21.3 Credit System**

UAE institutions predominantly apply credit-hour systems, often aligned with US models. International branch campuses may apply home-system credits with equivalence arrangements. This diversity reflects the system's international character.

### **3.21.4 Qualifications Framework**

The UAE has developed a national qualifications framework covering the education sector. Implementation within higher education is ongoing. The framework offers a reference point for future micro-credential integration.

### **3.21.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**

Interest in micro-credentials is increasing, particularly in professional and executive education. Institutions offer short programmes aligned with labour market needs. A unified national strategy is still emerging.

### **3.21.6 Definitions and Standards**

Definitions of micro-credentials are institution-specific. Standards governing design and assessment vary across providers. National guidance remains limited.

### **3.21.7 Recognition Mechanism**

Formal recognition applies to accredited degree programmes. Micro-credentials are generally recognised only within issuing institutions. Cross-institutional mechanisms are not established.

### **3.21.8 Required Micro-credential Elements**

Institutions identify learning outcomes, workload, assessment, and issuer identity as key elements. Digital certification is increasingly used. Framework alignment is anticipated.

### **3.21.9 Stakeholder Institutions**

Stakeholders include the Ministry of Education, accreditation bodies, universities, and employers. International providers play a significant role.



## 4. Summary

### 4.1.1 National Recognition Authorities

Across the surveyed Asian countries, national recognition authorities play a central role in shaping the regulatory environment for higher education and, indirectly, the development and recognition of micro-credentials. In most systems, responsibility is vested in a central ministry responsible for higher education, often supported by specialised quality assurance and accreditation bodies. These authorities typically regulate institutional licensing, programme accreditation, and qualification recognition, even where micro-credentials are not yet explicitly addressed in legislation.

In countries such as Armenia, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, and Laos, national ministries of education operate alongside dedicated quality assurance agencies or commissions. These bodies provide the institutional trust framework within which micro-credentials could be recognised in the future, particularly where national qualifications frameworks already exist. In Lebanon and Jordan, recognition is managed through ministerial committees and accreditation councils, reflecting more fragmented but still centralised governance structures.

By contrast, in large and decentralised systems such as China and India, recognition authority is formally centralised but operationally dispersed. While ministries set overall policy direction, individual institutions retain significant autonomy over non-degree credentials, resulting in limited cross-institutional recognition. Overall, the findings indicate that although national recognition authorities are well established for formal qualifications, explicit mandates and procedures for micro-credentials remain underdeveloped across all surveyed countries.

### 4.1.2 Credit Systems

Credit systems constitute a critical structural foundation for the potential integration of micro-credentials into formal higher education pathways. The survey reveals considerable variation across countries, ranging from full adoption of the ECTS to nationally defined credit-hour models. In ECTS-aligned systems such as Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and partially Lebanon, credits are explicitly linked to student workload and learning outcomes, providing a transparent basis for credit accumulation and transfer.

Several countries operate national credit systems that differ in structure and calculation. Sri Lanka applies a workload-based system under the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework, while Myanmar employs a modular credit unit system with clearly defined lecture and practical hour equivalencies. In Taiwan and parts of Southeast Asia, credit-hour systems remain dominant, with partial or informal mappings to ECTS for international compatibility.

In contrast, China and India lack unified national credit systems applicable across all institutions, particularly for short or non-degree learning. Credits are defined institutionally, limiting portability. The absence of standardised credit allocation for micro-credentials across most surveyed systems represents a significant barrier to their formal recognition and stackability.



### 4.1.3 Qualifications Frameworks

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) are widely recognised as essential reference tools for ensuring transparency, comparability, and recognition of qualifications. Most surveyed countries have established NQFs covering higher education, vocational education, or both. Armenia, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Taiwan all operate multi-level frameworks structured around learning outcomes and competency descriptors.

These frameworks provide a conceptual anchor for positioning micro-credentials by level, even where formal integration has not yet occurred. In several cases, such as Kyrgyzstan and Laos, policy discussions explicitly identify NQFs as the future basis for recognising short, stackable learning units. Alignment with regional frameworks, including the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, further strengthens this potential.

However, in countries such as China and Japan, the absence of a comprehensive, unified NQF limits systematic placement of micro-credentials. Lebanon's general NQF remains under development, while India's framework is still evolving in terms of operational clarity. Overall, while qualifications frameworks exist in most contexts, their practical use for micro-credential recognition remains largely prospective rather than implemented.

## 4.2. Micro-credentials Strategy

The survey findings demonstrate that few countries have adopted explicit national strategies for micro-credentials. Instead, development is predominantly institution-led, driven by labour market demands, lifelong learning agendas, and international project participation. In many cases, micro-credentials are framed as short courses, professional certificates, or micro-courses rather than as formally recognised academic credentials.

Countries such as Armenia, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam report participation in international initiatives, particularly Erasmus+ projects, which have stimulated pilot activities and conceptual discussion. Thailand and Vietnam illustrate more advanced experimentation, including MOOCs and credit bank pilots, although these remain fragmented. In contrast, China's approach is policy-driven but sector-specific, encouraging short programmes in priority economic areas without establishing a unified micro-credential framework.

Overall, the absence of comprehensive national strategies results in uneven implementation, limited scalability, and uncertainty regarding recognition. The data suggest a strong interest in micro-credentials across institutions, but insufficient policy coordination to support systemic adoption.

### 4.2.1 Definitions and Standards

A consistent finding across all surveyed countries is the lack of standardised definitions and formal standards for micro-credentials. Where definitions exist, they are typically institution-specific and describe micro-credentials as short, focused learning units designed to develop specific skills or competencies. These definitions often emphasise learning outcomes, limited duration, and relevance to professional practice.



