

MICRO  
CREDS

# SCALING SKILLS, SHAPING FUTURES: THE STRATEGIC IMPACT OF MICROCREDS IN IRELAND

MICROCREDS.IE





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Rialtas na hÉireann  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MicroCreds led by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) in collaboration with universities and a broad range of enterprise partners, successfully completed all of its objectives and delivered transformative change across the Irish higher education sector.

Over the five-year program, the MicroCreds initiative established Ireland as the first country in Europe to implement a coherent national framework for quality-assured and accredited micro-credentials. This framework, developed through sector-wide consensus and in alignment with national and European policy objectives, enabled the recognition of micro-credentials for both professional and academic purposes.

“THE PROJECT’S SUSTAINABILITY WAS ENSURED THROUGH ROBUST GOVERNANCE, ONGOING ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT, AND THE INTEGRATION OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS INTO UNIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS.”

The project’s four strategic strands were successfully delivered as planned:

- 1. National Framework Development:** The project team, guided by a Steering Group and supported by the IUA Registrars Group, developed and implemented a national architecture for micro-credentials. This included agreed protocols for credit, size, nomenclature, quality assurance, and accreditation, ensuring international recognition and transferability. Work is continuing to develop the stacking of micro-credentials within and across universities through pre-defined pathways.
- 2. Enterprise Collaboration:** A structured process for ongoing collaboration with enterprise was established, including the creation of an Enterprise Advisory Group and a series of sector specific engagement events through our Innovate initiative. Detailed research and continuous engagement ensured that the evolving needs of enterprise and learners were met. The project’s enterprise-informed design led to the development of micro-credentials that were responsive to emerging skills needs, supporting upskilling and reskilling across priority sectors.
- 3. MicroCreds.ie and Communications:** MicroCreds launched a national online portal MicroCreds.ie, providing a curated menu of micro-credentials from all eight universities. The portal, complemented by targeted national and regional marketing and communications campaigns, significantly increased awareness and uptake among learners and enterprises.
- 4. University Capacity Building:** Each university developed and rolled out new micro-credential courses tailored to their strengths, local enterprise needs, and regional contexts. Throughout the MicroCreds project over 600 new micro-credentials were created with over 20,000 learners impacted.

MicroCreds impact was substantial and multi-faceted:

- **For Learners:** MicroCreds provided flexible, accredited learning opportunities, supporting lifelong learning and enhancing employability. The diverse delivery modes (digital, blended, and face-to-face) ensured accessibility for a wide range of learners.
- **For Enterprise:** The initiative enabled Irish enterprises to rapidly address skills gaps, future-proof their workforce, and engage in meaningful partnerships with higher education institutions.
- **For the Higher Education Sector:** The project fostered a culture of innovation and agility, mainstreamed micro-credentials, and established sustainable structures for ongoing development and delivery.
- **For Ireland:** MicroCreds strengthened Ireland’s competitive position in the knowledge economy, supported national and European targets for lifelong learning, and contributed to economic and social development.
- The project’s sustainability was ensured through robust governance, ongoing enterprise engagement, and the integration of micro-credentials into university strategies and national frameworks. The MicroCreds model was recognised as scalable and replicable, providing a blueprint for other higher education systems seeking to innovate in response to changing skills needs.





**Lewis Purser**  
– Director of Learning, Teaching & Academic Affairs, Irish Universities Association

## MICROCREDS: FROM PROPOSAL TO NATIONAL IMPACT

“In 2020 when we originally submitted the proposal for the MicroCreds project, seeking funding from the National Training Fund through the Human Capital Initiative, we outlined the context at the time: a rapidly evolving society, economy, and labour market that were driving the need for more agile and lifelong engagement with higher education by a broader and more diverse range of learners.

Notably in the proposal we stated that “this project would increase university capacity to extract and adapt high-demand modules from existing programmes, and to develop courses tailored to suit the needs of target enterprise and learners”. Specifically, it would provide up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities to those in employment and those seeking to enhance their employability.

We also proposed that micro-credentials would be available through online, blended and face-to-face formats. At that time little did we know the disruption to business as usual Covid-19 was about to unleash. We did foreshadow in our proposal that “the availability of digital and blended modes [would be] particularly timely in order to support culture change and help Irish higher education and enterprise to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and accelerate post-crisis recovery.”

Looking back now this has indeed been the case. Over 20,000 learners have benefited from micro-credential courses provided through the MicroCreds project,

upskilling, reskilling and future-proofing their employability across courses identified and designed in close collaboration with the full range of enterprise sectors. We have deliberately built on international best practice in this field, and in turn enabled Ireland to become a go-to benchmark itself, promoting flexible higher education and lifelong learning and supporting competitiveness across areas of strategic importance and growing demand.

The project has built close and structured links with enterprise where different enterprise eco-systems and regional contexts require varied responses. The overall project governance model, under the IUA Registrars group, ensured that the project has dovetailed with other relevant academic and structural developments in each university. In this way, the project has acted as a sectoral enabling initiative, providing support and impetus for meaningful change within universities and across the system to accelerate skills development for the benefit of Ireland’s 21st century knowledge economy.

I would like to highlight the importance of the Human Capital Initiative and National Training Fund in enabling this work. Without the support of key stakeholders in enterprise, the Higher Education Authority, and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the project would not have been possible. We believe we have unequivocally shown that the universities can and do lead the way, when they are appropriately funded and learners are adequately supported, in developing Ireland’s higher-level future skills needs.

I invite you to explore this final report and learn more about the achievements of this transformative project.”

“MICROCREDS HAS SHOWN WHAT’S POSSIBLE WHEN UNIVERSITIES AND ENTERPRISE WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS REAL-WORLD SKILLS NEEDS.”

“THEIR WORK ON A FRAMEWORK FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS HAS SET THE GROUNDWORK FOR A SHARED UNDERSTANDING ACROSS THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND FOSTERED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MICRO-CREDENTIAL ECOSYSTEM. ”

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF SKILLS

“In 2020, the National Training Fund made an investment of €208 million over five years in the Human Capital Initiative’s (HCI) Pillar 3 Innovation and Agility programme. The investment supported a programme of innovative and agile collaborative projects from institutions or groups of institutions with application and impact across the higher education system. From the onset the MicroCreds project stood out as having the potential to transform the higher education system. It set itself ambitious and innovative targets to establish a coherent National Framework for quality assured and accredited micro-credentials, and to collaborate to deliver the building blocks required for a transformation in lifelong and life-wide learning through micro-credentials.

In 2020 we had an ambition for the HCI to deliver innovations across the higher education system impacting 20,000 learners across the 24 HCI innovative projects. This target was exceeded within three years and the micro-creds project has been pivotal in surpassing this target. In 2025 the MicroCreds project has delivered innovations in micro-credential learning impacting well over 20,000 learners, and it has facilitated the creation of 600 new micro-credential courses.

The MicroCreds project has been a key driver in aligning innovation and agility with national strategic objectives, key system objectives for the higher education system, and future skills needs for society and the economy. The national skills strategy 2025 published in 2020 set a national target for Ireland to achieve a rate of 15% of adults aged 25 -64 participating in lifelong learning

by 2025. This target was exceeded in 2024 at a rate of 16%. It is initiatives like increased micro-credentials course provision and the MicroCreds project which have enabled Ireland to reach this target.

The collaboration between the eight university partners through the structure of the MicroCreds project has created open forums for the partner universities to collaborate at various levels, identifying and working constructively to address challenges such as recognition and stacking, and supporting the integration of micro-credentials into the education and skills ecosystem. Their work on a Framework for micro-credentials has set the groundwork for a shared understanding across the higher education system and fostered the development of a micro-credential ecosystem.

MicroCreds played a pivotal role in the development of the 2022 European Council Recommendation on Micro-credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability, defining and establishing EU standards for quality and transparency.

The launch of the MicroCreds.ie portal in 2023 was a significant milestone for the project. As one of the first national platforms of its kind in Europe, it was designed to make lifelong learning more accessible and address enterprise skills gaps.

The work of the MicroCreds project team has facilitated significant collaboration on micro-credentials and has positioned Ireland a world leader in the field of Micro-credentials.

The HEA is delighted to recognise all the MicroCreds project achievements, and we look forward to building on these in the future. Congratulations to the IUA in particular Jools, Lynn, Emma, David, Nora and all the MicroCreds team on delivering this step change innovation for students in Ireland.”



**Dr Vivienne Patterson**  
– Head of Skills, Engagement and Statistics, Higher Education Authority



## MICROCREDITS PROJECT BY NUMBERS



**€14.3  
MILLION**

PROJECT FUNDING



**€3.4  
MILLION**

LEARNER FEE  
SUBSIDY AWARDED

**95%**

LEARNERS WHO WOULD  
RECOMMEND THEIR  
MICRO-CREDENTIAL TO  
SOMEONE ELSE\*



**20,000+**

LEARNERS IMPACTED  
BY MICROCREDS

**8**

MICROCREDITS  
INNOVATE EVENTS



**700**

ENTERPRISE ATTENDEES  
AT MICROCREDS  
INNOVATE EVENTS



**6,000**

SUBSIDISED  
PLACES  
OFFERED

**OVER  
4,500**

ENTERPRISE  
ENGAGEMENTS



**606**

MICRO-CREDENTIALS  
OFFERED



**397**

SUBSIDISED MICRO-  
CREDENTIAL COURSES  
OFFERED



**122,000**

USERS ON  
MICROCREDITS.IE

\*Statistics represent Autumn 2024  
MicroCreds Learner Survey

## PROJECT BACKGROUND: FROM CHALLENGE TO OPPORTUNITY

MicroCreds had strong alignment with the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 Goals of Innovation & Agility. The project directly responded to the HCI Pillar 3 call for innovative, agile approaches in higher education to address future skills needs.

MicroCreds was proposed because it aligned with national and European policy frameworks, directly advancing Ireland's goals for innovation, workforce development, lifelong learning, and economic competitiveness. The project supports Ireland's ambition to be a leader in workforce skills and lifelong learning at a European level.

“THE PROJECT SUPPORTS IRELAND'S AMBITION TO BE A LEADER IN WORKFORCE SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING AT A EUROPEAN LEVEL”

The proposal offered enterprise a unique opportunity to shape, access, and benefit from a national, quality-assured system of micro-credentials—making workforce development more responsive, efficient, and aligned with real business needs.

The MicroCreds project's key opportunities were:

### 1. RESPONDING TO EVOLVING SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC NEEDS

- **Rapid Change:** Society, the economy, and the labour market were evolving quickly, creating a need for more agile and flexible engagement with higher education.
- **Lifelong Learning:** There was a growing demand for upskilling and reskilling opportunities, especially for those already in employment or seeking to enhance their employability.

### 2. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY ALIGNMENT

- **Policy Objectives:** The project aligned with national and European targets for flexible higher education and lifelong learning, supporting Ireland's competitiveness and ability to meet future skills needs. This includes the OECD's recommendations to respond to calls for inclusive growth, lifelong learning, and strong partnerships between education and enterprise. And the EU Skills Agenda & Education and Training 2020 to advance upskilling pathways and lifelong learning, helping Ireland meet European benchmarks for adult education participation.
- **Strategic Fit:** MicroCreds supported key objectives in the Higher Education System Performance Framework and national strategies such as the National Skills Strategy 2025, Project Ireland 2040 and Future Jobs Ireland.

### 3. INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- **First in Europe:** The project would make Ireland the first country in Europe with a coherent national framework for quality-assured and accredited micro-credentials.
- **Sectoral Collaboration:** MicroCreds brought together Irish universities, enterprise partners, and key stakeholders to create a unified, scalable system.

### 4. MEETING ENTERPRISE NEEDS

- **Enterprise-Informed:** The project was shaped by research and consultation with enterprise partners, ensuring that micro-credentials are relevant to current and future workforce needs.
- **Agile Workforce Development:** Micro-credentials provide a flexible, modular approach to upskilling and reskilling employees, allowing businesses to respond quickly to technological change and evolving market demands.
- **Support for SME and Regional Needs:** The system was designed to be accessible to both large multinationals and smaller indigenous companies, with regional engagement and tailored offerings. SMEs, in particular, benefit from help navigating the professional learning landscape and from flexible, scalable training solutions.

### 5. MEETING LEARNER NEEDS

- **Up-skilling and Re-skilling:** The project provided targeted, accredited modules that help learners gain new skills or update existing ones, supporting career advancement or transition.
- **Improved Employability:** Courses were developed in collaboration with enterprise partners, ensuring that the skills taught are relevant to current and future job market needs.
- **Flexible Delivery:** It offered digital, blended, and face-to-face learning, making education more accessible and responsive. Employees can gain specific, job-relevant skills without the need for long-term study commitments.

### 6. BUILDING CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- **University Capacity:** The project aimed to help universities extract and adapt high-demand modules, develop new courses, and increase capacity for flexible learning.
- **Portal and Framework:** The national portal helped learners find and track micro-credentials, while a new framework will ensure quality and recognition. The framework and portal were designed to be scalable across the entire higher education sector, supporting national and regional policy objectives for education, skills, and economic development.

### 7. TRANSFORMATIVE AND SCALABLE IMPACT

- **System Change:** The project was designed to be transformative for the higher education sector, scalable across all institutions, and sustainable beyond the initial funding period.
- **Wider Benefits:** It will benefit learners, employers, and the broader economy by supporting lifelong learning and workforce adaptability.

## GENESIS RESEARCH INTO THE POTENTIAL FOR MICROCREDS

Genesis was commissioned to undertake research into MicroCreds and the potential for support, engagement and impact on enterprise and the workforce in Ireland. Research was undertaken with Irish businesses and stakeholders to: Understand current workforce training and development strategies; Identify current and future skills requirements and deficits; Assess the effectiveness of existing learning programmes; Explore triggers and barriers to optimal learning programme design and implementation; Gauge awareness, perceptions, and appetite for micro-credentials; Use insights to develop the MicroCreds project to address national needs.

The key findings of the research showed:

- **Current Learning and Development Management:** Learning and development is often managed reactively, with relationships with vendors and universities being tactical rather than strategic and there is a need for more systematic and strategic planning.
- **Barriers to Engagement:** Key barriers include cost, time investment, uncertain ROI, and cultural attitudes toward lifelong learning. Irish workforce culture has not fully embraced continuous learning; learning is often seen as a means to an end.
- **Potential of Micro-Credentials:** A strong, accredited micro-credentials programme could drive wider adoption if it is flexible, relevant, and well-curated. MicroCreds is seen as attractive due to its flexibility, choice, national reach, and potential for tailored learning.
- **Execution is Critical:** Success depends on clear value proposition, strong marketing, industry advocacy, user experience, and a robust funding model. The scheme must be agile, dynamic, and responsive to evolving needs.

## DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

**Dublin City University (DCU)** offers a diverse portfolio of high-impact micro-credentials designed to meet the evolving needs of industry, career development, and lifelong learning. These flexible, targeted learning opportunities enable professionals to acquire new skills and competencies efficiently and effectively.

As a recognised European leader in micro-credentials, DCU plays a strategic role in shaping the future of short-form learning. Each course is co-designed with industry and societal partners to ensure relevance, applicability, and alignment with current and emerging workforce demands. Rigorous quality assurance processes underpin the development and delivery of all micro-credential offerings, reinforcing DCU's commitment to academic excellence and learner success.

The MicroCreds project team works across the university to embed micro-credentials into institutional operations, ensuring coherence and sustainability. DCU's bespoke portfolio is tailored to professional learners and is further strengthened by its active participation in the ECIU University Alliance, which supports cross-European collaboration in flexible learning.

To drive strategic innovation, DCU has appointed a Director of Micro-Credential Strategy and Innovation. This leadership role supports the development of robust processes and a university-wide strategy for implementing short-form learning. This ensures that micro-credentials are not only a core component of DCU's educational offering but also a key enabler of lifelong learning and workforce transformation.

