



Practical Guide to Awarding Micro-credentials in Emotional Intelligence and Non-Discrimination Activities

Work Package 4 - Activity 4.2

EQUINI project

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this practical guide on micro-credentials (MCs). This document is based largely on our hands-on experience gained throughout the project. We also refer to officially applicable documents and guidelines, but the most valuable insights come from what we learned while actually working on micro-credentials. We do not focus here on strict definitions or formal EU policy language. Instead, our goal is simple: to show you that micro-credentials are not as intimidating as they may seem.

We aim to “disarm” micro-credentials for you. There are challenges — we faced them too during the project — but there are also practical ways to handle them. Did we succeed? Yes, we did. And we are confident that you can take on the challenge as well.

Throughout this guide, we share what worked for us, what to watch out for, and tips to make your journey smoother. Think of it as a companion helping you navigate the world of micro-credentials with confidence, clarity, and a bit less stress.

Let’s start from the beginning: what exactly is a micro-credential? Sounds serious, right? To keep things simple, we begin with a short, user-friendly definition. Later, as you dive deeper into designing or issuing micro-credentials, you may feel the need to explore a more formal, detailed definition — and that is perfectly fine. For now, think of micro-credentials as a digital certificate that proves you have learned a specific skill or set of skills. It shows what you can do, how much effort it took, and is officially recognized, shareable, and often linked to European or national qualification standards.

This guide is organized around the actual steps and experiences of our project team. We encountered obstacles, experimented with solutions, and gradually developed methods that work in real-life institutional settings. You won’t just read theory here — you’ll see what we tried, what worked, and how we adjusted when things didn’t go as planned.

Finally, remember: this guide is meant for you, the user. It is a practical toolkit, not a regulatory manual. Our aim is to give you confidence, so you can design, implement, or recognize micro-credentials without being overwhelmed. Micro-credentials are tools — and like any tool, the more you practice with them, the more useful they become. Go on Europass, explore how it works. At first, you may feel intimidated. But step by step, you might even enjoy it.

This graphic below captures the spirit of this Guide. Micro-credentials may look complex at first glance — full of procedures, platforms, terminology, and European frameworks. But when you break the process down into manageable steps, it becomes a journey rather than a barrier.

The winding path symbolizes exactly that: learning by doing. Starting with a simple question — *What is a micro-credential?* — and moving step by step through planning, problem-solving, practical tools, insights, and finally real interaction with systems such as Europass.

The icons represent the elements we discovered along the way: practical work (tools), focus and objectives (target), connecting pieces (puzzle), moments of understanding (lightbulb), and digital certification (Europass). None of these elements stands alone — they form a coherent path that becomes clearer with each step.

Most importantly, the graphic reflects our core message: don't be afraid to explore.

Micro-credentials are not a closed system reserved for experts. They are tools — and tools are meant to be used. Step in. Experiment. Play with them. Sometimes the only way to understand something is simply to start.





As a complement to this Guide, two additional project documents offer deeper context and practical detail. In *Procedure for Issuing Micro-credentials at Lodz University of Technology* (Activity 3.2), you will find information about the micro-credential procedure implemented at Lodz University of Technology, illustrating the institutional framework and the step-by-step process for issuing micro-credentials. In *Standard Descriptions of the EQUi Learning Pathways* (Activity 3.1), you will find the twelve learning pathways developed during the project, including a summary of the needs analysis and their connection to transversal skills and emotional intelligence. Together, these documents help you see the full picture providing a comprehensive view of both the practical implementation of micro-credentials and the broader context of learning design.

2. CHALLENGES ON THE WAY: MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND INCLUSION

The implementation and awarding of micro-credentials in the field of emotional intelligence and non-discrimination present a number of institutional, conceptual, technical, and cultural challenges. These challenges are particularly significant in the case of transversal and socio-emotional competences, which are inherently more complex to define, assess, and validate than technical or discipline-specific skills. In practice, in the project we faced difficulties on **two interconnected levels**.

First, there are challenges related to **micro-credentials themselves**. As relatively new instruments within higher education systems, micro-credentials raise questions about governance, quality assurance, alignment with qualification frameworks, digital infrastructure, recognition, and institutional legitimacy. They require clear procedures, carefully formulated learning outcomes, reliable assessment models, and coordination across multiple units within the institution. Even when working with well-defined technical competences, designing and issuing micro-credentials demands organisational maturity and methodological precision.

