

## External quality assurance of micro-credentials: challenges and opportunities

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Synchronising Micro-Credentials in the EU Ecosystem: Permanent  
Representation of Slovenia to the EU, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025

# European Quality Assurance Register



## Mission:

Enhance transparency and trust, promote international recognition

## Role:

Official register of QA agencies that comply with the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)**:

- Established by and for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- Founded by the E4 organisations (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE), jointly governed with HE ministries
- Non-profit, independent and acting in the public interest



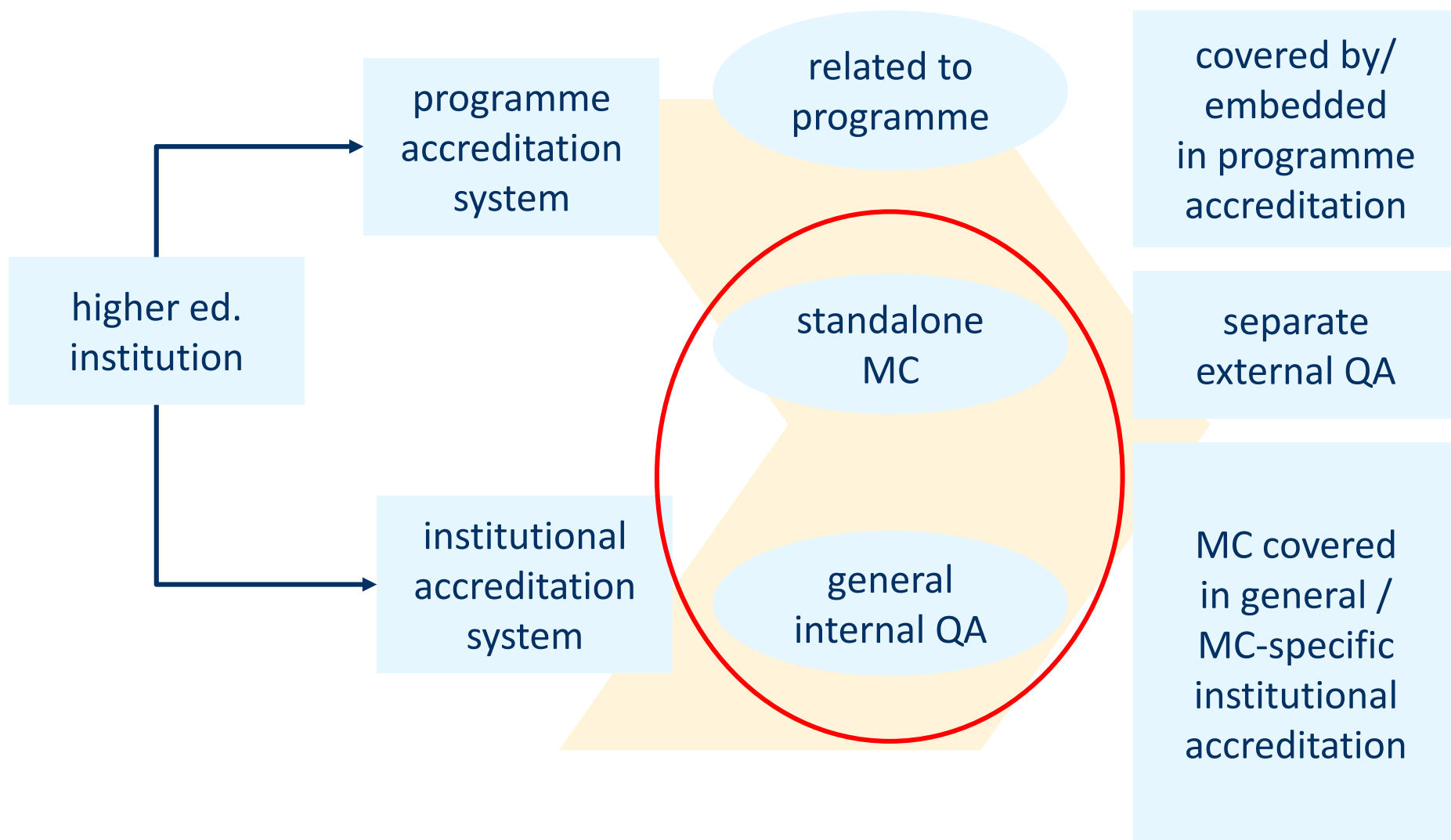
# Overview of the current landscape of micro-credentials