Standards governing design, assessment, and documentation vary significantly. In some systems, emerging good practice includes specifying learning outcomes, workload or hours, assessment methods, and alignment with qualifications frameworks. However, such elements are not mandated nationally in most contexts, resulting in heterogeneous formats and limited comparability.

The absence of agreed standards undermines trust and hinders recognition across institutions and borders. Respondents consistently identified the need for common descriptors and minimum information requirements as a prerequisite for effective micro-credential recognition.

#### 4.2.2 Recognition Mechanisms

Recognition mechanisms for formal higher education qualifications are well established across surveyed countries, typically involving institutional evaluation under national regulatory oversight. Credit transfer, accumulation, and recognition of prior learning are applied to degree programmes with varying degrees of consistency. These mechanisms provide a partial foundation for recognising micro-credentials.

However, recognition of micro-credentials remains highly limited. In most cases, external micro-credentials are either not recognised at all or assessed on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis by academic committees. Only a small number of institutions report integrating micro-credentials into student records or degree pathways, usually under pilot arrangements or bilateral agreements.

The lack of formalised procedures, combined with uncertainty regarding quality assurance and equivalence, constrains institutional willingness to recognise external micro-credentials. This reinforces fragmentation and restricts learner mobility.

#### 4.2.3 Required Micro-credential Elements

Despite the absence of national standards, the survey reveals broad convergence regarding the core elements that micro-credentials should contain. Institutions across diverse systems consistently identified learning outcomes, workload, or learning hours, and assessment methods as essential components. Many also emphasised the importance of indicating credit value, level alignment, and mode of delivery.

Where qualifications frameworks exist, respondents highlighted the value of referencing framework levels to support transparency and recognition. Issuer identity, quality assurance status, and verification mechanisms were also frequently cited, particularly in discussions of digital credentials.

These shared expectations provide a strong empirical basis for defining common minimum requirements for micro-credentials at the regional level.

#### 4.2.4 Stakeholder Institutions

Stakeholder involvement in micro-credential development and recognition spans multiple levels, including ministries, quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and, in



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some cases, employers and professional bodies. Ministries of education and higher education commissions serve as primary policy actors, while accreditation agencies safeguard quality and institutional legitimacy.

At the institutional level, responsibility typically lies with academic senates, curriculum committees, international offices, and continuing education units. Employers and industry partners are increasingly involved in curriculum design, particularly for skills-oriented micro-credentials, although their formal role in recognition remains limited.

The findings suggest that effective micro-credential ecosystems require coordinated engagement among these stakeholders. Strengthening dialogue between regulators, providers, and labour market actors is essential for advancing recognition frameworks and supporting a CRM.



## 5. Cross-country Comparative Matrix: Required Micro-credential Elements

Table 1 on pages 40–41 was constructed through an inductive synthesis of the comparative evidence presented in the preceding “Country comparison” chapter and synthesises cross-country evidence on required micro-credential (MC) elements across the surveyed higher education systems. The columns represent those micro-credential characteristics that emerged most frequently and consistently across analysed national systems and institutional practices, identified through systematic coding of country profiles, with particular reference to Chapter 3 and Section 3.8 (Required Micro-credential Elements). Where relevant, this coding also draws on national credit systems, qualifications frameworks, and established recognition and quality assurance practices that implicitly define minimum documentation requirements. By operationalising these recurrent features as analytical dimensions, the table translates qualitative cross-country findings into a structured comparative matrix, enabling a transparent overview of the extent to which key elements - such as learning outcomes, assessment methods, workload indicators, credit attribution, and quality assurance status - are formalised or implied within different regulatory and institutional contexts.

An “x” indicates that a given element is either explicitly stated as a required component of micro-credentials in national or institutional documentation or can be clearly inferred from standard credit, curriculum, or recognition requirements applied to short or modular learning. The absence of an “x” does not imply that the element is irrelevant or excluded in practice, but rather that it is not systematically defined, mandated, or consistently evidenced at the national level. The matrix should therefore be interpreted as a comparative overview of formalisation and transparency, rather than as an exhaustive inventory of institutional practice.

Across the surveyed countries, the matrix indicates a clear hierarchy in the prevalence of required micro-credential elements. **Assessment methods** and **learning outcomes** are almost universally present, reflecting their central role in ensuring academic validity and trust across systems. Closely following are **workload indicators**, expressed as the number of hours and, in many cases, the number of credits. **Mode of delivery**, **assessment criteria**, **issuer identity**, and **quality assurance status** appear frequently, but less consistently formalised. By contrast, **course structure**, **teaching methodologies**, **syllabus descriptions**, and **course literature** are rarely specified as required elements at the national level and, where present, tend to remain institution-specific. The uneven distribution highlights that most systems prioritise outcome- and assessment-related information over detailed content descriptors when defining or recognising micro-credentials.



Table 1: Required micro-credential elements: cross-country comparison matrix

Country	Assessment methods	Learning outcomes	Number of hours	Number of credits	Level reference (NQF/EQF)	Mode of delivery	Assessment criteria	Issuer identity	Quality assurance status	Course structure	Teaching methodologies	Syllabus	Course literature
Armenia	x	x	x	x	x			x	x				
Cambodia	x	x	x	x	x	x							
China	x	x	x	x	x								
Georgia	x	x	x	x					x				
India	x	x	x	x		x							
Iran	x		x			x							
Japan	x	x											
Jordan	x	x	x	x			x						
Kyrgyzstan	x	x	x	x	x				x				
Laos	x	x	x	x	x	x							
Lebanon	x	x	x	x				x					
Myanmar	x	x	x	x		x	x	x					
Saudi Arabia	x	x	x					x					
Sri Lanka	x	x	x		x								
Taiwan	x	x	x	x	x	x					x		
Thailand	x	x	x	x			x						
Vietnam	x	x	x	x		x							
Oman	x	x	x					x					
South Korea	x	x		x	x								
United Arab Emirates	x	x	x					x					
Uzbekistan	x	x	x	x						x			
Philippines*	x	x					x		x				
Indonesia*	x	x					x		x				
Malaysia*	x	x					x		x				

Footnote legend:

An “x” indicates that the element is either explicitly stated as a required micro-credential element in national or institutional documentation, or clearly implied through standard credit, curriculum, or recognition documentation, even if not labelled specifically as a micro-credential requirement.