Second, there are challenges stemming from the **specific thematic focus of this project** — **transversal skills, emotional intelligence, and non-discrimination**. These competences are dynamic, context-sensitive, and behaviour-based. Unlike discipline-specific knowledge, they cannot be fully captured through traditional academic assessment formats. They relate to attitudes, interpersonal interactions, ethical awareness, and situational judgement. Measuring such competences requires nuanced evaluation methods, ethical sensitivity, and a careful balance between standardisation and contextual relevance.

When these two dimensions intersect — a relatively new certification instrument (micro-credentials) applied to inherently complex, socio-emotional and transversal competences — the level of complexity increases. Institutions must simultaneously ensure academic credibility, transparency,



and portability of credentials, while also respecting the subtle, human-centred nature of the skills being assessed.

This chapter explores these layered challenges in a structured way. Rather than presenting them as barriers, we treat them as realities to be understood and managed. Recognising their dual nature — systemic and thematic — is the first step toward designing micro-credentials that are both methodologically sound and genuinely meaningful in fostering inclusive, emotionally intelligent academic environments.

2.1 Conceptual and Epistemological Challenges

2.1.1 Measuring Intangible Competences

Emotional intelligence, empathy, intercultural awareness, and inclusion-related skills are context-dependent, relational in nature, and behaviourally expressed rather than purely knowledge-based.

Unlike cognitive or technical skills, they cannot be assessed solely through written exams or standardised testing. Institutions must therefore develop robust, performance-based and reflective assessment methodologies capable of capturing behavioural change, attitudinal development, and demonstrated interpersonal competence.

The absence of universally standardised assessment tools for transversal competences increases the burden on institutions to justify the validity and reliability of their evaluation models.

2.1.2 Standardisation vs. Context Sensitivity

Micro-credentials require clearly defined and standardised learning outcomes to ensure transparency and portability. However, emotional and inclusion-related competences are deeply embedded in local cultural contexts, institutional cultures, and national equality frameworks.

There is an inherent tension between the need for standardisation (for recognition and interoperability), and the contextual nature of social and emotional learning. Institutions must balance comparability with contextual relevance.

2.2 Alignment with Qualification Frameworks

2.2.1 Mapping to Recognised Taxonomies

Aligning learning outcomes with recognised European frameworks (e.g., ESCO classification, EQF levels) is time-consuming and methodologically demanding. It requires precise wording of outcomes, careful verification of terminology, ensuring measurable formulations, avoiding vague or overly descriptive statements.



Transversal skills often appear in taxonomies as broad descriptors, requiring additional institutional interpretation to make them operational.

2.2.2 Positioning within Institutional Qualification Structures

Many higher education institutions are structured primarily around formal degree programmes, ECTS-based modules, and discipline-specific curricula.

Introducing micro-credentials may raise questions regarding their equivalence or non-equivalence to ECTS, their relationship to formal qualifications, recognition within internal career advancement frameworks, and compatibility with national higher education regulations.

Without clear institutional policy, micro-credentials risk being perceived as supplementary rather than strategically integrated.

2.3 Recognition and International Portability

2.3.1 Cross-Border Recognition

When micro-credentials are issued by a single institution or within a national system, concerns may arise regarding international recognition, employer awareness, and/or comparability across countries.

This challenge is particularly relevant in international projects involving multiple universities.

Digital infrastructures such as the Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure improve portability; however, recognition ultimately depends on stakeholder awareness, employer trust, and institutional reputation.

2.3.2 Employer Understanding of Transversal Credentials

Employers may prioritise technical or discipline-specific certifications, lack awareness of the value of emotional intelligence credentials, and/or question how such skills were assessed.

Institutions must therefore ensure that micro-credentials clearly describe learning outcomes, assessment methods, workload, competence level. Transparency becomes essential for labour market credibility.



2.4 Technical and Digital Infrastructure Challenges

2.4.1 Platform Constraints

Digital credential platforms (e.g., Europass) require adherence to predefined structures and metadata fields. Limitations may include restricted character limits, mandatory dropdown fields, inflexible categorisation systems, and/or limited options for describing innovative pedagogical approaches.

These constraints may require compromises between accurate pedagogical representation, and technical compliance.