- **The number of micro-credentials**, measured by number of courses at 6 main learning platforms, **rose for more than 200% between 2018 and 2022** (OECD, 2023)
- Cedefop (2023) shows that **variety of actors** such as public organisations, companies and employment services, offer programmes at higher education level
- Employers surveyed (N=384) had a **stronger preference for micro-credentials offered by accredited providers** (62%) and to the ones being **offered as part of the national formal offer** of education and training (48%) (Cedefop, 2023)

# QA of micro-credentials: Scenarios in practice

eqar



## Key challenges for external QA



- Education structured in smaller units of learning
- So-called "*unbundling*" of educational offer and the learning and teaching process
- (in most contexts) Lack of formal framework as the ones that exist for full, official degrees
- Correct and transparent referencing to qualification frameworks

# The ESG and micro-credentials

ENQA (2023): Quality assurance of micro-credentials  
(*working group report*)

*D1. How do you review the relevance/applicability of individual ESG (Part I) for QA of MC? (Mean)*



**Figure 6.** Relevance/applicability of the ESG (Part I) (1 to 5 least relevant/applicable to most relevant/applicable).

# The ESG and micro-credentials (some examples)



- 1. Clear communication about the learning outcomes, workload and assessment (ESG 1.2; ESG 1.3; ESG 1.8)**
  - 2. Consider flexible learning paths and modes (ESG 1.3)**
  - 3. Adequate resources to assist learning (ESG 1.6)**
- ...

# **Database of external quality assurance results (DEQAR)**

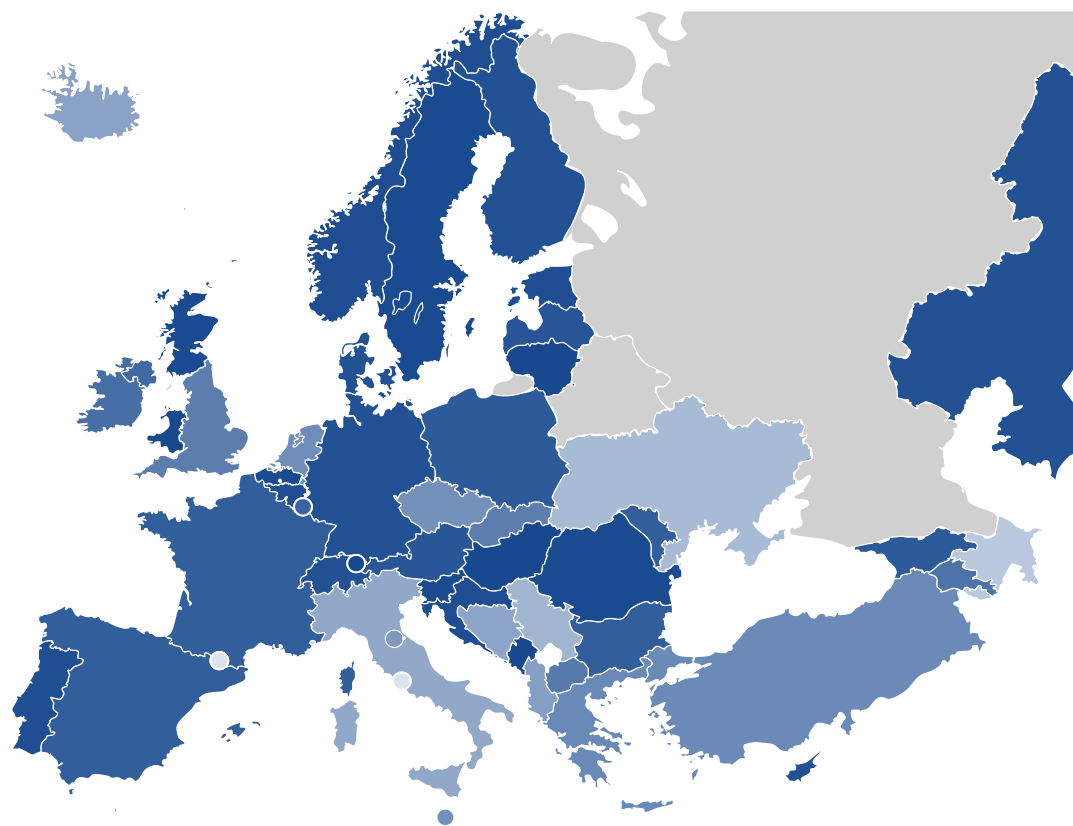


# DEQAR in a nutshell



Clear and transparent access to external QA reports (i.e. **accreditations and evaluations**) and decisions by EQAR-registered agencies (**only higher education**)