An “\*” indicates countries for which information was drawn from MICROCASAreports D1.1.<sup>2</sup> and D1.2<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> D1.1 [Micro-credentials in Southeast Asian Universities: Comparative Study](#)

<sup>3</sup> D1.2 [White Paper: Action Plan for Micro-credentials adoption in HE of SEA](#)



## 6. Key Findings and Trends

Building on the country-level analysis presented in Chapter 4, this chapter synthesises the comparative insights derived from the survey across the participating Asian higher education systems. While Chapter 4 highlighted national institutional contexts and approaches in detail, the following sections focus on cross-country patterns, divergences, and converging trends. The analysis draws on evidence from systems at different stages of micro-credential development, ranging from pilot-based experimentation in countries such as Taiwan and Jordan to more structured policy engagement observed in Oman, Thailand, and several Southeast Asian contexts addressed through the MICROCASA and MICRO4ASIA initiatives. This synthesis provides the basis for identifying implications for a coherent and trust-based recognition mechanism.

### 6.1.1 Similarities and Differences

Across the surveyed countries, the most consistent similarity is that micro-credentials are generally understood as short, skills- or competence-oriented learning units, yet they remain unevenly embedded in formal higher education recognition systems. In Armenia, Georgia, and Oman, micro-credentials are increasingly discussed within the context of national qualifications frameworks and quality assurance structures, whereas in Taiwan, activity remains largely institution-driven and project-based. Where micro-credentials exist, they are most often issued as institution-led short courses, certificates, micro-courses, or micro-majors, typically designed to enhance employability and continuing professional development rather than to function as fully regulated qualifications.

A further shared characteristic is the predominance of internal recognition. In most surveyed systems, including Lebanon, and Sri Lanka, micro-credentials are recognised primarily within the issuing institution, while recognition by other higher education institutions or across national borders remains limited and is frequently handled on an ad hoc basis. Differences between countries are primarily explained by varying levels of system readiness, which depend on the maturity of national qualifications frameworks, the transparency and stability of national credit systems, and the strength of quality assurance arrangements. In Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, comparative evidence points to increasing policy attention and structured implementation efforts, albeit accompanied by persistent variation across institutions.

### 6.1.2 Gaps and Challenges

The analysis identifies a number of recurring gaps that constrain the systematic adoption and recognition of micro-credentials. Foremost among these is the absence or incompleteness of national legal and policy frameworks explicitly addressing micro-credentials. This challenge is evident in countries such as Jordan, Myanmar, and Laos, where pilot initiatives coexist with unclear regulatory status. As a result, institutional interpretations remain fragmented, credential formats are inconsistent, and cross-system trust is limited.

A further challenge concerns recognition practices. In many systems, including China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, micro-credentials earned at one institution are not automatically



recognised by others, or are recognised only on a discretionary, case-by-case basis. This significantly limits portability and reduces the perceived value of micro-credentials for learners. Technical obstacles are compounded by the heterogeneity of credit systems, including ECTS-based models, credit-hour systems, and nationally defined frameworks with differing workload equivalences. Without harmonised translation principles, stacking and transfer remain difficult. These structural challenges are reinforced by uneven stakeholder engagement and varying levels of institutional readiness.

### 6.1.3 Emerging Good Practices

Despite uneven maturity across systems, several emerging practices can be identified as promising foundations for future recognition mechanisms. One key trend is the increasing emphasis on clearly articulated learning outcomes, which are widely treated as the primary unit of comparability. This approach is particularly visible in countries with established outcomes-based qualifications frameworks, such as Armenia, Oman, and Uzbekistan. Closely related is the growing attention to assessment transparency, with assessment methods and, in more advanced cases, assessment criteria being documented as integral components of micro-credentials.

Another notable practice is the gradual convergence around a core set of documented elements, including workload expressed in hours or credits, learning outcomes, assessment arrangements, and mode of delivery. This trend is reinforced by regional and project-level initiatives, most notably MICROCASA in Southeast Asia and MICRO4ASIA in Vietnam and Laos, which promote competence-based design, digital credentialing, and cooperation on recognition principles. Together, these practices point towards a transferable model for the development of a Common Recognition Mechanism grounded in transparency, trust, and institutional cooperation.



## 7. Common Certificate Elements for Micro-credentials

### 7.1. Introduction

Micro-credentials are increasingly used by higher education institutions, professional bodies, and online platforms to evidence small volumes of assessed learning. Their value in recruitment, credit transfer, and lifelong learning depends heavily on the clarity of the information displayed on the certificate. Where certificates omit key information (for example, learning outcomes, level, or assessment), third parties cannot reliably interpret or trust the achievement, limiting recognition and portability.

In this report, “elements” refer strictly to the information displayed on the micro-credential certificate (or an attached transcript/supplement that is issued together with the certificate). The objective is to identify a comprehensive, policy-usable set of certificate elements, distinguishing between (a) core/mandatory elements recommended by the EU Council Recommendation and the MICROBOL Common Framework (and reinforced by other European and national frameworks), and (b) optional elements that are frequently recommended or used in practice. The synthesis is complemented by institutional survey evidence from MICRO4ASIA and related studies.