2.4.2 Administrative and Data Management Burden

Issuing micro-credentials involves collecting verified participant data, documenting assessment results, generating personalised digital documents, ensuring compliance with data protection regulations, and maintaining archival systems.

This creates additional administrative workload and necessitates coordination across academic units, quality assurance bodies, certification offices, and IT departments.

Without clearly defined procedures and role allocation, implementation becomes inefficient and time-consuming.

2.5 Institutional Governance and Coordination

2.5.1 Cross-Unit Coordination

The implementation of micro-credentials often requires approval by academic bodies, consultation with legal units, alignment with quality assurance procedures, involvement of certification offices, and strategic endorsement by university leadership.

This multi-level governance structure can slow down implementation and require repeated revisions before final approval.

2.5.2 Institutional Culture and Acceptance

Introducing micro-credentials may encounter scepticism from academic staff, concerns about over-proliferation of credentials, doubts regarding the academic legitimacy of soft skills certification, resistance to non-traditional learning formats.

Gaining institutional support requires evidence-based justification, pilot implementations, demonstration of labour market relevance, and alignment with institutional strategy.



2.6 Quality Assurance Challenges

2.6.1 Ensuring Consistency Across Editions

For micro-credentials to maintain credibility, institutions must ensure consistent assessment standards across different cohorts, comparable learning outcomes across editions, and stable evaluation criteria regardless of trainer.

Given the interactive and reflective nature of emotional intelligence trainings, maintaining standardisation without reducing authenticity is a complex task.

2.6.2 Avoiding “Attendance-Based Certification”

One of the major reputational risks is issuing micro-credentials based solely on participation rather than demonstrated competence.

Inclusion-related and emotional intelligence credentials must include demonstrable performance components, require active participation, verify behavioural application, and document assessment evidence.

Failure to do so may undermine institutional credibility.

2.7 Ethical and Sensitivity Considerations

Certifying competences related to: discrimination, diversity, empathy, emotional regulation, requires particular ethical sensitivity.

Assessment must avoid psychological overreach, respect participant privacy, avoid stigmatisation, and ensure safe learning environments.

There is a delicate balance between evaluating competences and respecting personal boundaries.

2.8 Sustainability and Long-Term Integration

2.8.1 Resource Allocation

Micro-credential implementation requires financial investment, trained personnel, IT infrastructure, and administrative support.

Without long-term budgeting, initiatives may remain project-based and unsustainable.

2.8.2 Integration into Career and HR Systems

For staff development, micro-credentials should be recognised in promotion procedures, integrated into professional development plans, and acknowledged in performance evaluation systems.

Without institutional integration, their motivational impact may be limited.



2.9 Conclusion

The awarding of micro-credentials in emotional intelligence and non-discrimination activities represents a strategic innovation in higher education. However, it involves methodological complexity, governance coordination, digital infrastructure adaptation, and cultural change within institutions.

Addressing these challenges requires clear internal procedures, transparent assessment frameworks, alignment with European standards, institutional commitment at leadership level, continuous quality improvement.

When these conditions are met, micro-credentials can become a credible, internationally portable, and strategically valuable instrument supporting inclusive and emotionally intelligent academic environments.

3. MAKING IT WORK: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

After identifying the layered challenges related both to micro-credentials as an institutional instrument and to the specific nature of transversal and socio-emotional competences, the next logical step is to move from analysis to action. This section does exactly that.

The recommendations presented here are not abstract principles. They offer structured, practical and operational guidance designed to support institutions in implementing micro-credentials in a coherent, credible and sustainable way. If Chapter 2 described *what makes this area demanding*, this chapter focuses on *how to respond to those demands in practice*.

Importantly, the implementation of micro-credentials in emotional intelligence and non-discrimination requires attention on two parallel tracks.

On the one hand, institutions must ensure that micro-credentials are methodologically sound, procedurally clear, quality-assured and strategically embedded within existing governance frameworks. Without defined responsibilities, documented workflows, assessment standards and digital readiness, micro-credentials risk remaining isolated initiatives rather than integrated educational tools.

On the other hand, because the project concentrates on transversal skills — particularly emotional intelligence, inclusion and non-discrimination — implementation must reflect the human-centred and context-sensitive nature of these competences. Learning outcomes must be clearly structured, assessment methods must rely on observable performance, and evaluation processes must remain transparent while respecting ethical and psychological boundaries.