	May 2025
Reports	115 128
HE Institutions (at least 1 report)	4 515
Higher Education Systems (≥ 50% of HEIs)	24
Agencies	56



No reports    10%    of HEIs in ETER/national list    100%

# Information in DEQAR



Accreditations and evaluations of (programme level):

**a) Full degree programmes → Full (nationally) recognised degree**

**b) Micro-credentials and other → Not leading to a full (nationally) recognised degree, but at HE level**

\*Expansion supported by the IMINQA project

# Definition of a micro-credential in DEQAR



- a) Consists of a **workload expressed in ECTS** in the range of **1 and 59 ECTS credits**
- b) Related to **EQF/ISCED level (5), 6, 7 or 8** OR **QF EHEA level short, first, second, third cycle**
- c) Does **not** lead to a **full (recognised) degree**

# DEQAR in practice



eqar.eu > Database > Search > By report

Database

Sort by

1 - 20 of 94847 reports

Results per page

Upload date

« < 1 > »

10 20 50 100

Refine your search

Search term

Provider name, city, coun



✓ Provider type

Only higher education institution(s) (94788)

Other provider(s) covered (59)

Report type

Programme type

Report language

Decision

ESG activity

Status

Cross-border review

Report date - valid to / Uploaded / Changed

Agency / Type

Education provider / Programme

Country

- 30/04/2024 uploaded 29/02/2024 changed 29/02/2024

ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

an College

21/07/2023 - 31/07/2027 uploaded 29/02/2024 changed 29/02/2024

BAC ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

SBS Swiss Business School

Switzerland

29/11/2023 - 29/11/2028 uploaded 29/02/2024 changed 29/02/2024

ARACIS PROGRAMME AUTHORISATION/ACCREDITATION (FIRST CYCLE, SECOND CYCLE)

West University of Timișoara - Marketing (first cycle degree)

Romania

29/11/2023 - 29/11/2028 uploaded 29/02/2024 changed 29/02/2024

ARACIS PROGRAMME AUTHORISATION/ACCREDITATION (FIRST CYCLE, SECOND CYCLE)

West University of Timișoara - Physics (first cycle degree)



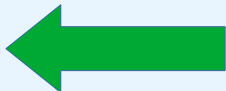
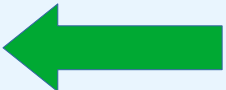

# Certification of a micro-credential



## 3D modeling software - CAD 1

Educational Centre "Zerde" Limited Liability Partnership

### A3ES: Programme accreditation

Programme	3D modeling software - CAD 1
Qualification	
Level ?	first cycle 
Programme type	Micro-credential
Workload (in ECTS credits)	15 
Assessment and certification	Assessment based certificate 
Learning outcomes	<u>use CAD software</u> 
Field of study	<u>engineering, manufacturing and construction</u> 

# Connected with European Commission's ESCO API



## Learning outcomes

drawing

tend drawing kiln - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

cold drawing processes - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

technical drawings - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

tend bar drawing machine - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

create AutoCAD drawings - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

metal drawing processes - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

use artistic materials for drawing - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

drawing kiln operator - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

## Field of study (ISCED-F)

accounting and taxation - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

agriculture - <http://data.europa.eu/esco/isced-f/081>

agriculture not elsewhere classified - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

agriculture not further defined - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary - <http://data.europa.eu/esco>

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## Main observations



1. Methods for connecting micro-credentials **to a QF level** (reference – entry qualification)
2. The **use of terminology** “diploma”, “bachelor”, “master” **is not always protected via national legislation** (hence providers can utilise it for own purposes)
3. While different QA approaches exist, **the majority of evaluations so far were conducted through QA on provider or programme level** (rarely single MC)

**Thank you!**

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