In today's fast-moving economic landscape, access to relevant, high-quality continuous professional development (CPD) is essential for maintaining workplace competitiveness. The Skillnet National Micro-Credential Survey (A Micro-Credential Roadmap: Currency, Cohesion and Consistency) highlighted that both employers and employees view micro-credentials as a powerful tool for supporting CPD and lifelong learning—particularly when time and cost are key constraints.

This is where DCU micro-credentials have delivered real value.

DCU partners with employers to co-create short, flexible, accredited courses that directly address current and future skills gaps. These offerings are designed to be responsive, scalable, and aligned with industry needs.

### Micro-credentials provide:

- Enhanced and sustainable engagement in CPD programmes
- Recognition of professional and personal skill development
- Increased organisational competitiveness
- A culture of continuous quality assurance and improvement
- Structured mapping of skills and expertise

DCU's collaboration models—endorsement, knowledge sharing, and partnership enable employers to engage with DCU in ways that suit their strategic goals, whether through co-design, validation, or delivery of learning experiences.

We work closely with enterprise engagement platforms such as the Regional Skills Fora, Skillnet Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, and the FinTech Corridor, alongside DCU's own institutional enterprise engagement structures. This ensures that our micro-credentials remain aligned to sectoral needs and priorities.



## TESTIMONIAL

"Dublin City University (DCU) continues to be a European leader in short-form learning through its strategic involvement in the HCI MicroCreds project. By embedding micro-credentials into its institutional framework, DCU is advancing Ireland's and Europe's goals for career and professional learning, workforce adaptability, and relevant higher education and skills. These industry-aligned credentials offer flexible pathways for learners and support economic resilience by addressing evolving skills demands across sectors.

DCU developed and delivered Ireland's first micro-credential in 2019 and we are delighted to have expanded our micro-credential portfolio through the MicroCreds project. Collaborating and engaging with industry has been a core part of DCU's approach. We aim to continue to develop and harness these relationships to support employees and employers in their professional development and learning journeys."



**Prof. Lisa Looney**  
– Vice-President for  
Academic Affairs &  
Registrar.

## MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

At Maynooth University, the Micro-credentials project was driven by a cross-functional team based in the Admissions and Student Recruitment Office, and was underpinned by the Maynooth University Framework for Micro-credentials, which set out the academic, operational, and quality principles guiding all provision. The project successfully developed a learner-centred micro-credential approach grounded in flexibility, industry engagement, and inclusion. A key innovation was the introduction of a structured, university-wide admissions and eligibility process, aligned with the framework, including pathways such as Recognition of Prior Learning that recognised industry experience and opened access to non-traditional learners.

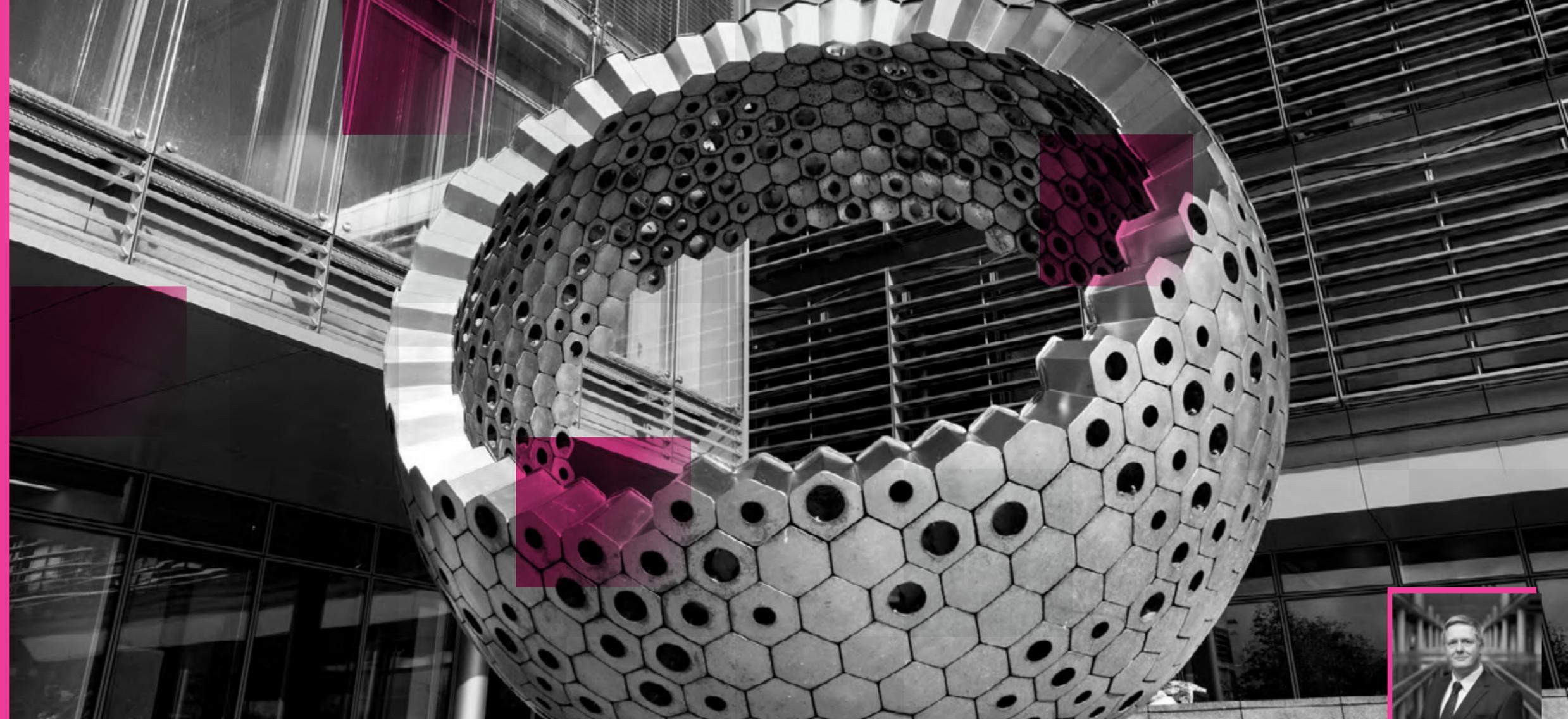
Maynooth University launched more than 20 micro-credential offerings in areas of strategic national importance, including climate action, digital transformation, finance, education and law. All micro-credentials were developed as credit-bearing programmes at NFQ Levels 8 and 9. Notable collaborations included a micro-credential delivered through the RES4CITY platform developed as part of an EU-funded project and delivered globally on-demand.

Innovations included fully integrated CRM workflows, targeted marketing campaigns that more than doubled applications in early 2025, and bespoke learner onboarding resources such as redesigned e-brochures and induction webinars. These achievements position micro-credentials as a sustainable part of Maynooth's broader commitment to access, upskilling and lifelong learning.

Enterprise collaboration was central to the success of micro-credentials at Maynooth University. A leading example is the Brewing & Distilling Micro-credential, co-designed with industry to directly address the skills needs of Ireland's growing distilling sector. Delivered in partnership with IBEC and the Irish Whiskey Association, this programme enabled professionals across Ireland to upskill through high-quality academic instruction and hands-on lab experience. RPL was actively used to recognise prior experience and open access to non-traditional learners, including staff with significant industry knowledge but no formal qualifications.

Through the IWA fully subsidised a learner place under a dedicated scholarship, underscoring strong enterprise recognition. This collaboration received extensive national attention through a joint press release shared on the Irish Farmers Journal, Agriland, KildareNow, and Hospitality Ireland news pages. Eoin Ó Catháin, Director of the IWA, described the initiative as vital for supporting innovation and diversity in the sector, noting that such courses would be "central to development in the years to come."

In parallel, Maynooth introduced fully integrated CRM workflows to manage enterprise engagement and applications, as well as scalable governance and marketing structures to support long-term collaboration. These efforts have strengthened Maynooth's reputation as a responsive, enterprise-aligned higher education provider.



## TESTIMONIAL

"The Micro Credentials Project at Maynooth University has been transformative in shaping our commitment to accessible, flexible and industry-aligned education. By embedding micro-credentials within a robust academic and operational framework, we have developed a scalable structure that allows rapid development and delivery of

these programmes. The success of our programmes - particularly those co-designed with industry partners - highlights the potential of micro-credentials to drive innovation, inclusion and workforce development. Importantly, we have opened doors to non-traditional learners through Recognition of Prior Learning, ensuring our offerings

reflect real-world experience as much as academic excellence. As Registrar, I am proud that micro-credentials are now a sustainable and important part of our educational offering, supporting learners and enterprise in meaningful, future-focused ways."



**Prof. Ronan Farrell**  
– Vice President  
Academic and  
Registrar.

## TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

The micro-credentials cross-disciplinary pilot programme at Trinity launched in the 2021/22 academic year starting with four Schools with existing expertise in providing continuing education- School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity Business School, School of Engineering and School of Social Work and Social Policy. Since then, three additional Schools - Natural Sciences, Medicine and Psychology – and one additional area – Trinity Innovation and Enterprise – have joined the programme. Trinity now offers approx. 40 micro-credentials across these subject areas, all of which are at postgraduate level (Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications) and range from 5-10 ECTS using a range of delivery modes (in-person, online, blended and hybrid).

The Trinity Micro-credentials project team is currently part of Trinity Careers and Development (in Trinity Teaching and Learning) and is co-located with the HCI Enterprise Ecosystem team, the Trinity Recognition of Prior Learning team and the Trinity Careers Service.

Micro-credentials have brought new and diverse learners to Trinity with the average micro-credential learner age being 42. Learners come from a wide range of enterprise sectors, including the public sector, and 50% of our micro-credential learners have not studied at postgraduate level before.

In April 2025, Trinity reached an exciting milestone and celebrated our 1000th micro-credential learner. Micro-credentials have now become a key feature of Trinity's flexible educational offerings and we plan to continue to expand our portfolio and grow our learner numbers into the future.

Trinity Micro-credentials are designed to be flexible and responsive to meet identified skill needs of enterprise and society. The nature of collaboration varies across our micro-credential portfolio but, in many instances, we work closely with enterprise to inform their development, delivery and promotion.

An example is our micro-credential in Domestic Violence Child Protection: Training for Child Protection and Welfare Practitioners which was co-designed and co-directed by Trinity's School of Social Work and Social Policy and the law firm Mason, Hayes and Curran. This micro-credential attracted over 100 learners from organisations including government departments, the judiciary as well as private law firms and charitable organisations.

Over 60% of Trinity micro-credential learners are sponsored by their employer or another funding body. We work closely with various Skillnets, e.g. Greentech Skillnet, Cultural and Creative Industries Skillnet, to promote micro-credentials relevant to their members and support learners to pursue related funding opportunities. We also have strong collaborations across the HSE and with our partner hospitals, and with professional representative bodies, e.g. IDA, Enterprise Ireland, IBEC, Engineers Ireland. Trinity has also established an HCI Enterprise Advisory Group to bring the voice of enterprise into our planning processes and to inform our future direction.



**Prof. Martine Smith**  
– Dean of Graduate Studies.

### TESTIMONIAL

"Micro-credentials offer a way back into formal education for time-poor professionals eager to further their career and keep their skills current and relevant. We've had great feedback from learners with some coming back for a second micro-credential. Since many of our micro-credential learners have not studied at postgraduate level before, some have used this as an opportunity to test the water for a bigger commitment like a post graduate diploma or masters. An important impact of the project at Trinity has been a strengthening and consolidation of our collaboration with enterprise partners and increased diversity of learners, contributing to a richer learning environment for all.

A key legacy of the project at Trinity is the influence it has had on our strategic plan, positioning Trinity as a university of life, embracing flexible and accessible education, and welcoming new and diverse learners at all stages of their lives."



## TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

**TU Dublin** officially joined the MicroCreds Project and MicroCred.ie as an partner university in Spring 2025. Joining the MicroCreds project built on our existing involvement with the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 through the Convene project continuing our active engagement in Human Capital Initiative which explored new ways that universities and enterprise can work together to meet priority and emerging skills needs while creating new and effective access and progression pathways to higher education for workforce upskilling.

While TU Dublin is already a leader in STEM disciplines, the University also supports the largest cohort of students of business, media, culinary arts, and the creative and performing arts. We are passionate about life-long learning and, as the largest provider of part-time education, we make an important contribution to economic life of Ireland.

In conjunction with our five Faculties TU Dublin offers a wide range of impactful micro-credentials in collaboration with industry, government, and sectoral bodies across the following areas:

- Computing, Digital & Data
- Culinary, Hospitality & Tourism
- Science & Health
- Business
- Education

At TU Dublin, partnerships with enterprise and industry are central to our mission. Over the past five years, the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 has exemplified

this commitment, enabling deep collaboration across sectors and disciplines to address emerging skills needs and foster innovation. We have incorporated emerging technological, educational and entrepreneurial innovations into our programmes for learners at all stages of the talent development pipeline, from undergraduates to workforce learners.

As a new partner in the MicroCreds project, TU Dublin brings significant experience in enterprise engagement and flexible, industry-aligned learning. Through the Enterprise Academy, the university has developed a strong model for brokering cross-disciplinary partnerships that support accredited talent development across sectors. This work has informed TU Dublin's contribution to MicroCreds, particularly in demonstrating how short, targeted learning can meet emerging skills needs and complement traditional pathways.

TU Dublin's collaborations with organisations such as Technology Ireland Digital Skillnet, Intel, Workday, BT Sourced, SGS and Screen Ireland illustrate its commitment to co-creating programmes that respond to evolving workforce demands. As the university mainstreams the learning and structures established under Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3, it is well positioned to continue expanding opportunities for learners and employers within Ireland's growing micro-credential ecosystem.

## TESTIMONIAL

Micro-credentials play an important role in TU Dublin's commitment to lifelong learning, offering flexible opportunities for people to upskill in ways that fit around work and personal commitments. We have seen how short, focused learning can give professionals the confidence to re-engage with education, with many using a micro-credential as a first step toward further study. The Human Capital Initiative has also strengthened our engagement with enterprise partners, helping us better understand emerging skills needs and broadening the range of learners who engage with TU Dublin. A key legacy of this work is the continued integration of flexible, industry-informed learning pathways across the university, supporting learners at every stage of their careers.



**Mairead Murphy**  
 – Head of Student  
 Recruitment,  
 Admissions and  
 Participation



## UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

UCC has a long tradition of lifelong learning with the first learners joining in 1946. Micro-credentials have allowed UCC to continue this tradition into the current skills led lifelong learning landscape.

With support at all levels of the university, UCC has achieved great success in micro-credentials with over 100 courses and 4,500 learners across the period of the project. Success has been built on the passion and innovation of staff across all units to empower the lifelong learner.

The support of MicroCreds funding allowed UCC to invest in systems and process improvements which will ensure the long-term sustainability of micro-credentials.

Micro-credential learners from the outset have been considered as full members of the university community which includes access to supports outside the curriculum. Access to UCC Skills Centre and Library has delivered skills beyond learning outcomes, meeting learners where they are in their own lifelong learning pathway.

Embedding micro-credentials in policy and process rather than in parallel further ensures longevity of both micro-credentials in UCC and their currency for the learner.

The MicroCreds journey has been a complex one but with support and an outstanding team, it has been thoroughly worthwhile for all involved.

Engagement with enterprise has enriched UCC partnerships far beyond the MicroCreds project.

The flexibility afforded by micro-credentials has led to

co-designed offerings for a wide range of enterprise partners from the multinational company Stryker, Offshore Wind Academy SkillNet to NGOs and Cork Prison service.

The expanding suite of micro-credentials has also supported collaborations with the HSE and GreenTech SkillNet to sponsor learners' places on pre-existing micro-credentials.

To support enterprise engagement UCC has sought to centralise interactions with enterprise via the establishment of a new unit. The Business and Enterprise Engagement Unit provides a one stop shop for connection and collaboration.