This dual focus — system-level robustness and thematic sensitivity — shapes the recommendations that follow. They are designed to strengthen institutional legitimacy, ensure academic credibility, maintain ethical integrity and support long-term sustainability.

The goal is not merely to issue micro-credentials correctly, but to embed them responsibly within institutional practice, professional development structures and inclusion-oriented strategies.

The following sections provide a structured roadmap covering governance, design, assessment integrity, digital preparedness, stakeholder engagement, ethical safeguards and sustainability. Each recommendation responds directly to the challenges identified earlier and translates them into actionable institutional steps.

3.1 Governance and Strategic Integration

3.1.1 Institutional Anchoring

Micro-credentials should be formally anchored in institutional development strategy, staff development framework, and lifelong learning strategy. Additionally, the ones referring to emotional intelligence should be anchored in equality and diversity policy.

This prevents marginalisation and strengthens institutional legitimacy.

Beyond formal anchoring, institutions should treat micro-credentials as instruments of organisational change. When strategically embedded, they do not merely certify individual competences; they signal institutional priorities. Integrating micro-credentials into strategic documents communicates that emotional intelligence and inclusion are not optional add-ons, but core institutional values.

3.1.2 Dedicated Coordination Structure

Institutions are advised to establish a micro-credential coordinator, or a cross-functional working group involving academic, QA, HR, and IT representatives.

Clear allocation of responsibilities significantly reduces implementation delays.

Regular cross-unit meetings, progress reviews, and reporting to senior leadership can ensure that micro-credentials remain visible and strategically relevant rather than becoming isolated technical initiatives.

3.2 Design and Standardisation

3.2.1 Structured Learning Outcome Framework

Adopt a three-layer outcome model:

1. Core transversal competence (e.g., “demonstrate inclusive communication”),

- 
2. Observable behaviour (e.g., “apply active listening techniques in conflict scenarios”),
 3. Contextual application (e.g., “respond to discriminatory comments in academic settings”).

This structure balances standardisation with contextual relevance.

3.2.2 Assessment Rubrics

Develop detailed rubrics specifying performance indicators, minimum acceptable level, criteria for distinction (if applicable), qualitative descriptors.

Rubrics ensure consistency across trainers and cohorts.

3.3 Assessment Integrity

3.3.1 Demonstration-Based Evaluation

Prioritise assessment methods that require active demonstration: scenario simulations, group problem-solving, presentation of inclusion action plans, reflective analytical reports. Avoid purely theoretical or attendance-based certification.

Demonstration-based assessment ensures that learning outcomes are not just theoretical but genuinely applied. It increases credibility of the micro-credential with both learners and employers.

3.3.2 Documentation of Evidence

Maintain internal documentation of assessment tools, evaluation forms, anonymised performance samples (where appropriate), quality assurance reports.

This strengthens audit readiness and transparency.

3.4 Digital and Administrative Preparedness

3.4.1 Pre-Configured Templates

Prepare standardised templates for micro-credential descriptions, learning outcome wording, ESCO mapping, assessment descriptions. Templates reduce administrative errors and ensure alignment with digital credential infrastructures.

Using pre-configured templates also ensures consistency across different programmes and trainers, supports rapid onboarding of new staff, and helps maintain quality standards when scaling micro-credentials across multiple departments or faculties.

3.4.2 Clear Procedural Workflow

Establish a documented workflow including: Programme approval, Needs analysis documentation, Learning outcome validation, Delivery, Assessment, Quality review, and Digital issuance. The workflow should specify responsible units and timelines.

A transparent workflow not only prevents bottlenecks but also signals to staff and leadership that micro-credentials are strategically integrated into institutional processes. Regular monitoring and feedback loops within this workflow support continuous improvement and institutional learning.

3.5 Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

3.5.1 Consultation Phase

Engage employers, equality experts, and external stakeholders in validating relevance of learning outcomes, reviewing assessment methods, and confirming labour market applicability.

Regular consultation helps ensure micro-credentials meet real-world needs, builds trust among external partners, and supports recognition beyond the issuing institution. Feedback loops can guide iterative improvements and align micro-credentials with evolving industry and societal expectations. This increases external credibility.

