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QA OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN THE EHEA

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

enqa.

SOME INITIAL CHALLENGES

- Need to understand **what they mean** (different names, types, providers, purposes and uses)
- **Need to protect students' interests**, support transparency, recognition, credits, quality provision....
- **Hightened policy focus**, e.g. Rome communique', and EU policies on European Education Area and EU Skills Agenda (the hot topic of 2020-2021) → employability
- **Spontaneous market** by a diverse range of providers

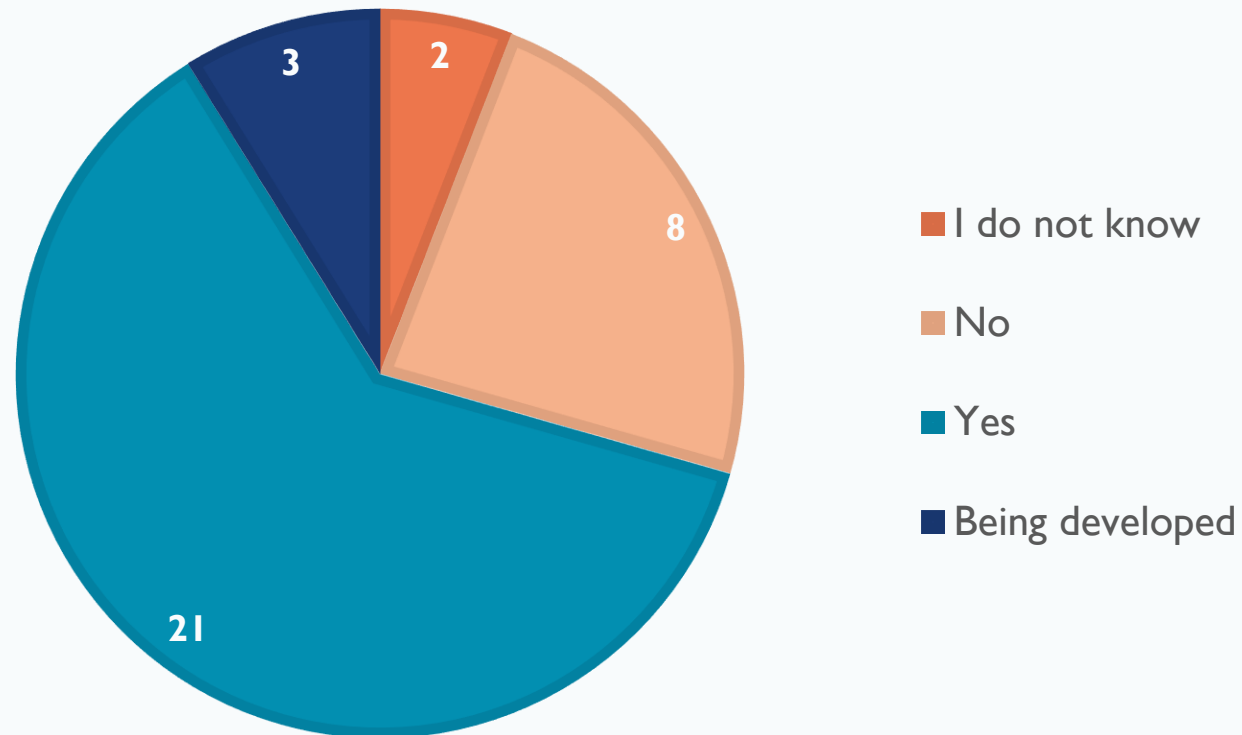


MICROBOL PROJECT

- looks into how to integrate microcredentials into the existing EHEA frameworks and tools/propose adaptations:
 - Qualifications frameworks /use of ECTS
 - Recognition practices
 - Quality assurance

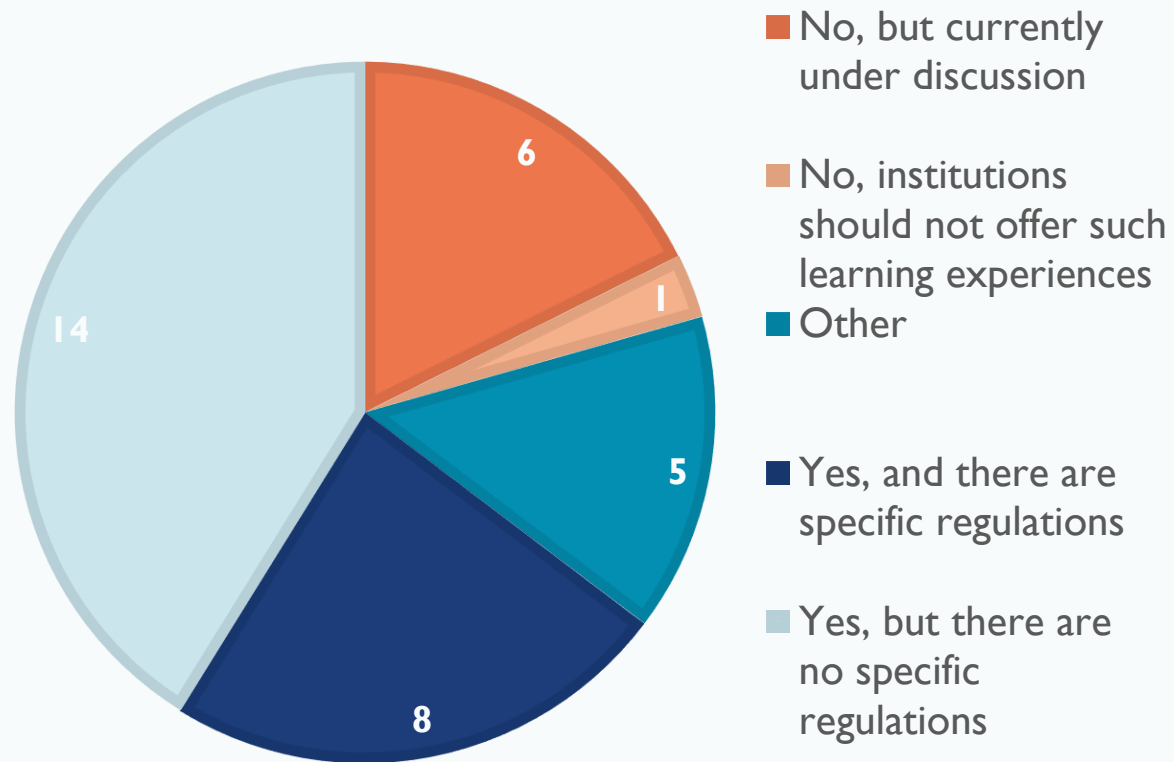
<https://microcredentials.eu/about-2/microbol/>