UCC has also built on existing partnerships that began in research or talent acquisition to now include micro-credential co-design and delivery.

As part of the engagement with SkillNets, UCC has developed a stackable postgraduate certificate in Met Ocean co designed with SkillNet Offshore Wind Academy. A full suite of micro-credentials has been developed to meet both technical and transverse skills needs. Stackable micro-credentials have been embraced by UCC and partners.

Co-design and learner focus has created micro-credentials that have both economic and societal value which supports UCC and Cork's mission as a UNESCO Learning City and lifelong learning in UCC.



## TESTIMONIAL

MicroCreds has been an impactful project to lead on behalf of University College Cork. The power of micro-credentials to upskill and reskill learners reflects the UCC vision to connect and empower people in the creation of knowledge for a more sustainable and inclusive world.

The embodiment of this vision is evident in the breath of micro-credentials on offer in UCC. From renewable energy to RPL access routes the MicroCreds project has put in practice our core values.

The academic value of a UCC micro-credential is built on a research led curriculum and robust quality assurance. These standards give learners and employers confidence in this new area of micro-credentials.

Micro-credentials offer learners an inclusive and accessible route to higher education, meeting current needs and building towards their future.

I look forward to continuing the micro-credential journey in UCC from project to successful evolving portfolio.



**Prof. Stephen Byrne**  
– Deputy President & Registrar



University College Dublin  
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath

## UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

University College Dublin (UCD) delivers a wide-ranging portfolio of micro-credentials, comprising accredited, short, flexible, and industry-aligned courses. These offerings are designed to address critical national and international skills shortages while promoting lifelong learning and ongoing professional development.

The micro-credentials project team is based at UCD's main campus in Belfield, Dublin. The initiative spans a diverse array of subject areas, including Agriculture and Food, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Physics, Education, Engineering, Ethics, Law, Medicine and Health, Psychology and Disability Studies, Social Work, Science Communication, Sustainability Implementation, Financial Services, and Veterinary Medicine.

A core innovation of the project is the development of short, credit-bearing courses (ranging from 2.5 to 10 ECTS credits) that can in some instances be stacked toward larger qualifications. This modular approach enhances learner flexibility and supports progression.

UCD actively collaborates with employers and industry representatives to ensure the relevance of its offerings to current workforce needs. Partnerships with other universities, the Irish Universities Association (IUA), and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) help facilitate the sharing of best practices and knowledge.

Micro-credentials provide immediate, tangible recognition of knowledge and skills, which can significantly boost learner motivation. Their reduced time commitment and affordability help lower barriers for those seeking to upskill or reskill.

UCD continues to develop its enterprise engagement strategy, recognising the vital role of collaboration in driving innovation, addressing societal challenges, and responding to industry skill needs.

A key component of this approach is active participation in industry events such as the CIPD Annual Conference, the Learning and Development Conference, Dublin Chamber events, and the Dublin Regional Skills Forum. These engagements provide direct insight into evolving workforce needs, helping UCD shape micro-credential offerings that align with current and future skills demands.

UCD also collaborates with key industry bodies—including IBEC, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and the Dublin Regional Skills Forum—through initiatives such as the MicroCreds Innovate series, facilitating ongoing dialogue and partnership.

In collaboration with Skillnet Ireland networks, UCD is co-developing micro-credentials tailored to specific sectors. Our latest micro-credentials are in partnership with Green Tech Skillnet, Midas Electronic Systems Skillnet, and the Space Industry Skillnet. These collaborations leverage UCD's research expertise to address domain-specific skills gaps.

Beyond network partnerships, UCD also provides customised learning solutions. A recent example involved adapting a micro-credential to meet a company's precise learning needs—demonstrating the practical value of UCD's flexible, industry-responsive approach to education.



### TESTIMONIAL

"The MicroCreds Project has broadened and deepened UCD's approach to lifelong learning and flexible education. As Dean of Students, the impact on widening participation was also important to see, with shorter courses empowering learners from diverse backgrounds whether they're upskilling, reskilling, career-pivoting or returning to education after time away. Professional learners are engaging with bite-sized, industry-relevant content aligned with their personal and career goals.

The project has also strengthened our partnerships with enterprise and enhanced the agility of our academic offerings. In alignment with our strategic

vision, it directly embodies the spirit of UCD's 'Breaking Boundaries' strategy, particularly through a strong focus on fostering a culture of lifelong learning. We have always been an innovative University, actively adapting to the changing demands of both society and the workforce; MicroCreds has provided another important avenue to meet those needs. It has become a model for innovation in higher education, strengthening UCD's position at the forefront of flexible, learner-centred education."



**Prof. Jason Last**  
– Dean of Students



## UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

MicroCreds Project Team at University of Galway is situated in the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development. The team is comprised of a Project Lead, Multimedia Content Developer and two Administrators. We are supported in our marketing efforts through the assistance of the Centre's Marketing Coordinator.

As we are a research-intensive university based in a region with strong Medical Device and Technology industries the range of subjects selected for microcredentials is reflected in our provision. These include a suite of microcredentials related to medical devices; Scalable Science, Technology & Innovation, Manufacturing Technology, Materials Science & Processes and Enterprise Simulation for Digital Twinning. Similarly a suite of courses designed to aid career changers and those who wish to upskill in the tech sector are provided for including; Data Analysis and Visualisation, Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing, Societal Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Programming Foundations. Both areas are highly sought after in the West Region to ensure continued economic growth. Similarly, the suite of microcredentials that form the Construct Innovate Masters develops skills in sustainable construction and built environment technology, focusing on digital adoption, modern methods of construction, and sustainability with a mission to combat housing challenges.

University of Galway excels in university-enterprise collaborations, driving innovation and economic growth through strategic partnerships. Its Innovation

Office facilitates knowledge transfer and industry engagement, connecting research with practical applications. A notable €5 million, five-year partnership with Medtronic, announced in 2023, advances the MedTech ecosystem, STEM education, and research. The Medtronic partnership, was awarded the 2024 MedTech Rising Awards' Best Collaboration, highlighting the University of Galway's role in impactful research, regional development, and preparing graduates and professionals for the global MedTech sector.

This University supports two new research institutes: the Institute for Clinical Trials, launched in May 2023, and an upcoming Institute for Medical Technologies and Advanced Therapeutics, reinforcing Galway's status as a global MedTech hub.

Other notable partnerships include those with Boston Scientific, fostering healthcare advancements and spin-outs hosted at the Business Innovation Centre. These engagements have created over 30 spin-outs, supported job growth, and strengthened Ireland's innovation ecosystem via initiatives like the West Regional Enterprise Plan.

The adoption and implementation of micro-credentials has significantly enhanced these collaborations by responding to industry needs with flexible, industry-aligned upskilling programmes. This has strengthened industry ties, increased workforce agility, and supported regional economic resilience. Programmes like Ideas Lab foster co-creation, while work placements and micro-credentials improve student and professional employability, aligning skills with industry needs.



**Nuala McGuinn**  
– Director Centre  
for Adult Learning  
and Professional  
Development

## TESTIMONIAL

“Micro-credentials have significantly enhanced our university's ability to respond to the evolving needs of learners and industry. They allow us to deliver targeted, flexible, and high-quality learning opportunities that support both professional development and personal growth. Our experience from a regional context is that the demand for upskilling and reskilling is ever-increasing. Due to their flexible nature, micro-credentials play a key role in promoting lifelong learning, learners can select areas that of interest to them and help them to remain relevant in a workplace that is rapidly changing. The project has also strengthened our engagement with industry partners, we have co-created curriculum, experimented with new teaching methodologies and have expanded our portfolio of offerings. It has positioned University of Galway as a leader in innovative, learner-centred and future-focused education.”



## UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

**University of Limerick (UL)** is a research-led, energetic, and enterprising institution with a proud record of innovation in education and excellence in research and scholarship. Our motto Eagna chun Gnímh translates as Wisdom for Action reflecting our mission to contribute to the discovery of new knowledge for a better world.

Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS) part of the Provost and Deputy President (DPD) Office oversees the promotion, admissions, innovation and development of postgraduate and professional programmes, including micro-credentials. Leveraging UL's strong industry connections, our programmes and courses are industry-led and research-driven addressing specific skills gaps with professionally orientated and employer-focused content.

Our micro-credentials offer a unique education experience, integrating practical, hands-on skills and competencies. This empowers learners to tackle contemporary challenges confidently and advance their career prospects.

UL provides micro-credentials in diverse areas such as Business, Management & Communications, Lean, Productivity and Sustainability, Health and Medicine, AI, Technology & Data Analysis, Law & Policy and Aviation.

UL's flexible learning pathways allow learners to combine specific micro-credentials towards higher awards, including Masters qualification, enhancing skills and competencies across multiple disciplines.

With the inclusion of micro-credentials, we continue the long-held tradition of working with enterprise partners to identify skills gaps, and design and develop courses to meet the needs of both industry and you, the learner.

Engagement with enterprise is a core tenet of the UL's strategic and operational plans. MicroCreds at UL is situated purposefully within the Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS) division. This allows for the University to present a coordinated portfolio of part-time professional education programmes and courses when engaging with enterprise and in particular how UL can support learners on learning pathways to support personal and professional development. The following activities illustrate the diversity of engagements that highlight micro-credentials:

- Throughout the MicroCreds project, UL has engaged in an extensive enterprise-outreach programme including participation in numerous events that have significant economic and social value for the region, including Wind Energy Ireland, ICBE, Lean Business Ireland, Supply Chain Conferences, Aviation and Manufacturing as well as Limerick Lifelong Learning Festivals.
- UL has delivered targeted upskilling events with regional employers and enterprise groups, including J&JVC, Kostal, and Explore Engineering, and nurtured strategic partnerships with the likes of Dell, Analog Devices, Enterprise Ireland and Failte Ireland.
- UL nominated micro-credentials to the Springboard+ call in 2025.

The impact of these activities has been significant.

The project's visibility has risen significantly among industry professionals and other key stakeholders, bringing numerous benefits to enterprises, especially in sectors where skill demands shift rapidly.

MicroCreds are now recognised as essential for focused skill development, enabling companies to cultivate targeted skill sets within their workforce that align precisely with specific roles or tasks. This is particularly evident in fast-evolving industries like technology, healthcare and greentech, where the demand for new skills is constant. UL's engagement with the Climate Ready Academy Skillnet which has yielded the accreditation of micro-credentials as well as the creation of a Certificate in Fundamentals of Sustainable Resource Management which is detailed later in the report.

Amid the current focus on talent retention, the MicroCreds project provides a clear pathway for advancement for industry students and serves as a powerful tool for companies to retain talent. Additionally, customised content and delivery have proven valuable to enterprises, with more companies opting to develop or select micro-credentials tailored to their specific needs.

The speed and flexibility of the MicroCreds project accelerate upskilling and reskilling, allowing professionals to learn at their own pace while staying current with the latest technological advancements.



## TESTIMONIAL

"Industry tells us about the skills they find difficult to recruit for, and the upskilling they need for existing staff to make themselves more competitive. As well as helping ensure employers have the skills they need in fast growing sectors such as, for example, renewable energy, in a tight labour market, supporting professional development has become a key tool for both the recruitment and retention of staff. We have heard a lot about quick and quiet quitting and the war for talent. Being able to support new skills is excellent for staff retention because it helps to develop careers and motivate staff. Companies are looking at upskilling as a tool for workforce stability and ensuring their talent is

personally and professionally developed. Companies are looking to universities to help with this.

Similarly, Government wants to see new programmes that fill talent deficits across a range of areas, including sustainability, ICT, AI, robotics and digitisation, all of which are high priorities. These are spaces that employers find it difficult to recruit talent for, or to convert existing talent into,"

It's about considering the profile of existing talent, for example mid-career professionals, and developing these skillsets for competitive advantage while at the same time honing career advancement,"

Here at University of Limerick we have developed micro-credentials in collaboration with enterprise in areas such as AI & Machine Learning, Sustainable Organisations and Supply Chain Management to name a few. Our aim, through our involvement with the MicroCreds project, is to work as a collective with our fellow IUA partners to address both regionally specific and national priority skills needs."



**Geraldine Carrol**  
Associate Vice  
President, Graduate  
and Professional  
Studies.



“THE MICROCREDS PROJECT HAS CREATED THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND ROLL-OUT OF FLEXIBLE AND AGILE EDUCATION.”

## PROJECT IMPACT

The MicroCreds Project aimed to establish a coherent national framework for quality assured and accredited micro-credentials across the universities in the project. This initiative positioned Ireland as a leader in Europe for flexible higher education and lifelong learning, supporting national and European targets.

MicroCreds was designed to be transformative across universities and scalable across the entire higher education system. The project has created the necessary infrastructure to support the rapid development and roll-out of flexible and agile education. Micro-credentials are credit-bearing, quality assured, and accredited by each university, aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This has supported skills development across enterprise and throughout the country, benefiting Ireland's 21st-century knowledge economy.

### THE FOUR STRANDS OF MICROCREDS:

#### STRAND ONE: NATIONAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

- Development of the architecture of the national framework, including sector-wide agreed definitions on micro-credentials and linkages with national and institutional quality assurance, recognition, and accreditation structures.
- Collaboration with stakeholders to undertake timely reviews of the framework to ensure it is relevant and continually providing optimal support and consistency.

#### STRAND TWO: ENTERPRISE COLLABORATION

- Development of a structured process for ongoing collaboration with enterprise, ensuring that target enterprise and learners' needs are met.
- Establishment of an Enterprise Advisory Group to ensure enterprise-informed development and harness local and regional university-enterprise links.

#### STRAND THREE: MICROCREDS.IE DEVELOPMENT

- Creation of a portal for learners to access information and gateway access to a curated menu of all micro-credentials across the universities.
- Implementation of national and regional communications to promote the portal and the micro-credentials available.

#### STRAND FOUR: CAPACITY BUILDING IN UNIVERSITIES

- Rapid development of the capacity to roll out micro-credentials across each of the universities.
- Recognition of variance across universities, enabling each to develop a programme consistent with its strengths and missions.

# STRAND ONE: NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

OUR AMBITION IS FOR MICROCREDS TO LEAVE A LEGACY FRAMEWORK FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT WITH LIFELONG LEARNING.

MicroCreds partner universities collaborated to develop, pilot and evaluate the building blocks required for a transformation in lifelong learning through micro-credentials.

Micro-credentials have the potential to reimagine and reframe the relationship between learners, universities, enterprise and civil society partners, generating a step change in lifelong and life-wide learning.

In its establishment the MicroCreds project aimed to create a coherent national framework for quality-assured and accredited micro-credentials, positioning Ireland as a leader in flexible higher education and lifelong learning.

Pillar 1 of the project focused on developing the architecture for a national framework for micro-credentials. This included establishing sector-wide agreed definitions for micro-credentials and integrating them with national and institutional quality assurance, recognition, and accreditation structures. The IUA has collaborated with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and other stakeholders to align micro-credentials with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

This work on a national framework has been transformative, not only for the eight universities but also for the entire higher education system in Ireland. The project has created the necessary infrastructure to support the rapid development and roll-out of flexible and agile education. By definition MicroCreds micro-credentials are credit-bearing, quality-assured, and accredited by each university, and aligned to the NFQ at levels 6-9. This initiative is helping Ireland meet national and European targets for flexible higher education and lifelong learning, supporting competitiveness in this strategically important and growing area.

Through extensive consultation with partners the MicroCreds framework recognises variance across universities, enterprise eco-systems and regional contexts. The agreed national framework for MicroCreds is:

- Small, focused courses
- Range from Undergraduate to Masters Level (aligned to levels 6-9 in Ireland's NFQ)
- Credit Size 1-30 ECTS (1 ECT = 25 Learning Hours)
- University Quality Assured
- Standalone credentials, some may stack towards a larger award on a pre-defined pathway
- Developed in response to identified skills need

Ireland is the first European country to establish a coherent National Framework for quality assured and accredited micro-credentials. The MicroCreds framework aligned with the EU Council Recommendation 2022 on the approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability. The Recommendation seeks to support the development, implementation and recognition of micro-credentials across institutions, businesses, sectors and borders.

