Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Brought to you by: Pop Up PD for Literacy Educators

About Pop Up PD for Literacy Educators

- free webinar series developed by Ontario's LBS Regional Networks, Sectors, & the Provincial Support Organizations for Literacy

- supports LBS practitioners with presentations on topics important to them

- English language webinars presented for LBS practitioners annually since 2015-2016; French language transcriptions are available on COFA's website!

- **all** webinar presentations, recording links & transcripts here: https://e-channel.ca/practitioners/pop-pd-resources

- webinar topic ideas welcome at: e-channel@contactnorth.ca

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Outline for Today's Webinar

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

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

3. Micro-credential Q and A – 7 Topics

4. Trends – Internationally and in Canada

5. Trends/Next Steps in Ontario

6. A Few Thought on LBS

7. Questions and Summary

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I would like to begin by acknowledging the Indigenous Peoples of all the lands that we are on today. While we meet today on a virtual platform, let's take a moment to acknowledge the importance of the lands, which we each call home. We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility in improving relationships between nations and to improving our own understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures. From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this land home.

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Micro-credentials aim to have maxi-impact

By Elaine Smith Special to the Star
Mon., Jan. 3, 2022 | 4 min. read

Micro-credentials are in the news!
Toronto Star, December 28, 2021

"Why not do it, put it on my resumé and incorporate it into my teaching practice as best I can?" asked Hance. "Education is headed toward these new ideas, so let's get on board. It could be the difference when it comes to getting a job."
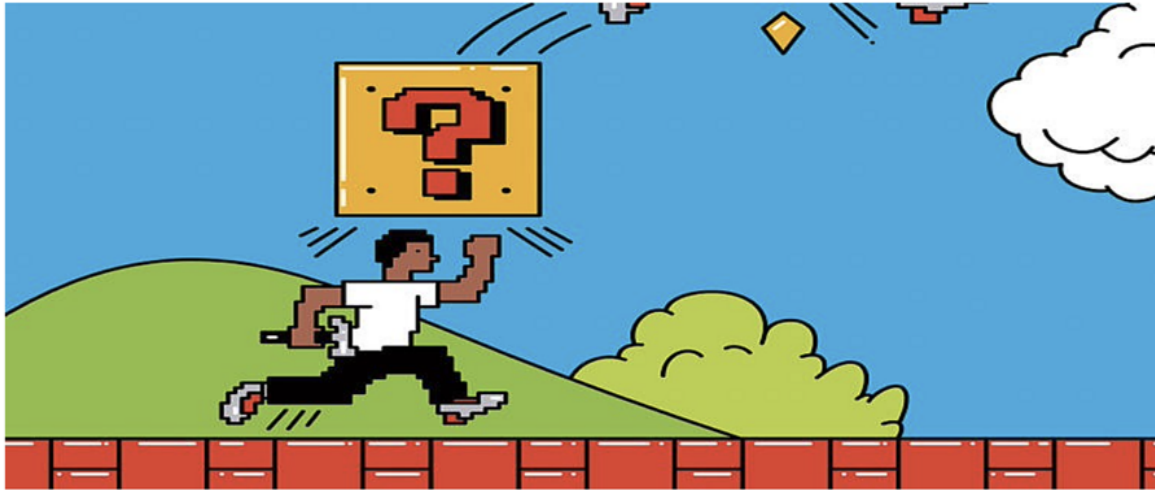
Micro-credentials aim to have maxi-impact by Elaine Smith, The Toronto Star, December 28, 2021
https://www.thestar.com/life/2022/01/03/micro-credentials-aim-to-have-maxi-impact.html

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

EDUCATION

Microcredentials: A mini guide to the micro college course market

Microcredentials are increasingly on offer at Canadian colleges, with short, focused courses that can help give your career a boost

By Liza Agrba
October 5, 2021

(Illustration by Sam Island)

Micro-credentials are in the news!
MacLean's, October 26, 2021

"*Spanning a range of skills and industries, microcredentials cover everything from data literacy and computer-aided design to reading blueprints and advanced wilderness first aid.*

Length is one major feature that distinguishes microcredentials—which run eight to about 200 hours—from other types of courses, though some educators think the way they're assessed is a more important factor.