3.5.2 Clear Communication

Micro-credentials should clearly communicate what the holder can demonstrably do, how competence was verified, workload and level of complexity.

Use accessible language. Clear communication increases trust and encourages uptake by learners, managers, and employers, demonstrating the tangible value of the micro-credential in professional and academic contexts.

3.6 Ethical Safeguards

3.6.1 Psychological Safety

Ensure that training environments are respectful and inclusive, participation in reflective activities is structured but not coercive, and personal disclosures are voluntary.

Encourage facilitators to establish clear ground rules, promote trust among participants, and provide guidance on handling sensitive topics. Supporting psychological safety not only protects learners but also strengthens the credibility and acceptance of the micro-credential within the institution.

3.6.2 Transparent Assessment Criteria

Participants should receive clear explanation of assessment criteria, examples of expected performance, and feedback after evaluation.

Where appropriate, document how assessments are conducted and ensure consistency across trainers and cohorts. Transparent criteria and well-documented assessment processes reduce perceived subjectivity and build confidence among participants, faculty, and external stakeholders.

3.7 Sustainability and Institutional Impact

3.7.1 Integration into HR Systems

Micro-credentials should count toward professional development records, be recognised in internal promotion frameworks, and support leadership development pathways.

When integrated into HR systems, micro-credentials can gradually influence institutional culture. Recognition within appraisal systems, promotion procedures, and leadership training sends a clear message that transversal competences are valued alongside academic and technical achievements.

Over time, this contributes to redefining what institutional excellence means — expanding it to include inclusive communication, ethical awareness, and emotionally intelligent leadership.

3.7.2 Continuous Review Mechanism

Implement a cyclical review process: participant feedback, outcome achievement analysis, trainer reflection, periodic update of learning outcomes and programme content.

This aligns micro-credentials with evolving diversity challenges and labour market trends.

A review mechanism should not be limited to quality control. It should function as a strategic learning loop for the institution. By systematically analysing outcomes and feedback, institutions can identify emerging competence gaps, adjust diversity strategies, and refine staff development priorities.

In this way, micro-credentials become not only certification tools, but also instruments for institutional self-reflection and adaptive governance.

3.8 Final Consideration

The successful awarding of micro-credentials in emotional intelligence and non-discrimination requires more than procedural compliance. It demands:

- institutional maturity,
- methodological rigour,

- 
- strategic vision,
 - ethical responsibility,
 - and long-term commitment.

At a strategic level, micro-credentials in this domain represent more than innovative certification formats. They offer institutions an opportunity to operationalise their declared values. By formally recognising emotional intelligence and inclusion-related competences, institutions move from policy rhetoric to measurable practice.

When embedded coherently across governance structures, HR systems, quality assurance processes, and digital infrastructures, micro-credentials can contribute to gradual cultural transformation. They help normalise inclusive behaviours, legitimise transversal competences, and reinforce expectations regarding respectful academic environments.

When supported by coherent governance, transparent assessment, and strategic alignment, micro-credentials can become a transformative instrument in fostering inclusive, emotionally intelligent academic environments.

Ultimately, their long-term impact depends not only on technical implementation, but on whether institutions are willing to treat them as part of a broader commitment to inclusive excellence and responsible academic leadership.

4. OPERATIONAL RISK MATRIX

The table below summarises the main challenges we encountered when implementing micro-credentials in emotional intelligence and inclusion, the potential risks they bring, and practical strategies to mitigate them. Think of it as a “map” of what can go wrong — and how to prevent it.

Each row highlights a specific challenge, such as difficulty in measuring social competences or platform limitations, shows what could happen if it is not addressed, and provides a concrete mitigation approach that worked for us in the project. This matrix is designed as a practical tool for institutions embarking on micro-credential initiatives: it helps anticipate obstacles, plan preventive measures, and keep both learners and stakeholders confident in the value of the micro-credentials.