The MicroCreds framework represents a transformative shift in Ireland's lifelong learning landscape. Through quality-assured, bite-size accredited micro credentials, anchored by enterprise collaboration and a national platform, MicroCreds creates a flexible, accessible, and scalable system for upskilling and reskilling across Ireland.



## BENEFITS FOR LEARNERS

- Flexible, accessible, **bite-sized learning** fits around work and life.
- Recognised credits with **real academic value**.
- Ideal for **reskilling**, upskilling, returning to work, or switching careers.
- Possibility of **stacking credits** toward larger qualifications on pre-defined pathways



## BENEFITS FOR ENTERPRISE:

- Quickly **upskill staff** in response to emerging skills needs.
- Improve **staff retention and productivity**.
- Build tailored training programmes aligned with organisational goals



## MICRO-CREDENTIAL QUALITY IN ACTION

Integrity, trust, relevance and value, are core features of DCU's approach to micro-credential quality assurance. The MicroCreds journey has been buoyed by national activities by key stakeholders such as QQI, employer bodies, the Higher Education Authority through HCI and through continuing support from employers. These activities are complemented by a concerted effort and a continued focus by the European Union on micro-credentials. The objective being quite simple - that micro-credentials become an integral part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and an enabler of the Union of Skills strategy.

The Council of the European Union's Recommendation in 2022, dispelled any notion that micro-credentials were peripheral or are not aligned to the objectives of the EHEA. Ten principles set out in the Recommendation underline this and focus on; quality, transparency, relevance, valid assessment, learning pathways, recognition, portability, being learner-centred, authentic, and providing information and guidance on micro-credentials. These principles, along with the agreements reached in the MicroCreds project have steered DCU's quality assurance approach to ensuring integrity, flexibility and an emphasis on standards.

### REFERENCE

Council of the European Union (2022). Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability,

The European definition of micro-credentials adopted by MicroCreds and operationalised in DCU reflects the fact that micro-credentials are meant to be different. DCU defined micro-credentials based on the following eight characteristics:

1. Relevant - Topics address in-demand knowledge and skills, and content is industry relevant and applicable.
2. Short - Length of course is shorter than a traditional degree programme or qualification. Micro-credential accreditation ranges from 1 - 30 ECTS (credits). The workload or time commitment starts at 25 hours (for 1 ECTS) and increases depending on the credit value of the course.
3. Collaborative - Learning experience involves collaboration and engagement with industry to provide participants with relevant, up-to-date, competitive knowledge and skills. Collaboration can take different forms. For more information on our industry engagement models click here.
4. Flexible - Delivery can be online, face-to-face or in a blended modality.
5. Learner-Centred - Course design and pedagogy reflects rigorous learning centred design practices and high-quality production standards.
6. Formally Assessed - Transparent learning outcomes are formally assessed in line with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
7. Quality Assured - Offering is reviewed and evaluated against institutional and national standards and practices.
8. Stackable - Credits earned can be stacked toward larger awards or programmes, forming the basis of bespoke learning pathways.

DCU put in place internal quality assurance personnel, structures and processes to support the review and

approval of micro-credentials with micro-credentials subject to external review too. Key quality processes and documents such as the University's Marks and Standards were refined. Provision was made specifically for micro-credentials, including an approach to the approval of internal stacking of micro-credentials leading to traditional awards as part of DCU's accreditation processes. DCU developed a learner service and support matrix to support the learner experience and to provide micro-credential learners with clear guidance on supports that they could avail of from the University. DCU's Micro-Credential and institutional webpages, alongside MicroCreds.ie have acted as key resources to support and guide learners. To facilitate industry and stakeholder engagement, the University adopted a framework to support collaboration and co-construction which was validated by the DCU HCI Stakeholder and Engagement Forum and presented to DCU's Senior Management. DCU has embedded learner surveys as part of its micro-credential delivery to provide appropriate feedback mechanisms for learners.

As DCU moves to further mainstream micro-credentials within the University, the University has issued micro-credentials through its European Alliance, ECIU university using the European Digital Credential Platform and in compliance with the European Recommendation Annex 1. Ensuring that DCU's micro-credentials adhere to the core principles of ECTS, European Standard and Guidelines and alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications is key to quality assurance for micro-credentials. The University, along with MicroCreds partners, has fed into discussions on key policy areas such as Recognition of Prior Learning and Access, Transfer and Progression by QQI. DCU looks forward to feeding into the NFQ review and the proposed development of the Irish Register for Qualifications. Through these pivotal actions and the next phase of MicroCreds we aim to take concrete steps in further advancing lifelong learning, whilst supporting the national employability and skills agenda.

## UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY & THE POMISA PROJECT: ENHANCING MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The PoMiSA project aims to enhance higher education and workforce development in Southern Africa by unlocking the transformative potential of micro-credentials. University of Galway has played a pivotal role in the PoMiSA project by sharing expertise in quality assurance (QA), flexible course design and delivery and the role of industry in content co-creation through Ireland's MicroCreds framework.

This case study examines how University of Galway's knowledge transfer supports microcredential development in Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, and South Africa, underscoring its global relevance.

### THE STATE OF PLAY OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS: IRELAND



This University of Galway report sets out the establishment of micro-credentials in the context of the Irish education and industry eco-systems. It highlights the education providers, examines the implementation and effectiveness of micro-credentials to close skills gaps and assesses the development of micro-credential policies and credit accumulation systems as the concept is integrated and mainstreamed. This has informed colleagues in Southern African countries on benchmarking their efforts against Ireland which has designed and implemented a coherent framework for



quality-assured and accredited micro-credentials, and has set the standards for excellence in flexible and agile learning.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) IN MICROCREDENTIALS

University of Galway has championed robust QA as a cornerstone of credible micro-credentials, ensuring alignment with Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) for academic and professional rigour. At the Shaping Futures: Global Connections and Collaborations for the Implementation of Microcredentials in Southern Africa conference, University of Galway presented the critical need for a common definition of micro-credentials, the value of rigorous course design, academic board validation, and external oversight. This expertise informs PoMiSA's development of policy frameworks which situate micro-credentials in relation to other credentials and qualifications and the development of regionally tailored QA guidelines, enabling Southern African nations to establish trusted micro-credential systems that support workforce mobility and lifelong learning.

### FLEXIBLE DELIVERY AND DESIGN

University of Galway's micro-credentials framework prioritises flexible delivery to enhance accessibility and learner engagement. Microcredentials are offered through online, blended, and modular formats, catering to diverse learner needs. University of Galway highlighted how modular design enables learners to stack micro-credentials toward full qualifications, fostering lifelong learning, exemplified in our Construct Innovate model. The role of industry in identifying skills needs and the co-creation of learning materials is also embedded in this model. The flexibility in design and delivery aligns with PoMiSA's goal of widening access across socio-economic contexts, ensuring inclusivity and equity.

### IMPACT AND GLOBAL RELEVANCE

University of Galway's work positions MicroCreds as a transferable model for education reform worldwide. By demonstrating how QA, flexible delivery and enterprise engagement underpin successful micro-credentials, University of Galway equips PoMiSA partners with actionable insights to build their frameworks. This knowledge exchange underscores micro-credentials' potential to bridge skills gaps, promote lifelong learning, and strengthen economic resilience, offering a replicable strategy for global education systems.

## DEVELOPING A SYSTEM FOR STACKABLE MICRO-CREDENTIALS WITHIN AND ACROSS UNIVERSITIES

In the context of increasing demand for upskilling and reskilling through flexible learning pathways, there has been a need to ensure better pathways for the



accumulation of micro-credentials into larger awards.

MicroCreds partner universities have worked towards a protocol for micro-credential stackability within each institution and they have commenced work on a framework to explore the stacking of micro-credentials across institutions.

The IUA's Credit Accumulation and Portability Working Group was established to explore a common approach to pathways and portability for credit accumulation across different programs and providers for small volume learning, such as micro-credentials.

The group was tasked with several actions to:

- Provide information on current practices within their own institution and identify possible key areas of alignment across institutions.
- Share best practices from within their own institution or European University Alliance, for example, if small volume learning, such as micro-credentials, could be stacked into larger awards, and share information regarding policies and processes used.
- Receive presentations and information from institutions and networks who were further advanced in the stacking of smaller volumes of learning into larger awards across institutions.
- Ultimately the group aimed to:
  - + Identify key areas required for a framework/principles for stacking micro-credentials across institutions, such as deciding the awarding body, the definition of a defined pathway, and time limits on credit validity.
  - + Draft an outline framework/principles for stacking micro-credentials across institutions.
  - + Draft pilots for stacking micro-credentials across institutions.

All MicroCreds partner universities now have protocols for the accumulation of micro-credentials and other small volumes of accredited learning. This significantly improves the flexibility and adaptability of lifelong learning through micro-credentials, and ensures learners have the opportunity to build their learning into larger awards if they wish to.

Developing the framework and underlying principles and protocols to enable stacking across pre-defined partner institutions is well underway. This shared approach is designed to help learners to stack micro-credentials and accumulate credit, and can provide pre-approved pathways to larger awards and qualifications.

## ADVANCING MICRO-CREDENTIALS AT TRINITY: PREPARING FOR PATHWAYS TO AWARDS

In January 2022, Trinity established an Award Architecture Working Group to analyse the options available for micro-credential award pathways at Trinity and to recommend an award architecture and associated regulations to the University Council. The outputs of this Group were presented to University Council and approved on 1st June 2022.

The recommendations approved include:

- Potential to develop non-major Trinity awards consisting entirely of micro-credentials within a credit volume range of 15-30 ECTS.
- Approval in principle of two potential frameworks:
  - + Full, non-major awards made entirely of micro-credentials (15–30 ECTS, typically a Postgraduate Certificate)
  - + Credit exemption pathways, allowing micro-credentials to count toward existing programmes.
- Requirement for micro-credentials that are part of a pathway to align with overarching programme learning outcomes and be completed within 3–5 years.
- Support for interdisciplinary and collaborative pathways working across Trinity's Schools and with enterprise, as well as Recognition of Prior Learning as a key access mechanism for learners.
- Assurance that all pathways should align and be governed by existing quality assurance standards within Trinity.

This work paved the way for discussions on the development of defined pathways to non-major Trinity awards with several Schools currently delivering micro-credentials. It is expected that recommendations in this regard will be brought forward for University Council approval in 2025/26.

This will facilitate learners to work towards a Trinity award at their own pace and supports Trinity's ambitions in terms of learning for life and promoting enhanced flexibility and accessibility to industry-relevant postgraduate education.

However, there are significant challenges with developing the system infrastructure to enable the implementation of these recommendations and to facilitate the stacking of micro-credentials in a learner-friendly and agile way. Options to address this are currently under consideration but will require significant investment.

Continued collaboration with IUA, QQI, and across HEIs will be essential and key to a viable and sustainable national micro-credential offering.



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

AUTHORS:

Fiona Gamble,  
MicroCreds Project Lead

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of Careers and Development



## SKILLNET IRELAND DRIVES WORKFORCE INNOVATION THROUGH TARGETED MICRO-CREDENTIALS

As the national talent development agency of the Government of Ireland, Skillnet Ireland is focused on providing practical ways of learning for workers that can help to upskill or reskill within the context of their lives.

Micro-credentials are an extremely important element of continued learning and the many courses developed by Skillnet Ireland such as the Creativity and Innovation for sustainable food systems programme from Taste 4 Success Skillnet and University College Dublin, or the Environmental Impact Assessment of Marine Renewable Energy Developments programme from Skillnet Offshore Wind Academy and University of Galway are a best in class example of focussing on demand-led skills, that are relevant to the needs of employers, and to the Irish economy. Similarly, the suite of stackable micro-credentials delivered by Skillnet Climate Ready Academy in partnership with University of Limerick, provide key upskilling and career development opportunities to those specialising the circular economy, biodiversity and sustainability.

Skillnet Ireland's recent report, Ireland's Talent Landscape 2025: Future Skills Challenges of Irish Business, found that 43% of businesses cited time commitment as the main barrier preventing workers from engaging in upskilling programmes. The continued strategic investment by Skillnet Ireland into the development and delivery of micro-credential programmes is a response to this barrier, and allows workers to incorporate their learning into their lives, while still scaling their careers, and simultaneously creating a pipeline of highly skilled workers for the Irish economy.

One such example of this is the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Certificate in Neurodiversity in the Workplace which was developed by BioPharmaChem Skillnet in partnership with University College Cork's Adult Continuing Education (ACE). The micro-credential programme - informed by a BioPharmaChem Skillnet research study into Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) within the sector - addresses the need to diversify the industry's talent base. It offers participants a comprehensive understanding of neurodiversity, its role in the workplace, and the policies and practices that foster inclusion.

Skillnet Ireland is committed to supporting the growth and development of business leaders and managers in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in workplaces across the economy. By delivering targeted, flexible, and industry-informed learning, micro-credentials are a testament to Skillnet Ireland's varied approach to upskilling for businesses, which benefits learners, companies, and the wider Irish economy.

### TESTIMONIAL

"Skillnet Ireland facilitates collaboration between industry and higher education to create flexible, future-focused programmes that meet Ireland's evolving skills needs. Through programme co-creation with our partners, we are supporting workforce development to drive innovation and strengthen business competitiveness."

**Aoife O'Sullivan**, Head of Network  
Development & Innovation, Skillnet Ireland

"43% OF  
BUSINESSES  
CITED TIME  
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AS THE MAIN  
BARRIER  
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WORKERS FROM  
ENGAGING IN  
UPSKILLING  
PROGRAMMES"

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF MARINE RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS

The Marine Renewable Energy (MRE) sector, encompassing offshore wind, wave, and tidal energy, faces a critical shortage of professionals skilled in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). These assessments are vital for ensuring sustainable development and regulatory compliance in MRE projects. To address this gap, University of Galway partnered with Greentech Skillnet to develop a micro-credential EIA course tailored specifically for the MRE industry, emphasising practical engagement and innovative online learning design.

Greentech Skillnet's extensive industry network enriched the course with MRE-specific case studies, including scoping marine ecosystems and stakeholder consultation for coastal projects. Industry experts contributed

real-world scenarios, such as environmental assessments for offshore wind farms, ensuring the content's practical relevance. Anna Quaid, an Environmental Consultant at ORS and a course graduate, stated, "Through expert-led lectures, case studies, and tailored assignments, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the environmental and ecological planning aspects of marine energy projects. The course's alignment with Ireland's renewable energy goals made it highly valuable."

Delivered online via Articulate Rise, the course features interactive learning design with multimedia elements, quizzes, and scenario-based activities that simulate real-world EIA challenges. Engagement techniques, such as guided discussions and case study analyses, encourage learners to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts, including reviewing regulatory frameworks or drafting environmental reports. This dynamic approach fosters critical thinking and builds confidence.

Headquartered in Limerick, 20FIFTY Partners has over 20 years' research experience in water stewardship, circular economy and broader sustainability.

UL accredited the suite of micro-credentials, levelled at NFQ 7, while 20Fifty Partners delivered the content. Students could choose three of the following five micro-credentials:

1. Biodiversity Management
2. Waste & Circular Economy Management in Practice
3. Energy Management in Practice
4. Implementing Sustainability Practices
5. Water Stewardship in Practice

University of Limerick has collaborated with the Skillnet Climate Ready Academy to deliver a curated pathway to allow participants stack micro-credentials into an accredited NFQ 7 award - Certificate in Sustainable Resource Management.

The Skillnet Climate Ready Academy is a flagship national initiative funded by Skillnet Ireland and delivered by 20FIFTY Partners, to support Irish businesses in developing the skills and talent required to mitigate the effects of our changing climate and environment.