COUNTRIES THAT OFFER OR ARE DEVELOPING MICRO-CREDENTIALS



- Offered: 21 countries
- Being developed: 3 countries
- Not offered, nor being developed: 8 countries

REGULATION OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

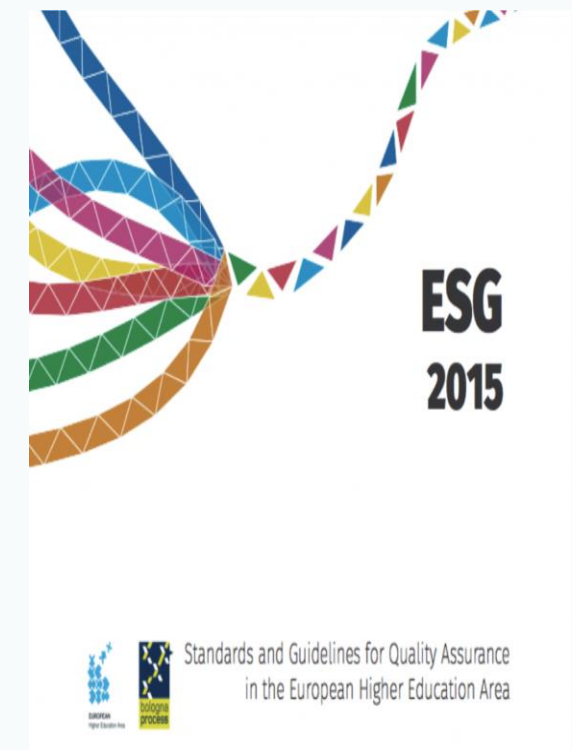


- Regulated at national level: 22 countries
 - Specific regulations: 8
 - No specific regulations: 14
- Under discussion: 6 countries
- Institutions should not offer MCs: 1 country

THE EUROPEAN QA FRAMEWORK

“The ESG (...) provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education.”

- Internal and external QA
- Apply to **all education by all HEIs, everywhere**
- But... the ESG are generic principles → need to be „translated“ into different contexts, without creating „B-classes“



QA OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS BY HEIS – WHAT?

- **Content/learning itself**
 - **ESG apply!** Especially important ESG 1.2 – design and approval of programmes and ESG 1.3 – student-centered learning, teaching and assessment
 - **Mode of delivery has an impact** (good practice from elearning re: student support, SCL, teachers' skills...)
 - **Specific guidance** on how to use the ESG for micro-credentials may be needed
- **The «envelope» (quality and reliability of the credential itself)**
 - Portability, directly accessible, ownership by the user
 - Safe storage (if electronic)
 - Traceable information
 - Information on **learning outcomes**, quality, level, workload (credits), and assessment of LOs (a «microcredential supplement»)

→ an «EU standard»

QA OF MICROCREDENTIALS BY HEIS - HOW

- ENQA mini-survey of agencies:
 - 1/2 **responsibility of internal QA**, but **support and guidance from agency**
 - 1/3 **responsibility of internal QA**, **no need for support** from the agency
- MICROBOL project:
 - Best if **EQA** through **institutional evaluation**, i.e. agency ensuring HEI has good methods to ensure the quality of microcredentials internally
 - HEIs should have a **published policy** on how they deal with microcredential QA
 - **No «credential-level» external QA** (too much, too slow)
 - How to deal with this in programme accreditation systems? Should/are all microcredentials part of existing (and QAed) programmes?

MAIN MESSAGES

- **QA process need to exist** and cover microcredentials to maintain trust
- Particularly important to **avoid parallel systems of offer**: accredited and non-accredited
- Important in order to **ensure/facilitate recognition**, particularly for HE use; traditional RPL not feasible

BUT...

- Processes should **not be excessively burdensome** and expensive (agencies and HEIs), nor take too long time!
- Need to be **sufficiently flexible (joint delivery, professionally oriented, innovative...)**
- **Clear information** about the QA methods used, the validity and potential use of the credential
- **Per support, discussions and guidance needed**

Remember: not a trademark → creation of a (non compulsory) label? Available to any provider?



WHERE

WHAT

WHEN

WHY

HOW

WHO