Table 1. Operational Risk Matrix (Challenge → Potential Risk → Mitigation Strategy)

Challenge	Potential Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Difficulty in measuring emotional and social competences	MCs issued without verified skills; credibility at risk	Use performance tasks (simulations, scenarios, reflections); apply clear rubrics
Overly generic learning outcomes	Low transparency; weak employer recognition	Formulate measurable, action-oriented learning outcomes aligned with ESCO terminology
Standardisation vs. contextual relevance	Loss of comparability or loss of contextual validity	Use core standardised outcomes + context-specific examples
Weak alignment with qualification frameworks	Institutional rejection; unclear status within university	Map outcomes to ESCO and reference EQF levels; get academic body approval
MCs seen as “attendance certificates”	Reduced credibility; stakeholder scepticism	Require successful completion of assessment as a mandatory condition for issuance
Limited employer awareness	Low labour market impact	Describe outcomes & assessment clearly; consult employers
Technical platform constraints	Programme details may be incomplete	Develop internal templates pre-aligned with platform requirements
Administrative burden	Delays in issuance; procedural bottlenecks	Assign clear roles; prepare step-by-step internal procedures; automate data collection
Cross-unit governance complexity	Implementation delays	Appoint a designated micro-credential coordinator or task force
Inconsistent standards across editions	Quality variation; reduced trust	Develop standardised assessment rubrics and trainer guidelines
Ethical sensitivity in assessment	Participant discomfort; privacy concerns	Ensure voluntary participation; clarify assessment criteria; avoid psychological profiling
Lack of long-term funding	Unsustainable initiatives	Integrate MCs into institutional development and HR strategies
Lack of recognition in career progression	Low motivation among staff	Include MCs in promotion & professional development policies

5. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The questions presented below are the very ones we asked ourselves at the beginning of the project — and while working through the different Work Packages. These were not abstract, theoretical doubts. They were real, practical questions that appeared when we started designing, organizing, and issuing micro-credentials. Step by step, as the work progressed, we began to find answers. Sometimes quickly. Sometimes after a few attempts.

What we share here is the result of that journey. It reflects the experience we accumulated, the lessons we learned, and the solutions that proved workable in our institutional context.

But let us be clear: this is not a collection of perfect answers. We are not claiming to be infallible. We are sharing what worked for us — knowledge shaped by practice, discussions, trial and error, and institutional realities. Your context may be different. Your challenges may look slightly (or entirely) different. And that is perfectly fine.

Treat these FAQs as a starting point, not a final destination. Use them, adapt them, question them — and build your own experience on top of them.

Q1. What is a micro-credential (MC)?

A micro-credential is a certified, digital recognition of verified learning outcomes that an individual has achieved following a short, clearly defined learning experience. It represents the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, or competences, including both subject-specific and transversal competences (e.g., teamwork, digital literacy, intercultural awareness), aligned with transparent and measurable standards. Key characteristics of a micro-credential:

1. **Learning Outcomes-Based** – The MC explicitly specifies the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired, formulated in measurable terms, aligned with the learning outcomes framework of the issuing institution.
2. **Workload and Level** – The MC is associated with a defined workload (expressed in ECTS or hours of learner effort) and a level reference to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and/or national qualifications frameworks (e.g., PQF).
3. **Assessment and Verification** – Achievement of the learning outcomes is formally verified through appropriate assessment methods; mere attendance does not constitute sufficient grounds for issuance.
4. **Digital and Portable** – Micro-credentials are issued in digital format, authenticated by the issuing body, and can be shared, stored, and transferred across platforms, including the Europass system.

5. **Stand-Alone or Modular** – They may be awarded independently or as part of a larger qualification or learning pathway, enabling flexible and modular learning.
6. **Quality-Assured** – MCs are subject to institutional quality assurance procedures, ensuring transparency, credibility, and compliance with European standards.
7. **Metadata Inclusion** – Each MC contains essential metadata, including title, issuing body, learning outcomes, workload, EQF/PQF level, assessment method, learning mode, date of issuance, and validity period (if applicable).

Now that you’ve seen the simple, user-friendly definition in the Introduction, it’s time to raise the bar a bit. The full definition above is more detailed and structured — it captures the complexity of micro-credentials in a professional, formal way. Don’t be intimidated. Think of it as a “next level” that helps you understand all the elements that make a micro-credential meaningful and credible.

Below is a visual version of the definition, which may help you remember the key points more easily. Sometimes seeing information in a structured, graphic form makes the complexity feel manageable — and easier to recall when you start designing, or using micro-credentials yourself.

Key Characteristics of a Micro-Credential



A micro-credential is a certified, digital recognition of verified learning outcomes that an individual has achieved following a short, clearly defined **learning experience.** It represents the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, or competences, including both subject-specific and transversal competences (e.g., teamwork, digital literacy, intercultural awareness), aligned with transparent and measurable standards.