This section is based on document synthesis and triangulation across the following sources:

- EU Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (2022/C 243/02), including its ‘standard elements’.
- MICROBOL ‘Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments’ Common Framework for Micro-credentials in the EHEA (2022), including its constitutive elements for certificates.
- European MOOC Consortium (EMC) Common Micro-credential Framework (CMF) and related European alliance practices (e.g., ECIU, EuroTeQ).
- Selected national frameworks and operational rules, as reflected in the analysed documents: the Netherlands Micro-credentials Pilot (Acceleration Plan) and SURF Edubadges; Ireland’s MicroCreds initiative; New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) micro-credential rules and application requirements; and Australia’s National Micro-credentials Framework.
- The Czech national analysis ([NPO SC C1 PS2 Analyza Final EN.pdf](#)) and MICROCASA’s comparative study on Southeast Asian universities.
- Institutional and system evidence from MICRO4ASIA’s Comparative Analysis.

### 7.2. Overview of International and European Frameworks

Across frameworks, there is convergence on a ‘minimum information set’ that allows third parties to interpret and verify the achievement. European guidance is anchored in the EU Council Recommendation (2022), which sets out standard elements for micro-credentials,



and the MICROBOL Common Framework (2022), which adapts Bologna tools (learning outcomes, credits, qualifications frameworks, and quality assurance principles) to micro-credentials in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

In parallel, provider-led frameworks (notably the European MOOC Consortium's CMF) standardise micro-credential transcripts and stress assessment, workload, level, and issuer identity. National frameworks such as those in the Netherlands (pilot + national register ambitions), Ireland (national discovery platform aligned with Europass), New Zealand (register-based approval rules), and Australia (critical information requirements) reinforce the same core descriptors, often adding operational detail such as review periods and learner identity assurance.

### 7.2.1 Mandatory Elements

Mandatory elements in this section are 'mandatory' in the sense that they are presented as required/core descriptor elements by major frameworks (EU Council Recommendation standard elements; MICROBOL constitutive elements; and widely adopted European/national practice). Institutions may add further fields, but omission of these core items materially weakens transparency and recognition.

**Learner identification:** A clear identification of the learner (typically full name and an institutional or other unique identifier).

**Micro-credential title:** The title/name of the micro-credential, stated in plain language.

**Issuer/provider and awarding body:** The provider/issuer and (where different) the awarding body/institution, including country/region. A signature or seal is commonly included to evidence official issuance.

**Date of issuance (and/or assessment/completion date):** The date the micro-credential was issued and, where relevant, the date of assessment or completion.

**Learning outcomes:** Explicit statements of what the learner knows, understands and can do on successful completion.

**Workload and credit value:** Notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes, expressed in hours and/or credits (ECTS wherever possible or a clearly defined national credit system).

**Level and qualifications framework reference:** Level of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential (NQF where possible; and, where relevant, EQF and QF-EHEA cycle references).

**Assessment type/method:** The type/method of assessment used to verify achievement of learning outcomes (including whether assessed on competence/proficiency).



**Quality assurance reference:** A statement of the quality assurance arrangements underpinning the micro-credential (internal QA and, where applicable, external QA/accreditation), with reference to recognised standards/registries where relevant.

**Authenticity and verification:** Information enabling verification of authenticity (e.g., unique credential identifier, verification URL/QR code, digital signature or registry entry).

In European frameworks, the above items closely map to the EU Council ‘mandatory’ standard elements (learner identification, title, issuer country/region, awarding body, date of issue, learning outcomes, workload/credits and level) and to MICROBOL’s constitutive elements (learner, provider, credential metadata, learning experience descriptors and authenticity).

### 7.2.2 Optional Elements

Optional elements enhance interpretability and support more automated recognition decisions, but are not consistently mandated across frameworks. Many are nevertheless frequently recommended, particularly for professional and cross-border use.

- Form of participation/delivery mode (on-site, online, hybrid; synchronous/asynchronous).
- Language of instruction (and, where relevant, bilingual certificate fields).
- Prerequisites, access requirements and admission criteria.
- Assessment supervision and identity verification arrangements (e.g., proctored, invigilated online, workplace-supervised).
- Grade/mark achieved (or pass/fail status), including grading scale where applicable.
- Field of study classification (e.g., ISCED subject area code; national classifications such as NZSCED).
- Start and end dates of learning activity; location of delivery (where relevant).
- Detailed content outline/syllabus and teaching/learning methods (often via a stable URL rather than printed in full).
- Credit transfer, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and articulation/stackability options (including any limits or conditions).
- Industry/professional body endorsement, where applicable (co-badging, logo, or endorsement statement).
- Review period/expiry (particularly where frameworks require periodic review for labour-market relevance).
- Evidence links (e.g., assessed portfolio artefacts) and alignment to competency/occupational standards.

### 7.2.3 Summary Table

The table below consolidates commonly recommended certificate elements. Sources indicate where the element is specified as core/mandatory in a framework and/or identified in surveys and practice.