Misheck Mwaba, president and CEO of Bow Valley College, says the fact that employer-defined competencies are used by post-secondary institutions in evaluating student performance is critical. "Without authentic assessment, there is no microcredential," says Mwaba.

https://www.macleans.ca/education/microcredentials-a-mini-guide-to-the-micro-college-course-market/

Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

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

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What is a micro-credential?

(There are MANY definitions and descriptions…)

What are some words or terms you would use to describe the concept of micro-credentials?

Type into the chat!

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Definitions from…

- Government of Ontario (Ministry of Colleges and Universities)
- Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)
- e-Campus Ontario
- Contact North|Contact Nord

Watch for common phrases or features…

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Français | Menu

Micro-credentials from Ontario's postsecondary schools

Learn how to get rapid training opportunities for the in-demand skills employers need.

On this page

1. Overview
2. About micro-credentials
3. Apply now
4. Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund
5. Progress on our plan

Overview

Micro-credentials are rapid training programs offered by postsecondary education institutions across the province that can help you get the skills that employers need. Micro-credentials help people retrain and upgrade their skills to find new employment.

Related

Ontario Universities

Ontario Colleges

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

Ontario Government's definition:

Micro-credentials are rapid training programs offered by postsecondary educational institutions across the province that can help you get the skills that employers need.

Micro-credentials help people retrain and upgrade their skills to find new employment.

https://www.ontario.ca/page/micro-credentials-ontarios-postsecondary-schools

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HEQCO's definition:

A micro-credential is a representation of learning, awarded for completion of a short program that is focused on a discrete set of competencies (i.e., skills, knowledge, attributes), and is sometimes related to other credentials.

https://heqco.ca/pub/making-sense-of-microcredentials

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eCampus Ontario's definition:

A micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning associated with a specific and relevant skill or competency. Micro-credentials enable rapid retraining and augment traditional education through pathways into regular postsecondary programming.

https://www.ecampusontario.ca/micro-certifications/

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Some common features in the definitions?

- Rapid/short
- Competencies
- Assessed
- Industry relevant
- Employer driven
- "Stackable" – more on that later!

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Contact North/Contact Nord provides a great summary:

There is no absolute definition for micro-credentials in Canada or anywhere else…these components are, however, widely recognized as key characteristics of micro-credentials:

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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A skills and competency-based focus for learning rather than time.

Short and focused on a narrow range of skills and competencies.

Competency is assessed as a demonstrable skill or behaviour, varying across micro-credentials.

Quality is assured through peer and industry review.

Industry recognized. Many micro-credentials are co-developed with industry or based on statements from industry organizations about the skills and competencies they're looking for.

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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TEACHONLINE.CA

ContactNorthNord Supporting Rural & Remote Ontario
Soutenant l'Ontario rural et éloigné

Home / Tools and Trends / Ten Facts You Need to Know About Micro-Credentials

Ten Facts You Need to Know About Micro-Credentials

December 09, 2020

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

LRS   e-Channel

MC examples from our own backyard!

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FINANCIAL POST

News / Economy

Tech companies want workers faster so they're designing their own microcredentials at colleges, universities

'There's this challenge when people get out of university that they're not properly skilled to work'

Bianca Bharti

Jul 05, 2021 • July 5, 2021 • 5 minute read • 💬 8 Comments

"The traditional education system and the digital economy were operating at different speeds.

