



Government of
South Australia

South Australian micro-credentials pilot

Endorsement Guidelines

December 2020

SA Micro-credentials Pilot Guidelines

This guideline outlines the process for industry endorsed micro-credential courses in South Australia.

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Overview

Importance of micro-credentials for individuals and business

Nationally recognised training is an important pathway for post-secondary education to support strong educational and employment outcomes for individuals and labour market mobility.

Industry has said¹ it requires a modern, flexible and accessible training system capable of meeting current and future workforce skill needs.

South Australian businesses are increasingly relying on shorter forms of training to meet their skill needs with 60.8 per cent of nationally recognised training in South Australia being for specific subjects or modules. Businesses are also increasingly valuing non-accredited training to meet their skill needs with almost half of South Australian businesses using non accredited training for staff in 2019².

There is an opportunity to strengthen connections between nationally accredited subjects³ and modules and non-accredited training in a meaningful way to provide individuals with a certificate that represents the learning outcomes achieved.

We have heard from industry, and from training and education providers, that important features needed in South Australia's approach to micro-credentials include:

- ensuring relevant industry standards are met and learning outcomes can be validated
- alignment with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) where possible
- co-design and endorsement by industry and professional organisations
- contemporary industry relevance to meet current and emerging skill needs
- certification of learning that verifies the knowledge, skills and attributes achieved
- new pathways to further education and training, including full qualifications

Micro-credentials play a role in a range of settings including work readiness, upskilling and reskilling, transitioning workers and additional skills and in developing knowledge outside the qualifications.

Individuals and businesses benefit from participating in and developing micro-credentials. They provide individuals with an opportunity for lifelong learning through shorter courses and a credential that is recognised by industry. For businesses, they provide timely access to contemporary industry endorsed training that meets current and future skill needs.



1 South Australia's Industry Skills Councils have identified micro-credentials as a priority in 15 out of 19 of their 2019 Workforce Insights Reports [<http://www.tasc.sa.gov.au/Workforce-Insights/Workforce-Insights-Reports>]. The Training and Skills Commission has confirmed micro-credentials are increasingly important for a skills led recovery from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19.

2 NCVET, 2019 [https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0038/7826285/Employers-use-and-views-of-the-VET-system-2019.pdf]

3 Units of competency

What are micro-credentials?

Micro-credentials are bite sized courses linked to industry needs that are relevant for people at all stages of their career. Extensive industry engagement across South Australia resulted in the following definition:

A micro-credential is shorter than a qualification and certifies the assessed learning of a defined set of skills, knowledge and attributes.

In South Australia, micro-credentials can include:

- nationally accredited skill sets⁴
- accredited courses
- skill clusters or local skill sets to meet specific industry or individual needs
- non-accredited training that is industry endorsed to meet specific industry or individual needs.

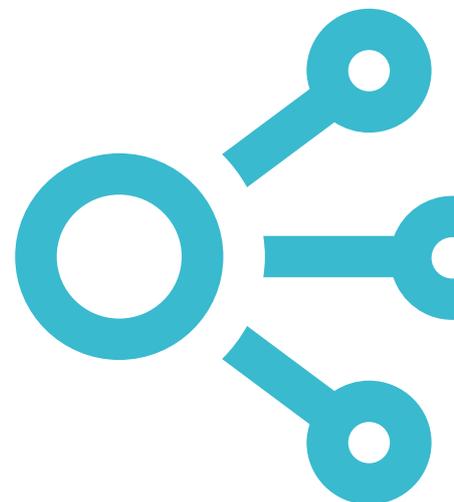
All micro-credentials include a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, training provider delivery standards, and evidence of current or anticipated need by industry, business or the community. On successful completion of a micro-credential, learners are issued with a recognised credential by their training or education provider.

A pilot initiative to explore new industry training approaches

The South Australian micro-credentials pilot is a 12-month initiative enabling the South Australian Training and Skills Commission (the Commission) to endorse micro-credentials, upon request by industry proponents.

The micro-credentials pilot will explore innovative approaches to training that comprise a mix of existing subjects from National Training Packages and/or non-accredited training in order to be responsive to the needs of industry, the workforce and individuals.

The process for state endorsed micro-credentials will be reviewed within six months of operation to identify key learnings and improve its effectiveness for individuals and industry.



⁴ Units of competency from a single Training Package

Developing a new micro-credential

The following conditions must be met by the industry proponent when developing a new course, prior to it being considered for endorsement.

1. Review existing nationally recognised courses, accredited courses, and micro-credentials in South Australia and other Australian jurisdictions to demonstrate the proposed training addresses a genuine gap in the market: <https://training.gov.au>
2. New course material should be developed in consultation with relevant technical experts, industry practitioners and training providers.
3. Be able to demonstrate industry need for the course by businesses in one or more industries, including written material and identifying referees with relevant expertise.

For non-accredited courses, the following additional conditions apply:

4. Training and assessment material should include learning requirements, assessment conditions, modes of delivery, performance standards for trainers and assessors and other relevant material to support delivery of the training.
5. The copyright and licencing arrangements, along with the course material, should enable other training and education providers to deliver the course.
6. Connections between the learning outcomes and the job are identified along with the equivalent Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level where relevant.

Applicants are encouraged to review the checklist at www.tasc.sa.gov.au/micro-credentials to ensure relevant material has been prepared prior to seeking endorsement for a micro-credential course by the Commission.



Certification and recognition of the credential

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) certification and recognition requirements continue to apply to any accredited subjects within an industry endorsed micro-credential.