The flexible online format and industry-driven content effectively bridge skills gaps, equipping MRE professionals to navigate EIA complexities and support sustainable project delivery. University of Galway and Greentech Skillnet invite industry partners to collaborate on future courses to meet evolving environmental and regulatory demands. Contact programme coordinators to contribute expertise or access training.

The stacking allowed the participants to complete the certificate, at their own pace and choosing. Over 440 participants have been registered on modules and 105 have completed and received the certificate so far, and 105 have completed and received the certificate.



## STRAND TWO: ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT

From the outset, enterprise engagement was recognised as a central tenet of the MicroCreds project. Ensuring that university-delivered micro-credentials were relevant, responsive and truly impactful required meaningful collaborations with employers and stakeholders across all business sectors. Our approach was shaped by a series of early insights through our research and stakeholder consultations which highlighted how the higher education sector typically established and managed relationships, articulated value and ultimately how enterprise engagement was embedded into the fabric of the project.

One of the earliest and most pressing challenges was the low baseline of awareness surrounding micro-credentials. Both within higher education and across enterprise, there was limited understanding of what micro-credentials were or how they could address real high-level skills needs challenges. This highlighted the immediate need for awareness-raising and alignment around language, particularly in relation to concepts like flexibility, recognition and accreditation. A pivotal insight during this phase was the importance of engaging employers not simply as end-users, but as partners. If micro-credentials were to be truly fit-for-purpose, employers needed to be involved from the outset, in many instances as co-creators and co-delivers, providing input into design, participating in feedback loops and engaging in strategic conversations. This shift in mindset helped ensure our partner universities' provision reflected real-time workforce needs and had buy-in from those who would ultimately benefit from it.

Approaches towards enterprise engagement differed considerably across the partner universities, in line with their designation as autonomous bodies and correlated to their strategic priorities and educational and research strengths. Whilst some institutions had well-established enterprise-facing units, others were beginning to develop their internal mechanisms for collaboration for micro-credentials. This diverse landscape reinforced the need for a National Framework for Micro-credentials, one which could support consistency in approach, whilst allowing individual universities the autonomy to engage in ways that best suited their structures and strengths.

To ensure a coordinated channel for employer engagement at national level, the project established the Enterprise Advisory Group (EAG). This body brought together a diverse cross-section of enterprise voices to advise, challenge and inform strategy from an external perspective. The EAG quickly became an invaluable forum for surfacing employer needs and validating project direction. Early engagements with employers signalled a strong appetite for new models of learning, however, the emphasis was consistently on practicality: employers valued short, stackable, job-relevant micro-credentials supporting retention, upskilling and mobility. Flexibility, agility and formal recognition were key priorities, underscoring the importance of aligning provision with both workplace realities and long-term professional development. Trust and quality also emerged as central themes with employers expressed a clear preference for university-delivered and quality-assured micro-credentials.

“IF MICRO-CREDENTIALS WERE TO BE TRULY FIT-FOR-PURPOSE, EMPLOYERS NEEDED TO BE INVOLVED FROM THE OUTSET.”

Whilst innovation was welcomed, it had to be underpinned by credibility and robust standards. This reinforced the need to highlight institutional strengths and to align with national quality frameworks. Over time, our enterprise engagement strategy evolved into a concrete plan with aligned activations, each assigned to key project stakeholders and groups with defined timelines. What began as a promotional effort to introduce micro-credentials gradually shifted towards genuine partnership and co-development. This evolution is captured in the MicroCreds Innovate model and further refined in the more targeted engagement strategies developed during the extended phase of the project and led out by individual university partners.

Crucially, as the project matured, it became clear that employers were not only engaging to address immediate training needs, but they were also surfacing broader systemic challenges related to lifelong learning, access to upskilling supports and the recognition of workplace learning. In this way, enterprise actors contributed not just as beneficiaries, but as key voices shaping the future of the learning ecosystem in Ireland. Together, these early insights and actions laid the foundation for a more strategic and collaborative model of enterprise engagement, one that has now moved beyond awareness-raising to meaningful partnership and longer-term system impact.





# EMPOWERING ENTERPRISE: THE BUSINESS VALUE OF MICROCREDS

TONY DONOHOE, CHAIR OF MICROCREDS ENTERPRISE ADVISORY GROUP

The MicroCreds Project has provided a robust framework for enterprises and universities to bridge skills gaps, foster lifelong learning, and enhance workforce adaptability. The initiative has positioned Ireland as a leader in flexible, industry-aligned education, and has the potential to help businesses stay competitive in a rapidly evolving global economy.

From its inception, the project aimed to combine data-driven analysis with structured stakeholder engagement –ensuring that programme provision was guided by timely information about what skills are needed for the economy and society. It was informed by an Enterprise Advisory Group, comprising representatives from business organisations, state enterprise agencies, community and voluntary organisation, and leading multinational companies.

The process was also underpinned by the establishment of the MicroCreds Enterprise Engagement Strategy which was designed to stimulate awareness of micro-credentials in the business community, monitor skills data and establish clear engagement channels to advance enterprise-university collaboration. One example of this collaboration was provided by the series of MicroCreds Innovate events which brought together large numbers of enterprise and university partners to identify skill gaps and opportunities for programme co-creation around key sectors and themes

such as SMEs (a key target group of the project) food, biopharma, financial services, digital, AI, zero carbon and transversal skills.

The MicroCreds Project has offered unique opportunities from a business perspective in terms of upskilling including:

- The reputation and quality assurance of Irish universities in a very crowded training market
- A mechanism for companies to acknowledge and invest in staff
- Tailored and flexible continuous professional development pathways for organisation and individuals
- The facility for programmes to be spread, rather than structured in large learning chunks
- The possibilities offered by blended delivery and new ways of curating course content
- The ability to spread training costs in a way that suits the business; this was further enhanced with the introduction of a Learner Fee Subsidy in March 2024.

The MicroCreds project has set a benchmark for flexible education in Ireland, influencing national and European

policy. As businesses continue to face disruption, the framework will ensure that Ireland's workforce remains adaptable, future-proofing both enterprises and the broader economy. It has demonstrated its potential to address many of the barriers to participation in lifelong learning, including time constraints for learners and inflexibility in current programme provision.

The success of the MicroCreds project highlights the critical role of universities in driving innovation while meeting real-world business needs.

**"MICROCREDS IS POSITIONING IRELAND AS A LEADER IN FLEXIBLE, INDUSTRY-ALIGNED EDUCATION – SHAPING NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN POLICY."**

## ALIGNING SKILLS WITH ENTERPRISE NEEDS

The Enterprise Advisory Group (EAG) was a critical component of the MicroCreds project, ensuring that the development and delivery of micro-credentials remained closely aligned with the skills needs of enterprise and the wider economy. Comprising senior representatives from industry, employer bodies and skills agencies, the EAG provided strategic guidance on priority skills areas, emerging workforce trends and the practical application of micro-credentials in the workplace.

Throughout the project, EAG members played a key role in shaping the focus and direction of MicroCreds in terms of enterprise engagement. This direct partnership with enterprise helped partner universities identify where flexible, targeted learning could deliver the greatest impact. Its input supported the design of micro-credentials that were responsive to real-world needs, relevant across sectors and aligned with both national and international skills priorities.

The group also acted as an important bridge between higher education and enterprise, strengthening dialogue and fostering mutual understanding of how micro-credentials can support talent development, workforce agility and employee retention. By bringing an enterprise perspective into the governance of the project, the EAG helped ensure that MicroCreds remained outcomes-focused and future-oriented.

A lasting legacy of the EAG is the strong culture of collaboration it helped establish between universities and enterprise, providing a model for ongoing engagement as micro-credentials continue to be embedded within Ireland's lifelong learning and skills ecosystem.





# MICROCREDITS INNOVATE

## A NEW MODEL FOR UNIVERSITY AND ENTERPRISE COLLABORATION

“MICROCREDITS INNOVATE HAS HELPED SHIFT THE PERCEPTION OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS FROM ABSTRACT POLICY TO BECOMING PRACTICAL TOOLS WITH DIRECT WORKPLACE VALUE”

MicroCredits Innovate was established as a dedicated stream within the MicroCredits project to strengthen the relationship between Irish universities and enterprise and support the co-creation and development of micro-credentials. Its overall purpose was twofold: to accelerate meaningful employer engagement and to create a sustainable model for collaboration which could extend beyond the funded project.

The initiative emerged in response to a growing recognition that strong, systemic enterprise engagement needed real opportunities to collaborate, influence and connect in a way that was practical, time-efficient and more clearly aligned to skills needs. MicroCredits Innovate was designed to meet that need.

Through curated events MicroCredits Innovate created structured spaces where employers and universities could explore real-world learning challenges, identify shared priorities and build confidence in working together. Led and curated by the MicroCredits Enterprise Engagement Manager, each event was shaped not only by insights from the MicroCredits Enterprise Advisory Group and wider employer network, but crucially featured keynote contributions from sector-leading experts. Events were strategically aligned with major sectoral skills needs reports and strongly supported by our partner universities, whose collaboration ensured relevance, reach and high-quality delivery. These events were part of a wider strategy to create the conditions for long-term partnerships rooted in trust and relevance.

What made MicroCredits Innovate successful was its agility and intent, offering universities a tangible route to deepen engagement with enterprise, whilst giving employers a clear signal that their voices were not only being heard but acted upon. The MicroCredits Innovate model has helped shift the perception of micro-credentials from abstract policy to becoming practical tools with direct workplace value. Beyond the immediate objectives, these events played a critical role in raising national awareness of micro-credentials, not just amongst employers and universities, but also across policy and system stakeholders. By aligning with key sectoral skills reports, showcasing expert keynote speakers, and drawing on strong support from partner universities, the EAG together with wider enterprise colleagues, the events helped position micro-credentials as a credible, policy-relevant response to Ireland’s evolving skills agenda.

MicroCredits Innovate has engaged hundreds of enterprise representatives across a full spectrum of enterprise sectors, sparking co-development of new offering and demonstrating a viable, scalable approach to university-enterprise collaboration, all in harmony with the central ethos of HCI Pillar 3. It has laid the groundwork for continued engagement beyond the extended phase of the project, with strong institutional buy-in and with an increasingly mature ecosystem for employer-informed micro-credentials.

### KEY STATS:

8

**MICROCREDITS INNOVATE EVENTS**

HELD ACROSS 2022-2024



OVER 700

**ATTENDEES ACROSS EVENTS**

90%

**OF ENTERPRISE ATTENDEES RATED EVENTS AS 'VERY USEFUL' OR 'EXTREMELY USEFUL'**

(POST-EVENT SURVEY FEEDBACK)

77%

**OF EMPLOYERS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN COLLABORATING ON FUTURE MICRO-CREDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH UNIVERSITY PARTNERS**

400 >>>

**EXAMPLES OF POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UPS WITH UNIVERSITY PARTNERS.**

### KEY THEMES RAISED BY ENTERPRISE:

- Need for agile development cycles and meaningful co-design opportunities with universities
- Strong desire for sustainable university-enterprise partnerships that move beyond once-off engagements to truly embed long-term collaboration.
- Greater clarity around funding options, including well-structured funding schemes.
- Clearly defined development cycles, supporting sustainable micro-credential delivery.
- Importance of formal recognition and alignment with national and European qualifications frameworks.
- Relevance of enterprise-specific pathways allowing learners to build relevant, sector-tailored larger awards over time.
- Demand for clearer communication and simplified language around micro-credentials, particularly for SMEs and non-HR specialists.
- Flexibility in delivery modes to suit modern workplace realities.
- Need for data on impact and outcomes, such as how micro-credentials contribute to employee upskilling, retention or productivity.

**Kalyn Potter, MSc,** Project Manager - Mentoring for Equality Programme. Course Lecturer – Mentoring for EDI

**Professor Katriona O’Sullivan,** Founder & Principle Investigator – STEM Passport for Inclusion. Course Coordinator – Mentoring for EDI

**Isabel Meza Silva,** Programme Manager – STEM Passport for Inclusion

## MENTORING FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MICRO-CREDENTIAL

This innovative micro-credential course is designed to empower professionals with the skills and knowledge to become impactful mentors in the context of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Developed in partnership with Maynooth University’s EDI Office and the STEM Passport for Inclusion, this course aims to address an identified gap in professional development opportunities that equip individuals with both the theoretical understanding and practical tools to mentor effectively through an EDI lens.

In Ireland, as in many other countries, underrepresentation in industry and leadership roles persists across various communities, particularly amongst minority groups and under-resourced regions. Delivered through a blend of live virtual seminars and asynchronous learning, the course supplies learners with a theoretical understanding, applied mentoring experience, and assignments that encourage reflection and programme proposal development to become agents of change in their workplaces and communities.

The course addresses the systemic barriers faced by individuals from under-resourced and diverse

backgrounds, recognising the role that mentorship can play in dismantling these barriers and supporting individuals from under-resourced communities in gaining cultural capital. Cultural capital is access to the knowledge, people and places that support individuals in realising equal outcomes in relation to education and career success, not simply having access to equal opportunities that may not take into account barriers to taking advantage of those opportunities.

Looking through the lens of access to STEM education and careers as an applied component within the STEM Passport for Inclusion, mentors are trained to support young learners in broadening their perspectives, building confidence and harnessing their leadership potential. This approach works to actively break down these barriers for students while provide learning opportunities that support the mentor’s reflective process and personal, as well as professional, development.

Since its launch, the course has been delivered to three cohorts, with 57 learners successfully completing the programme. Many of these graduates continue to serve as mentors, not only within the STEM Passport for



Inclusion initiative but also through mentoring programmes they have initiated in their own organisations and communities. This sustained engagement is a testament to the course’s impact and the commitment of its participants to fostering inclusive environments.

Our most recent cohort in the Spring of 2025 was the first to engage with new coursework components such as the proposal development. One learner got in touch after completing the course to note that they, “passed on [their] mentoring proposal to our Early Careers consultant and ... the first 2 parts are being implemented before September! From here on our graduates will get a peer mentor/buddy and a hub is being set up for communication between early career employees”, showing that the coursework can be applied in real world workplace environments to foster change.

Graduates of the course leave with a deepened understanding of EDI, practical mentoring skills, and the confidence to lead inclusive initiatives. Equipped to design, implement and assess mentoring programmes to better support EDI, graduates are now actively making changes to enhance EDI considerations in companies and communities across the island.

“ENGAGING WITH THE MENTORING FOR EDI MICROCREDENTIAL WAS AN ENRICHING AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING EXPERIENCE”  
–2025 COURSE GRADUATE

## NON-PROFIT ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT

Non-profit enterprise engagement can often be overlooked when beginning the co-design of micro-credentials but have proved a very rewarding addition to the suite of micro-credentials in UCC.

As part of the UCC vision connecting and empowering people to create knowledge that shapes and sustains an inclusive world it was a core value of the UCC MicroCreds project to include all possible partners and learners.

Dance Cork Firkin Crane and Professor Yvon Bonefant developed the first university accredited training programme in inclusive dance.

Creating a micro-credential to meet the needs of both the learner and funding required ingenuity across the partnership. Working with learners with a physical disability and /or neurodivergent profile has left a legacy of enhanced skills based learning and teaching methods which would not have been seen without the Inclusive Dance learners.

The impact has been profound, with many participants advancing to pursue further education in inclusive dance and others developing their own inclusive performances.

September 2024, the Community Foundation Ireland Creative Access Award was presented to University College Cork & Dance Cork Firkin Crane for ‘Inclusive

Dance Cork’. Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of Community Foundation Ireland said “We see the arts not just as an outlet for passion to be enjoyed by audiences, but also as a powerful instrument for change often giving a voice to those who are silenced or ignored. We congratulate all the winners including Dance Cork Firkin Crane and UCC who are truly opening up the power of inclusive dance to all.”