Table 2: Summary of micro-credential elements

<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source (Framework/Survey)</b>
<b>A. Learner and credential identification</b>		
Learner's full name	Name of the credential holder as it should appear for official recognition.	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory); MICROBOL (constitutive); EMC CMF; institutional practice (NPO).
Learner identifier	Unique identifier (e.g., student number, national ID, eduID, or other controlled identifier) to disambiguate individuals and support verification.	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory – learner identification); MICROBOL; MICRO4ASIA survey.
Micro-credential title	Plain-language title of the micro-credential.	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory); MICROBOL; Australia NMF (critical information); NZQA listing requirements; EMC CMF.
Micro-credential ID / serial number	Unique credential number/UUID to support auditability and machine-readable verification.	MICROBOL (authenticity/verification); best practice (digital credentials); MICRO4ASIA survey (verification).
Date of issue	Date the certificate was issued.	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory); MICROBOL; EMC CMF.
Date of assessment or completion	Date assessment was completed and/or the learner met completion requirements (useful where delivery spans time).	MICROBOL (date of assessment/issuance); EMC CMF; Australia NMF (date of delivery).
Validity/review / expiry date	Where relevance must be periodically reviewed, or credential expires (common in fast-changing professional fields).	NZQA (review period 1–3 years); Australia NMF (date/schedule); best practice (QA/relevance).
<b>B. Issuer and awarding body information</b>		
Provider/issuer name	Legal name of the issuing institution/provider.	EU Council Recommendation (issuer country/awarding body); MICROBOL; Australia NMF (provider).
Country/region of issuer	Country/region where the issuer is established (supports cross-border interpretation).	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory); MICROBOL (provider including country).
Awarding body (if different)	Where the delivering organisation differs from the awarding institution, both should be stated with countries.	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory); MICROBOL.
Official logo(s)	Issuer/awarding body logo(s) for rapid visual recognition (often expected by users).	Institutional practice (NPO).



<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source (Framework/Survey)</b>
Signature/seal and authorised signatory	Signature/seal and, where used, the name/title of the authorised signatory (supports authenticity and governance).	MICROBOL (signature/seal); institutional practice.
<b>C. Learning achievement specification</b>		
Learning outcomes	What the learner knows, understands and can do; should be outcome-based and assessable.	EU Council Recommendation (mandatory); MICROBOL; EMC CMF; MICRO4ASIA survey (core element).
Workload/learner effort (hours)	Notional learner effort expressed in hours, ideally broken down in a credential specification; can be summarised on the certificate.	EU Council Recommendation (workload); Australia NMF (learner effort); EMC CMF (hours); MICRO4ASIA survey.
Credit value	Credit value (ECTS where possible; otherwise national credits with equivalence statement).	EU Council Recommendation (ECTS wherever possible); MICROBOL; EMC CMF; Netherlands Pilot (ECTS range); MicroCredits (ECTS range); NZQA (credits).
Credit system used	Whether ECTS or another system; include conversion guidance where relevant.	EU Council Recommendation; MICROBOL; best practice for cross-system recognition.
Level and cycle	Level of learning outcomes in NQF, and where relevant EQF and QF-EHEA cycle.	EU Council Recommendation; MICROBOL; EMC CMF; MICRO4ASIA survey.
Field of study / subject code	Classification such as ISCED subject area (or national codes, e.g., NZSCED) to aid comparability and analytics.	MICROBOL (ISCED); NZQA (NZSCED); best practice.
Mode of participation/delivery mode	On-site/online/hybrid and (where relevant) synchronous/asynchronous participation.	EU Council Recommendation (optional); MICROBOL (form of participation); Australia NMF (delivery mode); MICRO4ASIA survey.
Language of instruction	Language(s) in which instruction and assessment were conducted.	Australia NMF (language); best practice for international use.
Content description (short)	High-level description of key topics/structure; detailed syllabus typically provided via URL.	Australia NMF (content/description); best practice.
Start/end dates of learning activity	Period of learning activity (useful for recognition and audit).	EMC CMF; Australia NMF (date of delivery).
Location (where on-site)	Location(s) for on-site components; relevant for regulated professions and audit.	Australia NMF (delivery mode/location); best practice.
<b>D. Assessment and standards</b>		



<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source (Framework/Survey)</b>
Type of assessment	High-level characterisation (e.g., exam, project, portfolio, workplace demonstration).	EU Council Recommendation (optional – type of assessment); MICROBOL (assessment); EMC CMF; MICRO4ASIA survey.
Assessment method(s)	Specific methods used to generate evidence against learning outcomes.	MICRO4ASIA survey (core); EMC CMF; Report_Master definitions.
Assessment criteria/grading rubric	Transparent criteria/rubrics; may be summarised or linked in a credential specification.	Best practice (assessment transparency); MICRO4ASIA survey (assessment criteria as emerging practice).
Supervision and identity verification during assessment	Whether the assessment was supervised/proctored and how learner identity was verified.	EU Council Recommendation (optional); best practice for trust in online contexts.
Grade/mark achieved	Grade or pass/fail status; include grading scale where applicable.	EU Council Recommendation (optional); EMC CMF (if graded).
<b>E. Quality assurance, recognition and pathways</b>		
Type of quality assurance underpinning the micro-credential	Reference to internal QA and, where applicable, external accreditation/audit; include brief statement and/or link to QA record.	EU Council Recommendation (optional); MICROBOL (QA); MICRO4ASIA survey (QA status).
QA/accreditation body and reference	Name of accrediting/QA body, accreditation ID, or registry entry (where applicable).	EU Council Recommendation (QA instruments and registries); Netherlands Pilot (NVAO support); NZQA (approval/accreditation rules).
Stackability / integration options	Whether stand-alone or stackable; any defined pathways or conditions for credit transfer.	EU Council Recommendation (optional); MICROBOL (access/stackability logic); Netherlands Pilot and MicroCreds (stackability); MICROCASA (stackability awareness).
Prerequisites / access requirements	Entry requirements, prerequisites, and any required prior competences.	EU Council Recommendation (optional); MICROBOL (access requirements); NZQA (admission/entry requirements).
Recognition statement	Clarifies intended use (employment/CPD/credit) and whether recognition is at the discretion of receiving organisations.	EU Council Recommendation (recognition principles); MICROBOL (recognition via LRC/RPL); best practice.
Further information link	Stable URL to a credential specification page with full details (syllabus, hours breakdown, assessment criteria, QA documentation).	EU Council Recommendation (optional – further information); Australia NMF (publication of information); best practice.



