

LEARNING TO LEARN THROUGH MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN A REGIONAL SETTING



POLICY BRIEF

Australia

The Erasmus+ project “Learning to Learn through Micro-credentials in a Regional Setting” ([L2L MicroCred](#)) is a two-year initiative (2024-2026) aimed at boosting adult self-efficacy and employability in regional contexts. The international consortium brings together the University of Inland Norway (Norway), LUMSA University (Italy), the University of Limerick (Ireland), and Central Queensland University (Australia) to deliver high-quality, open-access micro-credentials tailored to local needs, fostering social inclusion and learner motivation.

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PROJECT

Globally, the L2L MicroCred project advances the state of the art in inclusive digital pedagogy by demonstrating how to successfully deliver e-learning to low-literacy cohorts (down to grade three reading thresholds) without triggering cognitive or content overload. It moves beyond traditional, stagnant online formats by seamlessly blending structured pathways with highly interactive, gamified features (such as star-based motivation and drag-and-drop sorting) that elevate student engagement and combat learning monotony. Among the main research outputs, the Open Box Model and Pedagogical Toolbox stand out.

The project introduces an innovative technical layout by embedding a heavily utilised AI summary feature that allows struggling readers to independently chunk dense text into manageable, low-word variants. Finally, it redefines online assessment architecture by replacing penalising testing systems with a supportive framework that leverages non-punitive retry mechanics, transforming incorrect answers into opportunities for active information reinforcement, and restructures digital badging into practical, resume-mapped electronic credentials.

NATIONAL OUTPUTS

In the Australian national context, the L2L Microcred project successfully designed and validated an online foundational skill-building framework specifically tailored for vulnerable, at-risk, and disengaged youth aged 15–19 enrolled in regional employment initiatives like the 'Get Set for Work' and 'Skilling Queenslanders for Work' programs. The project outputs directly confront the realities of regional infrastructure gaps by formulating strategies to navigate the local "digital divide" (lack of devices and internet access). It establishes a novel, highly targeted, community-partnered dissemination model by deploying micro-credentials through local youth employment. The main features of the micro-credential ***Future Skills: Make Your Move*** are summarised in the table below.

4 Weekly Modules	30 Activities	Hybrid	Non-credit bearing
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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS

1 *Universal Design for Learning*

Future MC developments should move away from text-heavy instructions by embedding native text-to-speech/screen-reader features, utilising AI-driven text-chunking tools to condense information. Navigation icons should also be intuitive and color-coded to reduce interface friction. Providing text simplification and auditory alternatives transforms the module layout into an inclusive environment that accommodates reading difficulties without oversimplifying the educational content.

2 *Supportive, Gamified Formative Assessments*

Micro-credential assessment architecture should reject traditional, high-stakes testing layouts in favour of highly interactive, non-penalising formative tasks, such as drag-and-drop column sorting or resume-building exercises. When a user inputs an incorrect answer, the system should actively reinforce the correct core message rather than displaying a generic, unhelpful "try again" prompt. Designing a supportive framework with non-penalising retry mechanisms builds learner confidence and ensures that mistakes are leveraged as active, constructive learning moments rather than moments of academic exclusion.

3 *Hybrid Certification*

Disengaged youth and those unfamiliar with modern corporate systems rarely understand the inherent worth of an abstract digital badge, which dampens their motivation to finish the course. Translating this concept into tangible career utility drives course completion. Designers should clearly demystify abstract digital badging terminology at the very beginning of the course, framing badges transparently as "electronic certificates" that carry explicit value for online resumes and job applications. The digital architecture should feature a simple option to print tangible, physical certificates.

4 *Self-paced progression*

Traditional academic calendars systematically penalise disengaged youth whose lives are often disrupted by casual employment, housing instability, or mental health fluctuations. Course architectures should be structured into bite-sized pieces with persistent "re-entry" design.

5 *Relational support and community integration*

Micro-credential funding allocations must include a protected, non-instructional loading dedicated to relational, human-centred wraparound support. Funding rules should mandate partnerships between tertiary providers, youth advocacy services, and regional community organisations to co-design learning tasks around authentic, situated local challenges. Delivery models must integrate community-based mentors or institutional navigators tasked with addressing practical logistical, pastoral, and access hurdles that automated student-support platforms routinely fail to resolve.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MICRO-CREDENTIALS



Micro-credentials are central tools for acknowledging and documenting learning achievements gained through short, targeted training activities. Their core purpose is to enable continuous upskilling and reskilling by allowing adults to update and expand their competences throughout their working lives within a lifelong learning pathway. In response to rapid labor market shifts, rising competence demands, and the risk of social exclusion, micro-credentials directly address current workforce challenges by filling the gap for flexible learning opportunities.

EUROPEAN RECOGNITION

The strategic global value of micro-credentials is recognized by major international policy frameworks, including the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, UNESCO, and the OECD, positioning them as a key lever for building flexible, inclusive, and resilient learning.



THE EUROPEAN PROJECT LANDSCAPE

L2L MicroCred builds on nearly a decade of EU-funded work on micro-credentials: from mapping and standards (MicroHE) to a common policy framework (MICROBOL) and dialogue between universities, the world of work and learners (MicroCredX). European University Alliances are now testing issuance, quality assurance and recognition at scale through policy experimentation (4EU+MICI), e-sealed European Digital Credentials (ECIU) and shared design practices (CHARM-EU, Osservatorio Unico per le Microcredenziali – Digital Education). CRED4TEACH and the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies such as EduSTA apply micro-credentials to teachers' professional development. L2L MicroCred adds a complementary perspective: micro-credentials designed for regional contexts, focused on adult self-efficacy and inclusion.

ACTIONS FOR SCALABILITY

Adaptive Scalability Model

Evidence from pilot phases in Norway, Italy, Ireland, and Australia supports adaptive scalability rather than direct course replication.

To expand the reach of micro-credentials without compromising quality or exacerbating the digital divide, the framework leverages a shared digital architecture while embedding localized support, stackable learning pathways, and targeted tutoring.

Seven Key Components

1. Tools for learning needs and target group definition
2. Modular and adaptable course design
3. Authentic tasks and formative assessment
4. Differentiated levels of difficulty
5. Tutorship and possibility for peer and social interaction
6. Transparent progression and certification
7. Support of local associations and institutions for delivery





Discover more on
<https://www.l2lmicrocred.net/>