The Inside-Prison Exchange programme led by Dr Katharina Swirak and Dr James Windle collaborated with Cork ETB Prison Education Unit to create a micro-credential that brought together UCC Criminology students and learners from Cork Prison for a semester of joint study. All learners completed this pioneering micro-credential in Criminal Justice and Social Justice within the Prison Education Unit in Cork Prison. Learning with and from each other is a key element of all micro-credentials. The insight and value found in peer to peer learning has been a strength of all micro-credentials offered in UCC.

This micro-credential is proving to be a first step back into education for many, which not only a hope for this particular micro-credential but the whole MicroCreds project.

Both micro-credentials have shown how a small piece learning can have a big impact on, learners, educators, and society.

As part of their final project prison based students and UCC BA Criminology students together created a version of snakes and ladders, symbolising how life paths can be determined by a mix of luck, agency as well as constraints.



**Dr Katharina Swirak**

**Professor Yvon Bonefant**

**Mags Arnold**

## BRIDGING ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY: UCD ENERGY INSTITUTE'S MICRO-CREDENTIAL JOURNEY

The UCD Energy Institute's pioneering work in micro-credentials, specifically two accredited Level 9 courses in electricity grid operation and modelling, offers a compelling example of responsive education in action. These specialised offerings directly translate cutting-edge university research into practical, applicable training for professionals shaping Ireland's energy future. Our initial motivation stemmed from a clear recognition that the rapidly evolving energy sector demands a highly agile and focused approach to upskilling opportunities.

### EVIDENCE OF IMPACT: ROBUST INDUSTRY UPTAKE

The most immediate and powerful indicator of this strategy's efficacy has been the overwhelmingly robust enrolment figures. This success was not serendipitous but a direct consequence of actively leveraging our extensive industry links, including NexSys Industry partners and professional organisations like Wind Energy Ireland. Through continuous, collaborative dialogue, we've ensured course content is not only theoretically rigorous but also critically relevant to real-world challenges in grid development and operation. This commitment to industry-informed curriculum design has deeply resonated with professionals seeking to maintain competitiveness and adapt to new technologies and policy shifts. The micro-credentials' immense appeal stems precisely from their ability to deliver targeted, high-impact learning experiences within a flexible time frame, directly addressing crucial skill gaps identified by our esteemed industry collaborators. This strong uptake unequivocally validates the UCD Energy Institute's forward-thinking vision and demonstrates a clear, powerful return on investment for both the institution and participating professionals.



Powering Tomorrow: Hands-On Learning in UCD's Integrated Energy Lab

### NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCELLENCE

UCD, like many established institutions, operates within long-standing structures for curriculum development, credit allocation, and quality assurance. While integrating these innovative, modular units has presented exciting opportunities for systemic evolution, it has also highlighted some challenges. A considerable challenge has naturally emerged in optimising resource allocation, particularly concerning the dynamic administration of these new offerings and the sustained availability of our expert lecturers. Unlike traditional, large-scale degree programs, the micro-credential model demands a more

agile administrative approach, which has, at times, stretched existing departmental resources. Similarly, securing dedicated lecturing time from our highly sought-after academic staff, many actively engaged in impactful research, has proven to be an ongoing balancing act.

These practical constraints highlight the need for adaptive strategies within UCD's established operational model. Given the undeniable growth and popularity of micro-credentials within industry, we advocate for a larger, fully resourced central department. Such a department would be helpful to manage all facets of micro-credentials across the entire university, including tendering, administration, and marketing, ensuring sustainable and scalable success.

## "FOOD ACADEMY PROGRAMME GAINS NEW ACADEMIC RIGOUR AND EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOOD PRODUCERS"



### CERTIFICATE IN FOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In a collaboration led by its Enterprise Academy, Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) has joined forces with SuperValu and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) to bring the already highly successful Food Academy programme to a new level. The TU Dublin Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship has added new food safety management elements to the Food Academy programme while the university reviewed and assessed its existing components to ensure they meet the standards required for academic accreditation.

Developed in conjunction with LEOs, the Food Academy programme supports entrepreneurs and early-stage companies in reaching the standards required to have their products stocked in major national retailers like

SuperValu. Successfully running for 12 years until 2024, the programme evolved into the Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship. Notable alumni include household names such as The Happy Pear and Strong Roots.

The programme helps producers develop skills in key areas including sessions delivered in parallel in different regional locations to meet the needs of the individual entrepreneurs.

In August 2024, 32 Irish food and drink producers joined the revised TU Dublin pilot programme, benefiting from expert training, authentic assessments, and university accreditation. Fees for this programme are subsidised via the Higher Education Authority's HCI Pillar 3 Micro-Credentials Learner Fee Subsidy.

According to Carmel Biggane, SuperValu Food Academy Programme Manager, "Working with Ciara Walsh, Senior Engagement Manager at the Enterprise Academy made it easy for us and demystified the academic side of programme co-design, validation and accreditation."

"Importantly, we're not only adding on a new module to support food producers, we're also recognising and accrediting the existing curriculum of the Food Academy programme as whole, under a 15 ECTS TU Dublin accredited 'Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship', says Walsh." The School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology at TU Dublin was as natural fit to support the new programme and the validation process

"All the heavy lifting was done by TU Dublin in ensuring that the content that we had was validated," Biggane adds. "That happened really fast, and it was in place in time for the next set of entrants to begin the programme."

TU Dublin added the food safety management piece where more expertise was needed. We have that expertise within the school and we were able to leverage that and combine it with the expertise within SuperValu.

**REGIONAL SKILLS FORA**  
**AUTHOR:**  
 Natasha Kinsella,  
 Regional Skills Fora  
 Manager, Dublin

## STRENGTHENING ENTERPRISE COLLABORATION: UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE REGIONAL SKILLS FORA

Over the past five years, the Higher Education Authority's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 has reshaped how Irish universities and industry collaborate to deliver agile, demand-led upskilling. At the heart of this transformation lies the powerful partnership of universities, enterprise, and the Regional Skills Fora (RSF).

The RSF have played a crucial intermediary role for outreach and promotional activity for the MicroCreds Project, as well as translating employer needs, resulting into informed tangible course development opportunities. Communication with regional enterprises and stakeholders is a central element of the RSF. By engaging directly with both SME and multinational employers across regions the RSF have ensured that Micro-credentials are positioned around real-world demands, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, sustainability, health innovation, transversal, and leadership skills. The launch

of the MicroCreds.ie portal has further enhanced these outreach efforts, providing a central, user-friendly platform where learners and employers can easily browse and compare short, accredited courses offered by multiple Irish universities.

The partnership between universities and the RSF has enabled insights to inform the development of modular, stackable, and accredited short courses that reflect urgent and emerging skills needs at regional and national levels. These Micro-credentials have provided working professionals with flexible upskilling opportunities, often delivered in blended or fully online formats, allowing for seamless integration into their working lives.

A key component of the RSF's work has been ensuring that employers are fully aware of emerging upskilling offerings, particularly the increasing availability of accredited, flexible and subsidised micro-credentials. Through proactive

outreach, sectoral briefings, and employer engagement events, the RSF have helped raise awareness of these opportunities, ensuring that businesses understand how micro-credentials can support workforce development, retention, and innovation within the workplace.

This sustained collaboration has not only delivered high-quality, accredited learning for thousands of professionals but has also helped build trust and long-term dialogue between higher education and enterprise. It represents a shift from one-size-fits-all training models to more adaptive, co-created, and demand-driven education pathways.

As Ireland continues to embrace a lifelong learning agenda, the legacy of this partnership will shape how higher education responds to skills needs for years to come ensuring relevance, agility, and inclusivity in our national upskilling ecosystem.



**Natasha Kinsella**  
 Regional Skills Fora  
 Manager, Dublin.

### TESTIMONIAL

"Through the micro-credential initiative, we have seen real alignment between what industry needs and what universities can deliver. The responsiveness and openness of university partners, informed by RSF insights and collaboration, have supported co-created impactful upskilling that drives productivity and innovation across all regions."

The awareness and activity of outreach in partnership alongside a dedicated portal has been especially vital for small and medium-sized enterprises, which often lack the internal HR resources or strategic capacity to plan structured workforce development."



### EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES



MicroCreds in a number of ways. A clear example of partnership in action was our dedicated annual MicroCreds SME awareness event aligned to Local Enterprise Week. Other areas of collaboration included participation and outreach engagement for Innovate events, MicroNet webinars and European visiting delegations.

In addition a clear call at County Council level was the second iteration of Fingal Skills Strategy for sectoral business skills groups sessions to enable co-design and co-created micro-credentials."



"We played a key role in spurring the development of a new micro-credential in Green Hydrogen Technology, Design & Analysis. In response to emerging industry needs, Regional Skills West convened a dedicated skills working group with leading civil engineering firms across the West of Ireland. These employers identified green hydrogen as a critical future skills area and highlighted the need for upskilling their current workforce. Through close collaboration with education providers, it was determined that a gap in provision existed. The University of Galway responded swiftly, developing and delivering a targeted micro-credential to address this need. The course successfully launched in 2025 and, due to strong demand, will be offered again in 2026."



"A clear example of effective partnership in practice was the MicroCreds Innovate Financial Services Focus Event, held online on 13th November 2024. The Northwest Regional Skills Forum worked alongside the IUA to support the delivery of this event, which was developed in direct response to a recommendation from the EGFSN's 2024 Skills for International Financial Services report. The report emphasised the need for more flexible and responsive learning pathways to meet the sector's future skills needs. The event brought together employers from the financial services sector, regional stakeholders, and higher education providers to explore how Micro-credentials can support the development of in-demand skills across key areas such as sustainable finance, compliance, fintech and data analytics. It also highlighted the expanding range of Micro-credentials available through Irish universities and how these offerings are increasingly being shaped through meaningful employer engagement."

## STRAND THREE: MICROCRED.S.IE & COMMUNICATIONS

In a fast-changing skills landscape, clear communication is more than a supporting act. It is central to success. For MicroCreds, communications have been a critical enabler in turning a bold idea into a recognised and trusted national initiative.

At the heart of the project's communications approach was a simple but powerful aim: to build national awareness and confidence in micro-credentials while supporting local university efforts to connect with learners and employers. Achieving that required more than just campaigns. It required a cohesive, creative, and collaborative strategy.

### STANDING OUT WITH A STRONG, UNIFIED BRAND

In a crowded learning and development space, MicroCreds needed to cut through. The solution was an original and distinctive brand identity that balanced credibility with accessibility. This brand allowed MicroCreds to speak confidently to both individual learners and business leaders, while visually distinguishing the project in a competitive, crowded higher education field.

This wasn't branding for branding's sake. It was a strategic asset, enabling the project to unify its voice across partner universities, platforms and audiences. The MicroCreds brand identity created consistency, built trust, and helped establish the project as a credible national leader in flexible learning.

“THE MICROCRED.S  
BRAND IDENTITY  
CREATED  
CONSISTENCY,  
BUILT TRUST,  
AND HELPED  
ESTABLISH THE  
PROJECT AS  
A CREDIBLE  
NATIONAL LEADER  
IN FLEXIBLE  
LEARNING.”



## A SHARED MESSAGE, LOCALLY DELIVERED

One of MicroCreds' strengths has been its unique model of national and local collaboration. Communications activities were designed to operate at two levels: a central (IUA-led) strategy to drive awareness and credibility, and local university-level campaigns tailored to specific learners and sectors.

To ensure alignment, a Communications Group was established which brought together representatives from all partner universities, alongside enterprise stakeholders. This forum became a cornerstone of the project, allowing universities to shape and share messages together, avoid duplication, and ensure that communications consistently reflected the project's core values.

Having a shared tone of voice and clear messaging framework was essential. MicroCreds introduced a relatively new concept to the Irish public. Without alignment, the risk of confusion or mistrust was high. By coordinating language, tone, and narrative across the consortium, the project ensured that all communications whether from a partner university, the IUA or project stakeholder spoke with one voice.

This approach has resulted in a growing awareness of micro-credentials not just as an idea, but as a high-quality, university-delivered way to upskill, backed by a clear, compelling story. For MicroCreds, communications didn't just support the project it has shaped how it was seen, understood, and valued.

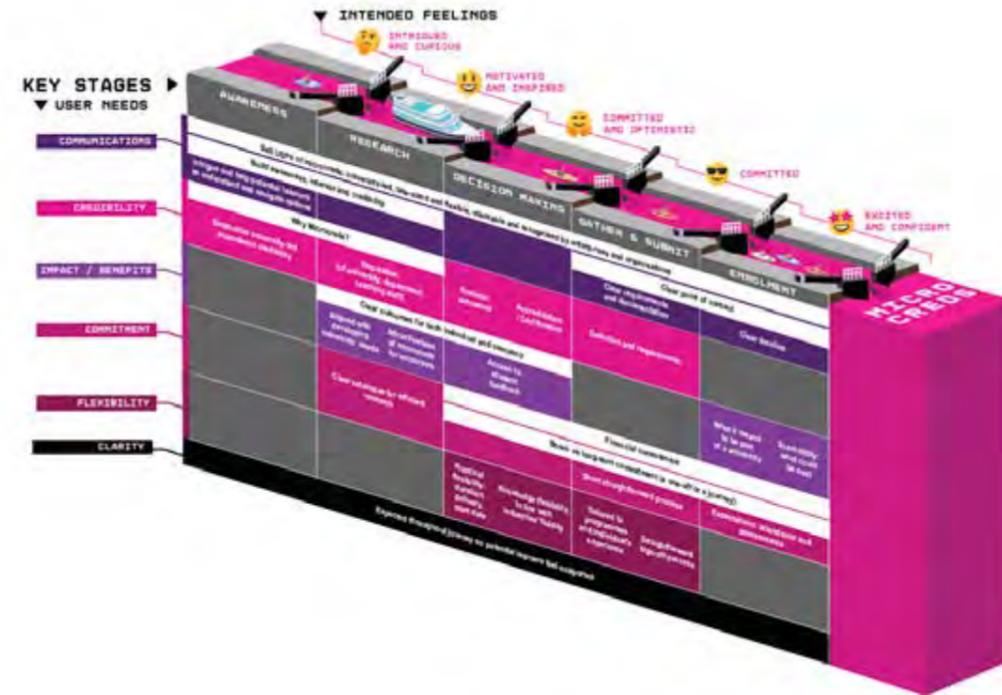
## UNDERSTANDING THE IDEAL MICROCREDS LEARNER JOURNEY

In the summer of 2023 MicroCreds partnered with Pickle Jar Communications to further examine how learners and enterprise navigate the process of discovering, selecting, and enrolling in micro-credentials in Ireland. This work was undertaken to ensure that the newly launched MicroCreds.ie platform could deliver a consistent, high-quality user experience that helped support the uptake of lifelong learning.

Drawing on stakeholder interviews across our seven partner universities, surveys of learners and the general public, employer engagement, and competitor analysis, the research provided a clear evidence base for the impact of MicroCreds.ie and areas for further development. While interest in lifelong learning is strong the learner journey is often fragmented. The research highlighted that prospective learners encounter inconsistent course information, varying application processes, and limited clarity on outcomes. This became the catalyst for partner universities to start reviewing their own internal application processes for micro-credential learners.

The study overall highlighted the distinct needs of our two primary audiences. Enterprise prioritise business impact, flexibility, and the ability to stack learning into larger awards. While individual learners value clarity on cost, time commitment, and career impact. Across both groups, the triggers to act are clear: recognising a need to update skills, preparing for career change, or responding to an employer's prompt. However, cost, time constraints, and lack of guidance remain significant barriers.

The research recommendations included immediate measures aimed at improving users engagement and



more long term sectoral moves to support lifelong learning. Recommendations such as consistent naming conventions, standardised course information and improved search tools supported better engagement with MicroCreds.ie. While a longer-term ambition to unify the learner journey through a centralised application platform would create a seamless experience from discovery to enrolment, enable personalisation for different audience segments, and provide richer data to inform policy and delivery across higher education in Ireland.