Element	Description	Source (Framework/Survey)
<b>F. Digital verification and interoperability</b>		
Verification URL	Official web address where third parties can validate the credential's status and metadata.	MICROBOL (verification of authenticity); institutional practice (registries); best practice.
QR code	Encodes verification URL/credential identifier to support fast checks and reduce transcription errors.	Best practice; increasingly common in institutional implementations.
Digital signature / tamper-evident file	Cryptographic signature or hash to evidence integrity of the certificate file.	Best practice in digital credentialing; Open Badges and verifiable credentials.
Europass compatibility / Europass wallet identifier	Capability to store/share via Europass Digital Credentials and wallet infrastructure.	EU Council Recommendation (platforms such as Europass); Ireland MicroCreds (Europass link); NPO institutional practice.
Open Badges metadata (where issued as a badge)	Embedded metadata (issuer, criteria, learning outcomes, evidence) enabling automated verification and portability.	Report_Master definitions; 1EdTech Open Badges standard (best practice).
Registry entry (national/sectoral/institutional)	Reference to a trusted register (e.g., NZQA Register; planned national registers; institutional badge platforms).	Netherlands Pilot (register ambitions; SURF Edubadges); NZQA register; NPO analysis.
Blockchain / verifiable credentials reference (where used)	Reference ID for blockchain/VC infrastructure (e.g., EBSI pilots) where adopted.	European alliance pilots (ECIU/EBSI) reported in NPO analysis; best practice where implemented.

### 7.3. Digital Verification and Portability

Digital verification features are now treated as essential enablers of trust and portability, even when not explicitly labelled as 'mandatory' in all frameworks. A robust certificate typically combines human-readable information with machine-readable, verifiable metadata.

#### Common approaches

- QR code and verification URL linking to an official institutional or registry record of the credential (supporting rapid authenticity checks).
- Unique credential identifier (serial number/UUID) that resolves to the same verification record and supports audit trails.
- Digitally signed PDFs and/or platform-issued verifiable credentials to prevent tampering (including the use of cryptographic signatures and hashes).
- Digital badges conforming to the Open Badges standard, embedding issuer identity, learning outcomes, criteria, evidence links, credit value and issue date as metadata.



- Integration with credential wallets and exchange platforms, notably Europass (EU), and national or sectoral registers (e.g., the Netherlands micro-credentials register ambitions; NZQA register).
- Use of blockchain-based infrastructures in European pilots (e.g., EBSI early adopter activities) to support tamper-evident verification and cross-border interoperability.

#### *Quality assurance references*

Quality assurance (QA) references on the certificate strengthen recognition by signalling that the micro-credential is backed by defined processes for design, delivery and assessment. In Europe, external QA is often referenced to ESG (higher education) and/or EQAVET (VET), and to registries/labels where available (e.g., DEQAR for external QA results). In practice, certificates may include a brief QA statement plus a link to a fuller credential specification that records approval, review dates, and accrediting bodies.

#### *Insights from Institutional Practice*

Institutional evidence in the analysed sources indicates strong convergence around a core set of descriptors. The Czech national analysis reports that providers typically issue micro-credential certificates as digital records (often printable), including the provider logo and standard elements defined by a common framework, to support portability and recognition.

The MICRO4ASIA comparative survey similarly reports broad agreement that learning outcomes, workload/hours, and assessment methods are essential certificate components, with many respondents also emphasising credit value, level alignment, delivery mode, issuer identity, quality assurance status, and verification mechanisms. In Southeast Asia, MICROCASA highlights that digital technologies are increasingly used for delivery, assessment, and verification, supporting accessible and portable records of learning.

### **7.4. Recommendations**

For Vietnamese and Laotian universities seeking alignment with global best practices, a pragmatic approach is to adopt a standard certificate template that (i) satisfies the EU Council's mandatory standard elements and MICROBOL constitutive elements, and (ii) adds a small number of operational fields that respond to local and regional recognition needs.

#### *Suggested standard set for Vietnam and Laos*

- Adopt a 'core descriptor set' on every certificate: learner identification; micro-credential title; issuer/provider and awarding body; issuer country/region; date of issue; learning outcomes; workload (hours) and credit value; level referenced to the national qualifications framework (and, where feasible, mapped to AQR/EQF for international readability); assessment type; and a QA statement.
- Add a minimal digital verification package: unique credential ID; verification URL; QR code; and a digitally signed PDF or verifiable badge credential.
- Provide a stable online 'credential specification' page (linked from the certificate) that holds extended information: detailed syllabus/content, assessment criteria/rubrics,



supervision/identity verification arrangements, grading scale, review date, and stackability/credit-transfer conditions.

- Use bilingual fields (local language + English) for the title, issuer, and key descriptors (learning outcomes, credits, level), to support cross-border recognition and employer use.
- Reference quality assurance explicitly: the internal approval body (e.g., academic senate/continuing education committee), any external accreditation/QA agency, and the review cycle (e.g., every 2–3 years).
- If stackability is intended, state the pathway and conditions (e.g., ‘Eligible for credit transfer up to X credits towards programme Y, subject to departmental decision’) to avoid implying automatic entitlement.

### **7.5. Implementation considerations**

To operationalise the above, universities may establish an institutional micro-credential register (or a consortium register) that issues verification URLs and stores the canonical metadata record, enabling QR-based validation and integration into emerging credential wallets. Where national policies on digital credentials develop, alignment with open standards (Open Badges and verifiable credential data models) will reduce vendor lock-in and improve interoperability.



## Conclusion

This report has been produced as Deliverable D4.1 of the MICRO4ASIA project within Work Package 4. Its purpose is to consolidate evidence on how micro-credentials (and functionally comparable short learning offers) are currently conceptualised, documented, quality assured, and recognised across selected Asian higher education systems and globally. The report aims to strengthen transparency and trust in micro-credentials as instruments for internationalisation, lifelong learning, and labour-market responsiveness, while remaining sensitive to divergent regulatory and institutional realities.