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
 Learning Outcomes-Based	The MC explicitly specifies the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired, formulated in measurable terms, aligned with the learning outcomes framework of the issuing institution.
 Workload and Level	The MC is associated with a defined workload (expressed in ECTS or hours of learner effort) and a level reference to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and/or national qualifications
 Assessment and Verification	Achievement of the learning outcomes is formally verified through appropriate assessment methods; mere attendance does not constitute sufficient grounds for issuance.
 Digital and Portable	Micro-credentials are issued in digital format , authenticated by the issuing body, and can be shared, stored, and transferred across platforms, including the Europass system.
 Stand-Alone or Modular	They may be awarded independently or as part of a larger qualification or learning pathway, enabling flexible and modular learning ✨
 Quality-Assured	MCs are subject to institutional quality assurance procedures, ensuring transparency, credibility, and compliance with European standards.



Q2. Can micro-credentials replace formal qualifications?

No. Micro-credentials are not equivalent to full degrees or formal qualifications. They complement formal education by recognising short learning experiences, validating transversal skills, supporting lifelong learning pathways.

They may, however, be integrated into formal qualification structures if institutional regulations allow.

Q3. Can micro-credentials carry ECTS credits?

Yes, if institutional and national regulations permit it.

However:

- Not all micro-credentials must carry ECTS.
- If ECTS are assigned, workload and learning outcomes must comply with formal academic standards.
- Clear distinction should be made between credit-bearing and non-credit micro-credentials.

Please note that requiring ECTS for every micro-credential significantly strengthens its academic credibility, comparability, and potential for credit transfer or stacking into larger qualifications.

However, it also increases administrative complexity and raises the entry threshold for launching new short forms of education.

Institutions should therefore balance flexibility and quality assurance when deciding whether ECTS allocation should be mandatory for all micro-credentials or applied selectively depending on their purpose and scope.

Q4. Can a micro-credential be issued based solely on attendance?

No.

Attendance alone is not sufficient. Awarding a micro-credential requires verification that the participant has achieved the defined learning outcomes through an appropriate assessment process.

Q5. How long should a micro-credential remain valid?

The validity period depends on institutional policy and the nature of the competence.

Options include: indefinite validity, time-limited validity (e.g., 3–5 years), renewal based on refresher training.

Competences related to regulations or rapidly evolving practices may justify limited validity.



Q6. Who is responsible for approving a micro-credential?

Approval responsibilities should be clearly defined in institutional regulations. Typically, this may involve academic bodies or programme committees, quality assurance units, continuing education centres, designated micro-credential coordinators.

Clear governance prevents procedural ambiguity.

Q7. Can external trainers deliver micro-credentials?

Yes, provided that: their qualifications are verified, learning outcomes and assessment criteria are institutionally approved, quality assurance procedures are followed, and final certification is issued by the authorised institution.

Q8. How are micro-credentials recognised internationally?

Recognition depends on transparency of learning outcomes, alignment with recognised frameworks (e.g., ESCO), use of interoperable digital credential systems, and institutional reputation.

Digital issuance enhances portability, but employer awareness remains crucial.

Q9. Should micro-credentials be free of charge or fee-based?

This depends on institutional strategy. Options include: fully funded (e.g., project-based), partially subsidised, fee-based as part of continuing professional development.

Sustainability planning is essential for long-term implementation.

Q10. How can micro-credentials be integrated into staff career development?

Institutions may recognise them in promotion criteria, include them in professional development portfolios, link them to leadership pathways, acknowledge them in performance evaluation systems.

Formal recognition increases motivation and institutional impact.

Q11. What is the minimum recommended workload?

There is no universal minimum, but micro-credentials should represent: a coherent learning unit, sufficient time for competence development, meaningful assessment opportunity.

Very short sessions (e.g., 1–2 hours) are generally insufficient for awarding a credible micro-credential in emotional intelligence or inclusion.

Q12. How can institutions maintain the credibility of micro-credentials?

To maintain credibility you should require assessment, define measurable outcomes, apply minimum standards, limit issuance to clearly structured programmes, conduct periodic quality reviews.

Micro-credentials should not be used for purely symbolic recognition.



Q13. What documentation should be retained for quality assurance purposes?