This issue pushed CEO Guillaume Bazinet to come up with a solution that is being echoed in many post-secondary institutions across the country: industry players are helping universities and colleges design programs and microcredentials to ensure students are up-to-date with the skills or software that are in vogue in the sector."

https://financialpost.com/news/economy/tech-companies-want-workers-faster-so-theyre-designing-their-own-microcredentials-at-colleges-universities

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

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MOHAWK
FUTURE READY

Programs   Continuing Education   Future Students   Current Students   International   About

🏠 » Programs » Explore Mohawk Micro-credentials

Listen

Explore Mohawk Micro-credentials

Enhance your knowledge and gain career-focused skills quickly with a micro-credential

Mohawk's diverse selection of micro-credentials offers flexible, online and blended delivery learning experiences taught by industry-leading professionals. Learners who complete a Mohawk micro-credential will be awarded a digital badge. Some micro-credentials are stackable, and can be combined to lead to a larger, clustered credential.

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

Footcare Management	This micro-credential offers specialized training for RNs / RPNs to enhance knowledge around basic and advanced foot care.
Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (Drones) Ground School	This micro-credential prepares learners to challenge the Transport Canada Basic or Advanced Drone Operator Exam. Designed to meet and exceed Transport Canada's Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) Pilot Knowledge Requirements (TP 15263), this micro-credential covers the knowledge required to conduct advanced flight operations with small RPAS (drones) in Canada.

OntarioTech
UNIVERSITY

Micro-credentials

WHAT ARE MICRO-CREDENTIALS

HOME / **WHAT ARE MICRO-CREDENTIALS**

What are micro-credentials?

A micro-credential is a digitally-recorded recognition of a small, specific skill. It is a portable communication tool that represents evidence of your skills for employers, educators, and peers. Micro-credentials are created with industry, so you can be assured that the skills you are learning are in demand and current.

Micro-credentials are different from more traditional learning experiences. A micro-credential may recognize learning obtained from a particular experience (such as a workshop), it may not, or both. They are designed to fit in with busy schedules and adapt quickly to changing needs in the workforce.

**Ontario Tech
University**

BADGE

https://ontariotechu.ca/microcredentials/what-are-microcredentials/index.php

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

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3. Micro-credential Q and A – 7 topics

7 Topics:

1. Who is the target audience for MCs?
2. Who develops MCs?
3. How are MCs delivered?
4. How are MCs assessed?
5. How are MCs documented?
6. How are badges different from MCs?
7. What does 'stackable' mean?

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1. Who is the target audience for MCs?

- Unemployed or laid-off individuals who need in-demand skills to obtain employment

- Under-employed individuals who want or need to upskill to improve job opportunities

- Contract/on-call workers who want to learn new/complementary, in-demand skills

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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2. Who develops MCs?

- Colleges, universities, institutes, training providers

- Professional associations, e.g. Institute of Management Accountants

- Companies/employers, e.g. Microsoft, Google, RBC, Spotify

- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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3. How are MCs delivered?

Fully online (majority)

Hybrid

In-person

Frequent start dates

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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4. How are MCs assessed?

- Assess competencies – what the learner can do, not how much time is spent learning

- Often requires different assessment strategies than in traditional courses

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5. How are MCs documented?

- MCs or badges can be posted to a learners 'digital wallet' or e-portfolio

- Learners control access to their "digital wallet"

- In Canada, college and universities have agreed to gradually move to using digital MC credentials

- Some already have MCs recorded on a postsecondary transcript

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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6. How are badges different from MCs?

- Micro-credentials are:
  - related to a formally approved or accepted set of standards or competencies
  - taught by a teacher or mentor who is accountable for ensuring that the student learns and demonstrates the expectation for awarding the MC

- "Badges can be awarded informally for anything, by anyone. There is value in learning the specific skill or knowledge related to the badge."

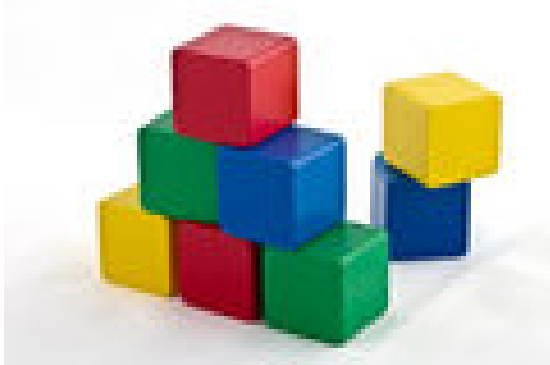Learning Networks of Ontario

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Not just an image file...