Non-accredited subjects within a course are certified by the education provider or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) delivering the course in accordance with training and assessment standards outlined in the endorsed micro-credential.

Graduating students of endorsed micro-credentials are issued with a certificate that indicates successful completion of the course endorsed by the Commission. This is to provide wider recognition of the skills, knowledge and attributes gained by the learner by business, training providers and education providers.

Certification of an individual's attainment of learning outcomes, assessment type, and competency achieved through the completion of a micro-credential course should:

- verify and validate that specific skills, knowledge, experience, and/or attributes have been achieved
- be portable and could contribute towards a formal qualification.

Support provided to develop a new micro-credential

The Department for Innovation and Skills can provide support to facilitate the development of new accredited and non-accredited micro-credentials that address skills gaps in priority sectors or meet emerging industry needs.

Assistance will be prioritised by the Department for courses that support South Australia's economic growth through a skilled and capable workforce and/or start-up community.

Organisations are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (Eoi) at www.tasc.sa.gov.au/micro-credentials to seek assistance from the Department.

The Department will contact the proponent organisation within two business days of receiving the Eoi to begin discussing options for assistance.

Endorsement of micro-credentials

The Commission will meet regularly to consider requests for endorsement and provide timely responses to proponents. The Commission's endorsement provides industry with recognition that the course meets contemporary industry and learner needs.

- Micro-credential courses that are developed and able to demonstrate industry need can request endorsement by contacting the Commission
- To discuss a concept for a new micro-credential or for assistance with developing a proposal for endorsement you can contact the Department

Endorsement typically last for 12 months, noting that the duration may vary depending upon the pace of change in that industry and its specific needs or nature of the course. The duration of endorsement is set by the Commission when it makes its endorsement determination.

Endorsement by the Commission is limited to providing an assurance that:

- the learning outcomes will meet contemporary industry needs
- learners will gain job relevant skills, knowledge and attributes that are recognised by industry.

Responsibility for maintaining the quality of the training delivered remains with the owner of the micro-credential in line with relevant state and national requirements.

Endorsed micro-credential courses are listed on the Commission's web site www.tasc.sa.gov.au/micro-credentials and describe the course and the copyright owner of the course. Individuals or organisations retain copyright on the courses endorsed by the Commission.



Principles for endorsement

The principles for endorsement have been adapted to meet local needs from the national [Training Package Development and Endorsement Policy Process](#) principles.



South Australia's Micro-credential Endorsement Principles

Principle 1:	Industry recognised skills gap unable to be met through the current nationally accredited training systems
Principle 2:	Certification of a person's learning outcomes, including skills and competencies that reflect elements of licencing and other regulatory requirements (local, national and international) or contemporary industry practices
Principle 3:	Assessment of learning outcomes include core transferable skills and core job-specific skills required for job roles as identified by industry
Principle 4:	Supports people to adapt to changing job roles and workplaces, and/or to transition to a new industry
Principle 5:	Supports pathways between the school, vocational education and higher education sectors and can provide a pathway to accredited courses

Delivery of endorsed micro-credentials



Education providers and RTOs in the public and non-government sectors can deliver micro-credentials.

Nationally recognised training must be delivered by an RTO that has the parent training packages for the relevant units of competency in its scope of registration, as required by ASQA and with permission from the copyright owner of the course. RTOs may partner with other education providers or industry partners to deliver training in accordance with requirements for third party arrangements⁵.

Organisations delivering non-accredited subjects in the micro-credential need to adhere to the training and assessment standards outlined in the course material endorsed by the Commission and any licensing and copyright arrangements that are in place with the owner of the course.

⁵ <https://www.asqa.gov.au/resources/fact-sheets/third-party-arrangements-0>

Monitoring and reporting on delivery

The owner of an endorsed micro-credential course will report to the Commission once a quarter on their activities and performance in order to maintain the endorsement status of the course.

Information that may be required to be reported includes:

- adherence to any conditions set by the Commission
- number of course sessions offered during the quarter
- number of students enrolled per course offered
- learning outcomes achieved
- student and industry satisfaction with the course
- certificates issued or not issued per student
- new training providers licenced to deliver the course.

Renewal of endorsement by the Commission

To seek renewal of endorsement, the industry proponent must demonstrate the micro-credential continues to meet contemporary industry needs or has been updated to accommodate new industry approaches and technology.

Renewal of endorsement will be determined by the Commission.

Opportunities to improve nationally accredited training

Micro-credentials endorsed by the Commission may be recommended to apply for course accreditation or to update the related nationally accredited training package units of competency through the ASQA. The Department can assist with this process.

Find out more, provide feedback or raise a complaint

To find out more about industry endorsement of micro-credentials, request assistance from the Department to develop a course, or to raise a complaint about the endorsement process please contact:

Training and Skills Commission
(08) 8226 3462
tasc@sa.gov.au
www.tasc.sa.gov.au/micro-credentials

To provide feedback on the micro-credentials pilot or to find out more about support from the Department please contact:

Department for Innovation and Skills
1800 673 097
DIS.Feedback@sa.gov.au
www.skills.sa.gov.au/business

For other feedback or complaints about the pilot initiative or endorsed micro-credential courses contact:

Office of the Training Advocate
1800 006 488
www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au

Feedback and complaints are a vital mechanism for understanding the effectiveness and impact of South Australia's micro-credentials endorsement pilot in supporting individuals and organisations to gain the contemporary skills, knowledge and attributes needed by industry.