The final output from this work was a dedicated learner journey model designed specifically for micro-credential learners in Ireland. The model offers a clear framework that partner universities can adopt and adapt to suit their internal systems and processes, ensuring a consistent, high-quality experience while respecting institutional differences. By working from a shared blueprint, the sector can align around best practice, reduce friction for learners, and enhance the clarity and credibility of micro-credentials.

## ENHANCING THE STUDENT JOURNEY: USING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE RESEARCH TO IMPROVE MICRO-CREDENTIAL RECRUITMENT AT UL

As micro-credentials continue to grow within University of Limerick (UL), understanding the learner's experience has become essential. At Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS), we wanted to understand the behaviours or needs of micro-credential students relative to our typical learner journey. To guide improvements, we commissioned dedicated customer experience (CX) research focused on how prospective learners navigate, engage with, and commit to micro-credential study.

This work built on earlier research carried out through MicroCreds.ie and was delivered in partnership with PickleJar Communications. Our aim was to delve deeper into the online experience specifically for micro-credential users on the UL website. The research included over 500 survey responses, as well as focus groups and one-to-one interviews with prospective and current students, providing a rich mix of qualitative and quantitative insight.

The findings revealed clear experience gaps. Most notably, students struggled to find what they were looking for. Many had difficulty identifying which micro-credential was right for them, often due to a

lack of clarity around course titles or intuitive search functionality.

The research also uncovered meaningful differences between micro-credential learners and those enrolled in longer part-time programmes. Micro-credential students were typically more focused on immediate, skills-based outcomes, wanting to improve performance in their current role or close a specific knowledge gap. Whereas longer-form learners tended to have broader, long-term career goals. Additionally, micro-credential learners expressed a strong preference for follow-up communications after course completion, seeking advice on potential next steps in their educational or professional pathway.

In response, GPS worked with key stakeholders to develop a prioritised roadmap of 15 initiatives, categorised across a newly mapped user journey: they find you, they decide, they commit, and they come back. This structure allowed us to match each insight to actionable improvements, allocate resources effectively, and identify collaboration points across marketing, admissions, and digital teams. The research proved to be a powerful influencing tool and was presented across faculty management groups to secure support and buy-in for key CX improvements.

This project demonstrates the value of structured, evidence-based customer experience research. By listening to students and mapping their real-world journey, we've been able to implement targeted improvements and set a strategic foundation that supports micro-credential recruitment at UL

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## DISTINCTIVE MARKETING FOR AN ENHANCED LEARNER JOURNEY

The MicroCreds project at University of Limerick (UL) has sought to expand access to flexible, lifelong learning through the development of micro-credentials. When marketed as a standalone offering, micro-credentials faced limited visibility and recognition among prospective learners compared to more established part-time learning routes.

At Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS), we recognised that the success of micro-credentials depended on putting the student first. Flexible learning at third level can be fragmented and confusing. Students don't always know what mode of study suits them best. They explore, compare, and often choose differently than initially expected. In fact, it is common that up to 50% of applicants convert to programmes other than the one they first enquired about.

Rather than guide students down standalone paths, our marketing strategy aimed to support exploration across all learning types, trusting that the student will choose the right product for them, guided by us.

A key enabler of this was positioning dedicated resources from the project within UL's central GPS marketing team. Micro-credentials were planned as



their own segment within all postgraduate recruitment campaigns across owned, earned and paid channels. Receiving focused attention and resource within the context of all communications to prospective learners. This structure allowed us to target the

The final critical factor was close collaboration with UL's admissions team. Together, we developed clear messaging, established defined admissions processes, and built a live application tracking report. This tool allowed marketing and admissions to jointly monitor conversion, identify friction points, and adjust tactics in real time. It also fostered a shared sense of ownership over the learner journey.

Across four coordinated student intakes, this integrated strategy improved visibility and engagement, embedding micro-credentials within core operations and long-term planning. The project's success ultimately reflects one key principle: to be effective, resources must be positioned alongside the university's core functions.

market with dedicated communications and meant that micro-credentials also benefited from cross promotion from other flexible learning campaigns.

We also recognised the importance of branding. After the MicroCreds.ie identity was delivered by the national project, we worked closely with UL's brand team to co-brand micro-credentials in a way that differentiated it from UL's traditional offerings while still clearly part of the family. This strategic alignment reassured learners of quality while allowing for distinction. It also simplified artwork approvals, accelerated campaign rollout and created buy-in for the project.

**"WHEN MARKETING, BRANDING, AND ADMISSIONS ARE ALIGNED, LEARNERS BENEFIT AND SO DOES INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY."**

## MARKETING TRINITY MICRO-CREDENTIALS TO ENTERPRISE

Micro-credentials marketing at Trinity has evolved significantly since the outset of the project in 2021.

Initially, marketing was product (micro-credential course) led and focused primarily on learner recruitment. As it was a pilot project, each course was allocated marketing budget and resources equitably to ensure each had a chance to recruit learners. Online campaigns targeted relevant learners for each course based on interests, job titles, experience etc. These were then added to marketing funnels for follow up communications. This approach was successful in recruiting learners and determining market appetite for each course. However, it was resource intensive and became less manageable as our Trinity micro-credential portfolio grew. The equitable approach did not allow for reallocation of resources in response to market appetite or sectoral needs.

A new HCI Enterprise Ecosystem was established at Trinity in 2023 to support Trinity's engagement with enterprise in terms of its HCI educational offerings. This allowed for an increased focus on enterprise marketing and a more audience led approach to micro-credentials marketing specifically. An enterprise marketing approach was developed focusing on Trinity's areas of research expertise and the sectors aligned with these. Micro-credentials and upskilling opportunities have been core elements of Trinity's message to enterprise.

Targeted outreach to learning and development and HR professionals through events and advertising has built our connections to a buyer audience responsible for upskilling in their organisations. Targeted sectoral campaigns for Trinity micro-credentials have grouped courses by audience rather than by academic School to ensure budget and resources are maximised.

An example is our summer Trinity micro-credentials webinar series campaign which segmented our audience



and course portfolio based on sector, professional focus and subject area interest. We grouped micro-credentials under the themes of healthcare, leadership and engineering and targeted our promotion to relevant audiences. Analysis of registrations and attendance showed high relevance of job titles and companies with both learner and buyer roles in appropriate organisations.

As market awareness of micro-credentials continues to grow and the HCI fee subsidy encourages increased participation, our marketing approach at Trinity to both learners and enterprise will continue to be flexible. We have learned the importance of meeting our audiences where they are and adjusting our messaging and placements regularly to address their changing needs.

**"MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND UPSKILLING OPPORTUNITIES HAVE BEEN CORE ELEMENTS OF TRINITY'S MESSAGE TO ENTERPRISE."**



“THE MICRO-CREDENTIAL FORMAT REALLY APPEALED TO ME WITH A BUSY WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE. IT ALLOWED ME TO SELECT A COURSE THAT WAS DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO MY CURRENT ROLE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES. THE COURSE CONTENT WAS VERY RELEVANT AND PRACTICAL. IT HAS REIGNITED MY APPETITE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING. I AM CURRENTLY ON MY THIRD MICROCRED!”

*Micro-credential Learner at Trinity College Dublin*

## SIMPLIFIED AND ENHANCED ONLINE APPLICATIONS

During the initial phase of the MicroCreds project at Trinity, our existing postgraduate course application form was used to process learner applications for our micro-credentials. In addition to requiring some internal manual workarounds to progress a micro-credential application through to registration, feedback and data from learners indicated that this form was not fit for purpose and was contributing to attrition rates during the application process.

In 2022, a team comprising colleagues from across Trinity - MC Project Team, IT Services and Academic Registry – came together to design, develop and implement a new application form specifically tailored and designed for MCs that would be embedded in our Student Information System. The aims were to enhance the learner experience of the end-to-end application process, to reduce the time from application to registration and to improve related conversion rates.

Using this learner-centred approach, a shorter and more user-friendly form was developed and implemented that was flexible and could be tailored to the application requirements of each individual micro-credential, e.g. professional registration requirements, references, CVs, etc. It also has a look and feel that makes it relevant to micro-credential learners specifically and provides scope for applications using recognition of prior learning.

From the learner’s perspective, the form presents an enhanced, easy-to-complete layout with all documents to be uploaded at the point of application submission. A visually engaging checklist enables learners to clearly see what sections are complete and what remains outstanding.

From the academic assessor and Trinity admissions perspective, applications are now fully complete at the time of submission so the time between application and

offer is reduced with a knock-on impact of increasing registration rates.

The new application form has had a significant impact since its rollout in 2023. The micro-credential applicant experience is greatly improved with a quicker turnaround from application to offer and feedback from learners on their experience of applying for a Trinity micro-credential has been positive.

Internally, application processes are now more automated and streamlined with greater reporting functionality enabling any delays or issues arising in the application process to be quickly addressed. The collaboration between Trinity colleagues on this development project created a real sense of purpose and commitment to advancing and continuously improving the micro-credential programme at Trinity with the learner at the centre.

“DESIGNING A NEW APPLICATION FORM SPECIFICALLY FOR TRINITY MICRO-CREDENTIALS HAS ENHANCED THE LEARNER JOURNEY, IMPROVED OUR APPLICATIONS RATES AND REPORTING FUNCTIONALITY, AND BROUGHT GREATER EFFICIENCY TO OUR PROCESSES.”

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## STRAND FOUR: AGILELY DEVELOPED AND FLEXIBLY DELIVERED MICRO-CREDENTIALS

Strand 4 of the MicroCreds project focused on the design, development and delivery of a nationally coordinated suite of university-accredited micro-credentials to address critical skills needs across Ireland's economy. Through this strand, partner universities worked collectively to embed flexible, high-quality learning opportunities within their academic structures, while responding directly to the evolving demands of learners, employers and wider society.

Over the lifetime of the project, more than 600 micro-credentials were developed and delivered across the partner universities. These offerings span a wide range of priority areas including digital transformation, data and artificial intelligence, sustainability and green technologies, leadership and management, health and life sciences, and sector-specific professional skills. Together, they demonstrate the capacity of Ireland's universities to rapidly design targeted learning aligned to national and enterprise skills priorities.

A defining feature of this strand was its emphasis on agility and flexibility. Micro-credentials were designed to be short, agile and credit-bearing, allowing learners to engage in focused upskilling while balancing work and other commitments. Delivery models included online,

blended and hybrid formats, significantly widening access to higher education for professionals, career-changers and those returning to learning. Importantly, all micro-credentials were quality-assured and aligned to the NFQ, ensuring academic rigour and portability.

Enterprise engagement was central to the development process. Our partner universities collaborated closely with industry partners, employer bodies and skills agencies to identify current and emerging skills gaps and to co-design learning that is relevant, applied and immediately valuable in the workplace. This collaboration strengthened the link between higher education and enterprise, while also supporting talent development, workforce resilience and employee retention.

Strand 4 has demonstrated that micro-credentials can be successfully embedded at scale within universities without compromising academic standards. The experience and structures developed through this work have been mainstreamed across partner institutions, ensuring that micro-credentials remain a sustainable and integral part of Ireland's lifelong learning ecosystem beyond the lifetime of the MicroCreds project.

**"MICRO-CREDENTIALS WERE DESIGNED TO BE SHORT, AGILE AND CREDIT-BEARING, ALLOWING LEARNERS TO ENGAGE IN FOCUSED UPSKILLING WHILE BALANCING WORK AND OTHER COMMITMENTS."**



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## DELIVERING CHANGE TOGETHER

Making micro-credentials work at an institutional level has been the remit of the universities involved in the MicroCreds project. The project teams in each institution have been challenged by a multitude of issues cutting across academic, operational and technical domains. We have been on the front line of implementation, positioned both as change makers and change shapers for MicroCreds. The MicroCreds project structures have been central to peer collaboration and to peer learning. They have provided a much needed forum for problematising, solution finding and collegial support whilst ensuring a cohesion across institutions. Project leads in each institution have worked actively with the central IUA MicroCreds team both collaboratively and as individual institutions delivering on key milestones for the project. This has been a key feature which has mitigated against risks associated with multi-partner project structures; including maintaining clear cross-project communication, managing personnel changes and ensuring that a non-fragmented approach to implementation is pursued. As all our metaphorical MicroCreds boats sailed in the same direction, and over the course of the project sometimes at different speeds, this feature of the project has been hugely beneficial for each member institution and has enriched the delivery and outcomes for MicroCreds.

Notable collective activities have included a learning design forum and workshop held as a satellite event for project partners participating in the European Distance Education Network Conference held in DCU. The forum sought to discuss best practices and key learning for learning design in micro-credentials aimed at professional and career learners. Speakers from international institutions joined the workshop to give an international dimension and a representative from the Dutch Micro-credential project known as SURF also shared key insights. MicroCreds partners have actively engaged in knowledge sharing between partners but



they have also hosted multiple delegation visits by national authorities and organisations, by other national HCI projects, and by international higher and vocational education institutions.

The value of our collective wisdom and experience ranging across a broad spectrum of areas including; recognition of prior learning, micro-credential learner support, business development and engagement with industry partners; agile approaches to quality assurance and portfolio development have all been shared both internally and externally. The MicroNet peer learning network which MicroCreds participated in, also facilitated peer learning from European and national perspectives and also, through the lens of European Alliances. Events were organised by MicroCreds, two European Alliances, ECIU and UNIC, the European University Association and Quality and Qualifications Ireland. These events covered a broad and stimulating range of topics such as Superdiversity and micro-credentials, the technical issuance of micro-credentials through the European Digital Credential Platform, quality assurance, multi-level sectoral perspectives on micro-credentials within higher education and how micro-credentials are facilitating the objectives of lifelong learning and employability.

Opportunities to engage with learning across HCI projects were also engaged in both at the institutional

but also at the national levels. MicroCreds worked closely with the Recognition of Prior Learning project, cross-collaboration was encouraged and cross-cutting issues such as recognition for micro-credentials, entry requirements and workplace learning were discussed actively by project implementation teams. A number of MicroCreds Project Leads and institutional team members completed the Recognition of Prior Learning Badge and were members of institutional implementation groups for both projects thus ensuring that alignment of activities and purpose was achieved within institutions and not only on the national level.

Industry engagement, a key feature of the MicroCreds project, is another example of collaboration, as we attempted to optimise and streamline engagement with industry partners and bodies. MicroCreds Project Leads and project teams fed into and supported the MicroCreds Innovate events and presented key learnings to industry and stakeholder representatives of the MicroCreds Enterprise Advisory Group. Active facilitation of opportunities with industry was supported to ensure that potential collaboration was engaged in and that industry and other stakeholders experienced a positive and responsive involvement with the cross-institutional MicroCreds team. Learning by doing and from each other has and is a key hallmark of the MicroCreds approach.

## AGRI-FOOD MICRO-CREDENTIAL PATHWAY TO MASTERS

This case study illustrates how micro-credentials offer flexible and accessible pathways for academic progression. It demonstrates how learners can complete industry-relevant micro-credentials and, motivated by their achievements, transition into the Master's Pathway in Animal Science by transferring earned credits and building on their prior learning.

"Pursuing micro-credentials proved to be an achievable and flexible pathway towards completing my MSc Animal Science degree." - Barry Doyle, Agri Sales Advisor.