There's data inside

- Criteria that you met
- Where you received the badge
- Alignment to professional standards
- Expiration date

7. What does "stackable" mean?

- MCs used together to gain additional certifications and/or admission to other education/training

- Take "small chunks" of learning at a time – less commitment and expense

- Helpful in industry where employees could take MCs that are for advancement or upskilling

- Canadian organizations are exploring how to make MCs stackable and transferable across institutions

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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4. Trends –
Internationally and in Canada

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Micro-credentials

World Tour

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International trends – New Zealand

New Zealand recognized as early adopter and world leader

- Introduced in 2018

- Unique model includes centralized regulation and standards by NZ Qualification Authority

- "A micro-credential certifies achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge; and is specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community."

https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/micro-credentials/#heading2-0

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In New Zealand, 100th MC approved in 2020

- Barista Training and Customer Service

- Applied Payroll

- Chainsaw Use in Forestry Production

- Alcohol and Food Safety Compliance

- Upselling for Hospitality and Tourism

- Workplace Digital Literacy: Interface between smart devices and digital platforms

- Digital Marketing

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International Trends - European Union

EU commissioned a micro-credentials report, completed in 2020 and to be implemented by 2025, which recommended

- A shared definition, common to all sectors
- Common characteristics and
- A roadmap of actions

Intended to boost adult learning, higher education institutions will offer short courses in a comparable manner, ensuring agreed upon quality standards and facilitating recognition and portability

https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/european-approach-micro-credentials-higher-education-consultation-group-output-final-report.pdf
https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-europe-universities-2021-12-eu-approved-micro-credentials-proposed-to-boost-adult-learning/

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International Trends – United States

Many examples including:

- State University of New York (SUNY) public system - Adopted in 2018, 400 MCs now available at 27 campuses in 60+ disciplinary areas

- University of Denver – private university offering three MCs in coding, teaching excellence and high-performance leadership

- Hundreds of thousands of MC-type offerings in the U.S.

https://www.suny.edu/microcredentials/ and https://www.du.edu/registrar/academic-programs/micro-credentials-badges

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Trends in Canada

Universities and Colleges are increasing their MC offerings

- University of Toronto 29 MCs, broad range of topics

- Royal Roads University - 5 main MCs including Supervisory Skills, Leading Projects and Mineral Exploration Field Assistant

- Camosun College – Clean Energy, Efficient Building

- Bow Valley College – IBM Skills Academy

https://learn.utoronto.ca/programs-courses/unique/micro-courses-and-micro-credentials
https://pcs.royalroads.ca/micro-credentials-2
https://www.macleans.ca/education/microcredentials-a-mini-guide-to-the-micro-college-course-market/

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Definition

A microcredential is a certification of assessed competencies that is additional, alternate, complementary to, or a component of a formal qualification.

Guiding Principles

1. Microcredentials can be a complement to traditional credentials (certificate, diploma, degree or post-graduate certificate) or stand alone.

2. Microcredentials are subject to a robust and rigorous quality assurance process.

3. Microcredentials should represent competencies identified by employers/industry sectors to meet employer needs.

.

4. Microcredentials may provide clear and seamless pathways across different credentials (both non-credit and credit) and may be stackable.

5. Microcredentials are based on assessed proficiency of a competency, not on time spent learning.

6. Microcredentials are secure, trackable, portable and competency is documented in students' academic records.

7. Microcredentials are to follow institutional approval processes.

https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/policyfocus/micro-credentials/

Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

5. Trends and Next Steps in Ontario

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Trends in Ontario

Ontario government's investment of $59.5m over 3 years to create Ontario's first **Micro-credential Strategy:**

- Create an online portal to access micro-credential training opportunities

- Create a fund to incent the development of new micro-credentials that respond to regional labour market needs and strengthen partnerships between postsecondary institutions, training providers and employers, distributed through a competitive call for proposals

https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/microcredential-programs-on-the-rise-in-canada/
https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/chapter-1c.html#s-9

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Trends in Ontario

- Launch a public awareness campaign to promote micro-credentials among learners and employers

- Expand Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) eligibility to include students enrolled in ministry-approved, quality-assured micro-credentials programs

- Work with eCampus Ontario and other partners to develop a virtual passport that issues and tracks a person's learning experiences to set the foundation for lifelong learning.