Institutions should retain approved learning outcomes, assessment tools and rubrics, anonymised evaluation results (where appropriate), QA review reports, and participant feedback summaries.

Proper documentation supports transparency and audit readiness.

Q14. Can micro-credentials be stacked or combined?

Yes. Micro-credentials may be combined into larger learning pathways, accumulated toward broader competence frameworks, or integrated into modular development programmes.

Stackability should be clearly defined and documented.

Q15. What happens if a participant does not meet assessment criteria?

Institutions may allow reassessment opportunities, provide additional feedback and support, or issue a certificate of participation (without micro-credential status).

Clear reassessment rules should be defined in advance.

Q16. How often should micro-credentials be reviewed?

Periodic review (e.g., every 2–3 years) is recommended to update learning outcomes, reflect new regulations, respond to evolving inclusion challenges, and maintain relevance to labour market needs.

Q17. How can learners use micro-credentials in practice?

MCs can be added to resumes, LinkedIn profiles, portfolios, or professional development plans. They provide evidence of specific skills for employers, academic institutions, or personal growth.

Q18. Can micro-credentials be awarded for soft skills like empathy?

Absolutely. Soft skills can be assessed through structured activities, simulations, reflections, and collaborative tasks. MCs provide formal recognition of these competences, increasing their visibility in professional and academic contexts.

Q19. What ethical considerations apply to emotional intelligence training?

Training and assessment must respect participant privacy, avoid coercive disclosure of personal experiences, ensure psychological safety, protect personal data, and avoid psychological profiling.

Assessment should focus on observable professional behaviours rather than personal traits.



Q20. How can emotional and inclusion-related competences be measured objectively?

While such competences are context-dependent, objectivity can be enhanced through structured assessment rubrics, predefined observable behaviours, multiple evaluators where appropriate, clear performance criteria, documented assessment procedures.

Complete standardisation may not be possible, but transparency and consistency are essential.

Q21. What types of assessment are appropriate for emotional intelligence and non-discrimination training?

Appropriate assessment methods include: scenario-based simulations, case analysis, group problem-solving tasks, action plan presentations, structured reflective assignments, observed behavioural demonstrations.

Assessment should verify the practical application of competences, not only theoretical knowledge.

Q22. Can emotional intelligence training create discomfort among participants?

Yes, it can.

Topics such as bias, discrimination, empathy, or conflict management may evoke strong reactions. Therefore, training design should ensure psychological safety, establish clear participation rules, avoid forced personal sharing, and provide facilitator support where needed.

Discomfort may sometimes be part of learning — but it must never compromise dignity or well-being.

Q23. How can the impact of emotional intelligence micro-credentials be measured beyond assessment results?

Beyond formal assessment, impact may be evaluated through: post-training self-assessment surveys, behavioural change indicators, workplace feedback (where applicable), follow-up evaluations after several months, participant reflections on practical application.

Long-term impact is often more significant than immediate test performance.

Q24. Should emotional intelligence micro-credentials be mandatory for staff?

This depends on institutional strategy.

Making them mandatory may signal institutional commitment to inclusion and respectful communication, as well as standardise behavioural expectations.

However, voluntary participation may increase intrinsic motivation, reduce resistance, and encourage deeper engagement.



Institutions should balance strategic priorities with organisational culture when deciding on mandatory implementation.

6. SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHTS

Micro-credentials in emotional intelligence and inclusion are exciting — but they're not without challenges. Institutions face hurdles ranging from assessment complexity and digital infrastructure limitations to governance, ethical considerations, and cultural acceptance. Our guide has walked you through these barriers, offering practical recommendations and strategies to make implementation smoother and credible.

We've shared hands-on insights from real project experience: step-by-step approaches, governance tips, assessment integrity, digital workflow design, stakeholder engagement, and ethical safeguards. You've also seen FAQs addressing common doubts and practical examples, so you know what to expect in day-to-day practice.

Remember: micro-credentials are tools. They can complement formal qualifications, recognise transversal skills, and support inclusive learning environments — but their value depends on thoughtful design, transparent assessment, and clear communication. Dive in, explore the Europass, test the workflows, and let your institution experiment with confidence.

In short: know the challenges, follow the recommendations, learn from experience — and enjoy discovering the potential of micro-credentials for yourself and your community.