To meet this objective, the report has collected primary data on policies and practices across 21 Asian higher education systems. Country profiles have been structured to capture the organisations and rules that shape recognition decisions, including: national recognition authorities and quality assurance bodies; credit systems and workload conventions; the existence and operational use of national qualifications frameworks; the maturity of micro-credential strategies, definitions, and standards; and the procedures used to recognise short learning in academic or professional contexts. The analysis also synthesises cross-country patterns through thematic sections, including a comparative matrix of required micro-credential elements, and an examination of emerging approaches to digital credentialing, verification and portability.

The work has been undertaken through a comparative, mixed-methods design that triangulates documentary analysis with stakeholder-reported practice. Desk research and policy review were complemented by structured telephone/online interviews and a mirrored written questionnaire, enabling comparable coverage where synchronous engagement was not feasible. Sampling followed a purposive approach aimed at securing policy-relevant system diversity; in total, the evidence base combines desk research with approximately forty successful stakeholder contacts. Inputs were captured in a standardised country template and coded against common analytical dimensions to support benchmarking. Targeted follow-up, fact-checking and updates were incorporated up to January 2026, and reporting conventions were applied to protect respondents' identities.

In addition, the MICROCASA report and the NPO report were treated as key reference documents throughout the analysis. They provided authoritative background evidence, institutional and policy context, and practical detail that enabled the desk-based review to be triangulated and the comparative narrative to be grounded in established documentation. Drawing on these sources strengthened the internal coherence of the findings and ensured that the conclusions and recommendations are anchored in the most relevant and credible project and stakeholder evidence available.

Overall, the findings indicate that micro-credentials are widely understood as short, skills- or competence-oriented learning units, but they are unevenly embedded in formal recognition infrastructures. In most contexts, recognition remains primarily internal to the issuing institution; cross-institutional and cross-border recognition is limited and frequently discretionary. This fragmentation is reinforced by the absence (or early-stage development)



of explicit national micro-credential policies, by heterogeneous credit and workload conventions that complicate comparability, and by uneven alignment between short learning offers and established quality assurance and qualifications-framework arrangements. Terminological variation (for example, short courses, certificates, micro-courses or micro-majors) further reduces interpretability for third-party users.

Despite these divergences, the comparative analysis demonstrates substantive convergence on the information needed to make micro-credentials understandable and assessable for recognition. Learning outcomes, documented workload (hours and/or credits), and clear assessment methods are consistently treated as essential descriptors. Many systems and institutions also emphasise issuer identification, verifiable learner identity, quality assurance status, mode of delivery, and, where available, level referencing to national or regional qualifications frameworks. The report also highlights a strong and growing emphasis on digital verification and portability, including unique credential identifiers, verification URLs and QR codes, digitally signed documents, and the use of metadata-rich digital badges as practical enablers of trust even where formal policy remains nascent.

On this basis, the report formulates recommendations that translate comparative evidence and international reference points into implementable steps, with particular attention to Vietnam and Laos. These include adopting a core descriptor set for all micro-credential certificates (supported by a stable online credential specification), embedding a minimal digital verification package, and stating stackability conditions explicitly where credit transfer is intended. The accompanying implementation considerations emphasise governance, quality assurance, and register-based approaches that can support consistent decisions and reduce administrative burden. Collectively, the analysis provides the foundation for designing and validating the MICRO4ASIA Common Recognition Mechanism by identifying which criteria can be harmonised across contexts and where contextual flexibility will be required to ensure both robustness and applicability.



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11. Czech national analysis: NPO Transformace VŠ – SC C1 – Micro-credentials ([NPO SC C1 PS2 Analyza Final EN.pdf](#)).
12. MICROCASA (2024). Micro-credentials in Southeast Asian Universities: Comparative Study (Deliverable D1.1).



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Fact-check notes and supplementary sources (January 2026)

The following notes document targeted fact-checking and updates against publicly available sources. Updates were applied where numerical scale indicators or institutional counts in the draft could be substantiated or corrected. Where official statistics were not readily accessible, figures were rephrased to avoid unjustified precision.

#### Key corrected or substantiated statements

Georgia – higher education institution count and enrolment: Updated to 63 HEIs (19 state, 44 private) and 54.2 thousand enrolled students for the 2024/2025 academic year, based on the National Statistics Office of Georgia indicator report. Vietnam – higher education institution count and enrolment: Updated to approximately 243 universities nationwide and national student population close to 2.1 million, based on recent reporting that references Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training and national planning documents.

Taiwan – institution count and enrolment trend: Clarified that 149 universities and colleges were reported as of 2021, and added demographic-related decline with MoE-reported reductions and projections for total university enrolment falling below 860,000 in 2025.

China – higher education scale: Substantiated the scale statement (approximately 47.63 million higher education students in 2023) using the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China media highlight.

Oman – private higher education scale: Substantiated the statement that Oman includes 27 private universities and colleges with an enrolment of around 35,000 students, based on the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation website.