The School of Agriculture & Food Science currently offers seven micro-credentials that align closely with the structure of its Graduate Programmes in Animal Science:

- Global Food Systems
- Advanced Animal Nutrition
- Livestock Infection, Immunity & One Health
- Sustainable Livestock Systems
- Communication & Agri-Innovation
- Equine Reproduction & Fertility
- Animal Foods

These micro-credentials were specifically selected for their relevance to the industry, flexible delivery formats, and suitability as standalone learning experiences. By completing any of these, learners fulfill part of the required coursework for the Master's Pathway in Animal Science, which offers the following academic awards:

- Graduate Certificate (30 ECTS)
- Graduate Diploma (60 ECTS)
- Master's Degree (90 ECTS)



Progression through these awards requires a specific combination of modules. Feedback from industry partners, prospective applicants, and current students consistently highlights the strong desire to achieve formal recognition, despite facing challenges such as:

- Uncertainty about returning to education
- Balancing work and family commitments
- Concerns over time and financial investment
- Questions around employer support and programme eligibility

Micro-credentials help address these barriers by offering a flexible and low-commitment starting point. Learners can:

- Complete one or more micro-credentials and transfer credits into the Master's Pathway
- Stack three micro-credentials to achieve a Graduate Certificate (30 ECTS)
- Progress toward the Graduate Diploma or full Master's degree over time

This approach enables learners to start small—without

committing to a full programme—and make informed decisions about continuing their education based on their experience.

**Key Advantages:** Low-risk entry point: Learners can explore the subject area by taking a single course without the pressure of a full programme commitment.

Credit recognition: Completed micro-credentials count toward higher awards, ensuring that early efforts are not wasted.

Reduced financial burden: Lower upfront fees make learning more accessible, especially for those uncertain about long-term study.

Increased confidence: Successfully completing one module can boost motivation and prove to the learner that balancing academic and professional responsibilities is achievable.

Employer benefits: Employers can sponsor a single module to evaluate its value for the employee and the organisation before investing further.

This flexible, modular approach to education ensures learners and employers alike can engage in upskilling with minimal risk and maximum relevance.

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## SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULAR ECONOMY & ESG INVESTING MICRO-CREDENTIAL

Developed in collaboration with the RES4CITY BoostMySkills initiative, this Sustainability, Circular Economy & ESG Investing micro-credential is designed to meet the evolving needs of students and professionals navigating the complex domains of environmental sustainability and sustainable finance. It addresses the critical recognition that sustainable development and responsible investment are not only ethical imperatives but also key drivers of innovation and competitiveness in the modern economy.

Launched via the EU-funded RES4CITY platform – an international online learning initiative focused on training students and professionals globally – the course is delivered on-demand, allowing participants worldwide to learn at their own pace. This flexibility and the course's applied focus on real projects and case studies make the micro-credential valuable to a wide range of learners. Primary beneficiaries include university students looking to complement their studies, industry professionals seeking to integrate sustainability into practice, and educators updating their curricula with the latest sustainability concepts.

The 5 ECTS curriculum spans from foundational concepts of sustainability and circular economy to emerging topics like sustainable fashion, and culminates in strategic insights into ESG investing and its future trends. Through theoretical modules and practical exercises, participants gain both a solid grounding in sustainability principles and the tools to implement sustainable initiatives aligned with global goals. This micro-credential not only builds individual capacity, but also exemplifies how academia and international initiatives can collaborate to drive the green transition through accessible education at a global scale.



## CHOOSE YOUR OWN INNOVATION: A JOURNEY THROUGH CHALLENGE- BASED LEARNING

At Trinity Innovation and Enterprise, we embed a strong focus on Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) across our educational programmes. This approach enables learners to apply innovative tools, techniques, and frameworks in a collaborative, experiential setting, addressing real-world challenges relevant to their own contexts.

However, since each learner's context differs in subject matter, scope, and complexity, different frameworks are often more appropriate for different tasks.

In developing our microcredential, Practical Frameworks for Innovation, we sought to offer a comprehensive

introduction to innovation while providing learners with the autonomy to explore frameworks best suited to their needs. Rather than focusing on a single methodology, the course introduced multiple frameworks, such as Design Thinking, Systems Thinking, and Creative Problem-Solving, and empowered learners to select and apply those most relevant to their personal or professional challenges. Content delivered in class was tailored to an introductory level, with curated resources available for deeper exploration.

The programme culminated in an innovation finale presentation, where learners showcased the solutions they developed using these frameworks. This assessment component tracked both the creativity of their ideas and the innovative value generated through their chosen approach.

The closing challenge presentations and projects demonstrated the different and varied employment of frameworks, and the underlying tools and techniques

across the learner cohort. Learners designing new products or services aligned closely with Design Thinking to address specific human needs. Others tackling broader, systems-level problems leaned into Systems Thinking. Many also combined tools from across frameworks, creating bespoke toolkits that responded directly to the nuance and complexity of their challenge.

This flexibility encouraged learners to think critically about which tools worked best, and to adapt them thoughtfully rather than follow any one framework rigidly. Through this practical and challenge-led experience, they developed their own innovation toolkits — and applied them to make meaningful progress against challenges that truly mattered to them.

We've learned that when learners are given the autonomy to adapt tools and frameworks based on their own context, they engage more deeply, learn more meaningfully, and build greater confidence in their innovation practice.



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## A LASTING LEGACY FOR FLEXIBLE LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The MicroCreds Project was established with a clear and ambitious objective: to create a coherent, sustainable national approach to micro-credentials that would enhance Ireland's capacity for lifelong learning, workforce upskilling and enterprise responsiveness. Over its lifetime, the project has delivered on this ambition, positioning Ireland as a European leader in the development of quality-assured, credit-bearing micro-credentials and embedding flexible learning as a core feature of the higher education system.

At the heart of MicroCreds was a commitment to system-level transformation. Rather than operating as a discrete initiative, the project was designed to be scalable, durable and capable of influencing institutional practice and national policy. Through close collaboration between universities, government, enterprise and skills agencies, MicroCreds established the foundational infrastructure required to support the rapid design and delivery of agile, flexible education aligned to quality assurance frameworks. This has ensured that micro-credentials are academically robust, portable and trusted by learners and employers alike.

The four strands of the project collectively delivered this transformation. Strand 1 provided the architectural backbone, contributing to the development of a nationally agreed framework for micro-credentials, including shared definitions and alignment with existing quality assurance, recognition and accreditation processes.

This work has strengthened coherence across the tertiary system and ensured alignment with national and European lifelong learning objectives.

Strand 2 embedded enterprise engagement as a core principle of micro-credential development. Through structured mechanisms such as our Enterprise Advisory Group and extensive collaboration with industry partners, MicroCreds ensured that provision was informed by real and emerging skills needs. This strand strengthened the relationship between higher education and enterprise and demonstrated how micro-credentials can support workforce agility, innovation and talent retention.

Strand 3 focused on learner access and visibility through the development of MicroCreds.ie. As a national portal, it has provided a single, trusted point of access to university-accredited micro-credentials and has played a significant role in raising awareness and understanding of micro-credentials among learners, employers and the wider public. Communications campaigns at national and regional level further supported cultural change around lifelong learning and flexible education.

Strand 4 translated policy and infrastructure into delivery. Across partner universities, more than 600 micro-credentials were developed, addressing priority skills areas across digitalisation, sustainability, leadership, health, and sector-specific professional domains. These offerings demonstrated that micro-credentials can be

delivered at scale while maintaining academic integrity, and that universities can respond rapidly to skills needs through flexible, learner-centred models.

As the project concludes, its most significant achievement lies in what has been mainstreamed. Partner universities have embedded micro-credentials into core institutional strategies, governance structures and operational systems. Dedicated advisory and strategic groups have been established; micro-credentials and lifelong learning are reflected in new university strategic plans; and long-term enterprise partnerships and memoranda of understanding focused on upskilling and reskilling are now in place. Institutions have invested in digital infrastructure, adapted learning and assessment approaches, and continued to review and evolve their micro-credential portfolios in response to emerging skills needs. Importantly, growing learner participation points to sustained demand and impact.

MicroCreds has laid the foundations for a mature, responsive and inclusive micro-credential ecosystem in Ireland. It has demonstrated how higher education can innovate at pace, collaborate effectively with enterprise, and widen access to lifelong learning. The legacy of the project is not only the structures and systems it created, but the cultural shift it enabled positioning flexible, accredited learning as a permanent and essential feature of Ireland's skills landscape.

"AS A NATIONAL PORTAL, IT HAS PROVIDED A SINGLE, TRUSTED POINT OF ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY-ACCREDITED MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS AMONG LEARNERS, EMPLOYERS AND THE WIDER PUBLIC."



“MICROCREDITS WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT KEY STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH THE SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS IT CREATED. VITAL PROJECT OUTCOMES SUCH AS THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND WILL PROVIDE CONTINUED STABILITY FOR LEARNERS AND ENTERPRISE.”



## MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND THE SKILLS REVOLUTION: WHAT'S NEXT?

MicroCreds has achieved significant success and impact for learners, enterprise, the higher education sector, and across society. Through the completion of project objectives, MicroCreds has demonstrated how long term transformational change can be made and the wide ranging impact that can be implemented.

Looking ahead to the future, MicroCreds will continue to support key stakeholders through the sustainable systems it created. Vital project outcomes such as the national framework will continue to support across the higher education system and will provide continued stability for learners and enterprise. MicroCreds.ie and the model for communication at a regional and national levels will be continued through the Higher Education Authority's recognition of the importance of the impact achieved to-date and their future management and development of the platform and supports. Our universities will continue to their commitment and work to develop micro-credentials to support upskilling and reskilling across the workforce in Ireland.

In particular, MicroCreds has the potential to impact on:

### 1. National and International Leadership

- Ireland is likely to continue its leadership role in micro-credentials, serving as a model for other countries seeking to implement similar frameworks. The established national architecture and quality assurance protocols will position Ireland as a reference point for best practices in flexible, accredited learning.

### 2. Ongoing Growth and Innovation

- The infrastructure, partnerships, and processes developed during the project will support ongoing innovation. Universities are expected to expand their micro-credential offerings, responding dynamically to emerging skills needs and technological advancements.
- MicroCreds.ie will evolve, adapting to requirements and supporting lifelong learning. The continuation of the platform through the Higher Education Authority is a significant milestone and shows strong development potential for the future.

### 3. Stronger Enterprise Engagement

- The collaborative structures with enterprise partners will deepen, ensuring that micro-credentials remain relevant to industry needs. This will foster a culture of continuous upskilling and reskilling, benefiting both employers and employees.

### 4. Enhanced Learner Opportunities

- Learners will have greater access to flexible, stackable, and recognised learning opportunities. Micro-credentials will become a mainstream option for professional development, career transitions, and personal growth.
- Further development of micro-credentials and their stackability will facilitate their use for academic progression and credit transfer.

### 5. Sustainable Sectoral Change

- The project's integration into university strategies and national policy will ensure its sustainability. Micro-credentials will become a permanent feature of the higher education landscape, supported by ongoing investment and policy alignment.
- The collaborative governance model established here will continue to drive sector-wide coordination and quality assurance.

### 6. Broader Societal and Economic Impact

- The project's legacy will include a more agile, responsive, and inclusive higher education system. This will contribute to Ireland's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy and support national goals for lifelong learning and workforce development.
- The potential future for MicroCreds is significant, with expectations of continued growth, innovation, and impact. The foundations laid by the project will enable Ireland to adapt to changing educational and economic needs, ensuring that learners, employers, and society as a whole benefit from a flexible and future-ready higher education system to support Ireland's workforce.



## APPENDIX

### PROJECT GOVERNANCE

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Strong and effective governance was fundamental to the successful delivery of the MicroCreds project, ensuring strategic oversight, academic integrity and alignment with national higher education and skills policy. Overall responsibility for the project management rested with the IUA, with ultimate oversight provided by the IUA Registrars Group. This senior academic governance structure ensured that MicroCreds was embedded within established decision-making frameworks across the university system and aligned with institutional priorities, academic standards and quality assurance requirements.

The IUA Registrars Group and our MicroCreds Steering Group provided strategic direction throughout the lifecycle of the project, overseeing progress against agreed objectives and guiding key decisions related to policy alignment, academic coherence and sustainability. Their involvement was particularly critical in supporting the development of the national micro-credentials framework, ensuring consistency with existing institutional regulations on assessment, accreditation and recognition. This level of oversight strengthened sector-wide confidence in the credibility and long-term viability of the project's outcomes.

Day-to-day project management was supported by a dedicated project team within the IUA, working closely with MicroCreds Project Leads in each partner university. These institutional leads played a central role in coordinating local delivery, acting as the primary link between the national project team and their respective universities.

Local implementation of project objectives was further supported through existing internal governance structures within partner universities. Standing committees, academic boards and internal working groups provided oversight and assurance, ensuring that micro-credentials were developed and delivered in line with institutional quality assurance processes, strategic priorities and operational capabilities. This approach supported consistent implementation while allowing flexibility to reflect local contexts.

Collectively, these governance arrangements provided a robust framework for accountability, collaboration and risk management. Importantly, by embedding governance within existing academic and institutional structures, MicroCreds ensured that its outcomes could be mainstreamed and sustained beyond the lifetime of the project, supporting the continued development of micro-credentials across Ireland's higher education system.

## MICROCREDITS PROJECT GOVERNANCE & STANDING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

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 Adrienne Kendlin (*Maynooth University*)

## MICROCREDS PROJECT KEY MILESTONES

### MARCH 2020

ORIGINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO HEA

### MARCH 2020

GENESIS REPORT COMMISSIONED

### JULY 2020

PROJECT APPROVED / ACCEPTED

### SPRING 2021

CORE PROJECT TEAM APPOINTED IN IUA

### MARCH 2022

MICRO-CREDENTIAL FRAMEWORK AGREED BY PARTNERS

### JUNE 2022

EU DEFINITION OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS LAUNCHED

### DECEMBER 2022

MICRONET PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT

### SPRING 2023

DEVELOPMENT OF MICROCREDS.IE BEGINS

### JULY 2023

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF MICROCREDS.IE

### AUGUST 2023

PICKLEJAR MICRO-CREDENTIAL LEARNER  
RESEARCH COMMISSIONED

### MARCH 2024

LAUNCH OF HCI MICRO-CREDENTIAL LEARNER  
FEE SUBSIDY

### APRIL 2025

EXTENDED PHASE OF MICROCREDS PROJECT  
BEGINS AND TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN  
BECOMES A PARTNER

### APRIL 2025

MICRONET PROJECT CAPSTONE EVENT

### MARCH 2026

MICROCREDS PROJECT CONCLUDES





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We are grateful to all those who contributed their time, insights and partnership in ensuring this project could deliver meaningful outcomes for learners, employers and the wider Irish skills ecosystem.

### Project Standing Groups & Partners:

Irish Universities Association (*IUA*)  
IUA Council  
IUA Registrars Group  
MicroCreds Steering Group  
MicroCreds Enterprise Advisory Group  
MicroCreds Project Leads  
MicroCreds Communications Group  
MicroCreds Technical Advisory Group  
Higher Education Authority (*HEA*)  
Department of Further and Higher Education Research  
Innovation and Science

### University Partners

Dublin City University  
Maynooth University  
Trinity College Dublin  
Technological University Dublin  
University College Cork  
University College Dublin  
University of Galway  
University of Limerick

### Enterprise Partners

National Skills Council  
Enterprise Ireland  
IDA Ireland  
IBEC  
Skillnet  
Microsoft  
Glanbia  
Cpl  
Regional Skills Fora  
ISME  
Johnson & Johnson  
The Wheel  
Northern Trust  
Chambers Ireland

### Sectoral Stakeholders & Supporters

National University of Ireland (NUI)  
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)  
Cedefop  
Curio London  
BigO  
European Commission  
SOLAS  
OECD  
Recognition of Prior Learning  
Creative Futures Academy  
Convene  
Enterprise Academy  
UL@Work  
DCU Futures  
iEd Hub

Advance Centre  
Sustainable Futures  
IKC3  
REEDi  
Higher Education 4.0  
GROWTH Hub  
Designing Futures  
Funds Academy  
Cyber Skills  
AMASE  
Virtual Laboratories  
DASBE  
CIRDAS  
Innovative Materials for Industry 4.0  
Technology Ireland  
BioPharmaChem Ireland  
Engineers Ireland  
European University Association (EUA)  
UNIC  
ECIU  
Small Firms Association

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Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



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