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Trends in Ontario

HEQCO "Making Sense of Micro-credentials" May 2021 highlights increased offerings at Ontario's universities and public colleges.

- Identified low rates of awareness among prospective students and employers surveyed

- Employers surveyed rated the most favourable features of micro-credentials as "Directly related to the job being applied for", "Competency based" and "Accredited"

https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/microcredential-programs-on-the-rise-in-canada/
https://heqco.ca/pub/making-sense-of-microcredentials/

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What's happening in Ontario's public colleges?

Ontario's public colleges offer (or are developing) micro-credentials

Some examples:

- Central Region – Centennial College

- Eastern Region – Durham College and St. Lawrence College

- Northern Region – Northern College

- Western Region - Mohawk College (see earlier slides)

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DURHAM COLLEGE
SUCCESS MATTERS

CENTRE FOR
PROFESSIONAL AND
PART-TIME LEARNING

Graphic Design Photoshop and Illustrator (Micro-credential)

CREDENTIAL: Micro-credential

CODE: GDPI

Program Description

Looking to broaden your computer and design abilities? Develop foundational graphic design skills using industry-standard software in Adobe Creative Suite. This micro-credential includes hands-on projects in Photoshop and Illustrator, preparing you to edit and create a variety of digita

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Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

Using Construction Tools (Micro-credential)

CREDENTIAL: Micro-credential

CODE: UCST

Program Description

The Using Construction Tools micro-credential program will provide students with the opportunity to learn basic skills in using hand and power tools, and then apply those skills while learning to build or install basic elements commonly associated with construction projects.

Upon completion of the program, students will be prepared to safely choose and use the appropriate hand or power tools on a jobsite.

Micro-Credentials: What? Why? When? And Where?

St. Lawrence College

Course Catalogue   Account   General Information   Cart

Help   Sign In

CYBERSECURITY

Develop the knowledge and skills to prevent, identify, mitigate risk and report online scams and fraud. This micro-credential consists of 4 required modules.

Mitigating Risk

Micro-credential: Cybersecurity
Fee: $98.00
Delivery: Online

Have you ever lost an important document? Learn how to back-up your important information, securely file your documents, label sensitive information, and learn how to avoid data loss

6. A Few Thoughts on LBS

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Can LBS help to promote the MC strategy in Ontario?

- Provide information to learners about MCs if appropriate

- Help to prepare learners for an MC if they are interested

- Could apply to any of the five goal paths

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7. Summary and Questions

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Micro-credentials are…

- Personalized with the right combination of micro-credentials to meet individual learners' needs.

- Modular and stackable - some micro-credentials are "one off" learning and assessment experiences, while others are modules that can be stacked to create a qualification.

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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Micro-credentials are...

- Shareable - the qualification is placed in a digital wallet or e-portfolio the learner can share with employers or education institutions.

- In Ontario, it is widely agreed that a micro-credential is "transcriptable" meaning it will appear on a learner's college or university transcript and will be deposited to her or his digital wallet or e-portfolio

https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/ten-facts-you-need-know-about-micro-credentials

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Questions?

Thank you for participating in today's webinar!

Please complete the evaluation using the link in the chat.

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The must haves…

- Webinar evaluation:
https://surveys.oalcf-echannel-repository.ca/s3/Pop-UP-PD-21-22-Web-6-Micro-credentialing

- Register for future webinars at: https://learningnetworks.ca/resources-publications/popuppd/

- Webinar resources:
  - English https://e-channel.ca/practitioners/pop-pd-resources
  - French https://apprentissageenligne.ca/formateurs/programme-afb-ressources-de-la-communaute-de-pratique-en-ligne

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