#### Source list (URLs)

National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat): Indicators of Higher Education Institutions (2024/2025 academic year). <https://geostat.ge/media/68714/Indicators-of-Higher-Education-Institutions---%282024-2025-ACADEMIC-YEAR%29.pdf> Vietnam’s higher education institution count (reporting citing MoET): <https://global-angle.com/vietnam-education-2025/>

Vietnam planning and current enrolment (reported): <https://en.sggp.org.vn/vietnams-university-student-count-to-surpass-3-million-by-2030-post116038.html>

Taiwan institution count and students (2021 snapshot): <https://www.us2taiwan.org/taiwan-higher-education>

Taiwan MoE enrolment decline and projections (Focus Taiwan, citing MoE): <https://focustaiwan.tw/society/202508170012>

China Ministry of Education (PRC): 2023 higher education student total. [https://en.moe.gov.cn/news/media\\_highlights/202403/t20240304\\_1118146.html](https://en.moe.gov.cn/news/media_highlights/202403/t20240304_1118146.html)



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Oman Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation: Private HEIs in Oman.  
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United Arab Emirates Commission for Academic Accreditation: list of institutions.  
<https://caa.ae/pages/institutes/all.aspx>

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANQF – Armenian National Qualifications Framework  
AQRF – ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework  
CAA – Commission for Academic Accreditation (United Arab Emirates)  
CRM – Common Recognition Mechanism  
ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System  
ENIC-NARIC – European Network of Information Centres / National Academic Recognition Information Centres  
EQF – European Qualifications Framework  
HEI – Higher Education Institution  
HEIs – Higher Education Institutions  
LNQF – Lao National Qualifications Framework  
MNQF – Myanmar National Qualifications Framework  
MoE – Ministry of Education  
MoET – Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam)  
MoHERI – Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (Oman)  
MoHESRI – Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (Thailand)  
NQF – National Qualifications Framework  
OQF – Oman Qualifications Framework  
PQF – Professional Qualifications Framework (Thailand)  
QA – Quality Assurance  
SLQF – Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework  
TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training  
UGC – University Grants Commission (Sri Lanka)  
VQF – Vietnamese Qualifications Framework

### Appendix 2: Interview structure

The following structured guide was used for telephone/online interviews and mirrored in the written questionnaire.

### Structured Interview Guide



to gather the necessary data from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or relevant national authorities. The structure ensures that you collect standardized, comparable information aligned with the benchmarking indicators and the goal of designing a Common Recognition Mechanism (CRM).

## **Interview Structure for Comparative Analysis of Micro-credential Recognition**

### **Section 1: Interviewee and Institution Information**

- **Name:**
- **Position/Role:**
- **Department/Unit:**
- **Institution Name:**
- **Country:**
- **Email/Contact Information:**
- **Date of Interview:**
- **Mode of Interview (Email, Online Call, etc.):**

### **Section 2: Institutional Context**

1. **Can you briefly describe your institution's role in higher education (size, focus areas, student numbers)? If possible, prefill with information from internet**
2. **Does your institution issue or recognize micro-credentials?**
  - Yes  No  In development/planning phase

### **Section 3: Credit System and Qualifications Framework**

3. **What credit system does your institution use (e.g., ECTS, national system)?**
4. **Is your institution aligned with a qualifications framework (EQF/NQF)?**
  - Yes  No If yes, please specify the framework and level alignment.

### **Section 4: Micro-credentials Strategy and Definitions**

5. **Is there an institutional or national strategy for micro-credentials? Please describe briefly.**
6. **How does your institution define a micro-credential? Is this definition formally adopted?**
7. **What are the required elements a micro-credential includes in your institution? If MCs are not used, note it down and relate the information to normal HE courses.**

Example

- Learning outcomes
- Number of hours



- Assessment methods
- Teaching methodology
- Number of credits
- Level (EQF/NQF)
- Mode of delivery
- Any other?

### **Section 5: Recognition Mechanism**

8. **Does your institution recognize micro-credentials obtained from other institutions or countries?**
- Yes    No    In certain cases only
9. **Can you describe the process used to assess and recognize external micro-credentials? If MCs are not recognized, note it down and relate the information to normal HE courses.**
- Who is responsible for evaluation?
  - What are the criteria and steps?
10. **Is there a formal decision-making body or recognition panel involved?**
11. **Are micro-credentials integrated into student records or degree programs?**
- Yes    No    Only informally

### **Section 6: Digital Credentials and Standards**

12. **Does your institution use digital credentialing tools (e.g., Open Badges 3.0, Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure)?**
- If yes, which platforms or standards are used?
13. **Is metadata (e.g., learning outcomes, credits, level) included in issued digital credentials?**
- Yes    No    In development

### **Section 7: Perceptions and Challenges**

14. **What are the main challenges your institution faces in recognizing micro-credentials?**
- Fragmentation    Lack of standards    Policy uncertainty    Technical barriers
15. **What factors would improve the recognition process?**
- National policy    Common standards    Trusted platforms    Staff training



**16. How do you perceive tools like Europass, EQF, or the Bologna tools in supporting recognition?**

**Section 8: Final Comments**

**17. Do you have any other comments, recommendations, or insights regarding micro-credential recognition or the idea of a common recognition mechanism (CRM)?**

**Consent**

- Do you consent to your input being included in a public report (anonymized if preferred)?
  - Yes    No    Yes, but anonymize personal/institutional identity

**Appendix 3: Report structure**

The following structure was used to compile the country reports based on the combined evidence from desk research, interviews and questionnaires.

**3. Country-Level Comparative Analysis**

(Repeat this section for each country covered)

- **3.1 Country Profile**
  - Name, number of HEIs, student population.
- **3.2 National Recognition Authorities**
  - Key institutions, contact points.
- **3.3 Credit System**
  - Type used (e.g., ECTS), conversion methods.
- **3.4 Qualifications Framework**
  - EQF/NQF usage, mapping procedures.
- **3.5 Micro-credentials Strategy**
  - National strategies, policy documents.
- **3.6 Definitions and Standards**
  - Institutional/national definitions of micro-credentials.
- **3.7 Recognition Mechanism**
  - Description of how courses are recognized.
  - Description of how MCs are recognized.
  - Enumeration of the standard MC elements (learning outcomes, credits...)
- **3.8 Required MC Elements**
  - Learning outcomes, hours, assessment methods, etc.
- **3.9 Stakeholder Institution**
  - HEI profiles and respondent details.