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International Institute for
Higher Education in Latin
America and the Caribbean

Course

Micro-credentials in LAC: design and quality



Introduction



The rapid emergence of micro-credentials presents both an opportunity and a challenge for higher education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region has one of the highest enrollment rates in the world, yet significant disparities persist in access, completion and equity. These challenges are compounded by changing labor market demands and a growing need for upskilling and reskilling.

By offering shorter, more flexible and skills-oriented learning pathways, micro-credentials have the potential to expand lifelong learning opportunities and enable individuals to acquire relevant competencies for responding to education and labour market needs. However, their rapid proliferation, combined with uneven or absent quality assurance and regulatory frameworks, raises concerns about market fragmentation, transparency and their long-term value and recognition of micro-credentials for learners, institutions and employers.

Course description

Developed by UNESCO IESALC, the course **Micro-credentials in Latin America and the Caribbean: Design and Quality** provides a comprehensive overview of the micro-credential ecosystem in the region and beyond, together with practical tools for the design, implementation and quality assurance of micro-credentials.

The course is grounded in the UNESCO IESALC Reference Framework on Micro-Credentials in Latin America and the Caribbean, developed through a comprehensive regional consultation process. Across four modules, participants will become familiar with key conceptual and normative frameworks, identify the main actors involved, and learn how to apply the principles of the UNESCO IESALC Reference Framework to develop quality micro-credential offerings.

The course combines a variety of learning resources – including videos, reading materials, infographics and assessment activities – with an optional synchronous session designed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and provide additional guidance to participants.

Intended for:

The Course Micro-credentials in Latin America and the Caribbean: Design and Quality is aimed at academic and management teams of higher education institutions directly involved in the co-design, management and quality assurance of continuing education training. Collaboration and participation in this course is fundamental for the conceptual approach and understanding the criteria for the design of micro-credentials with an emphasis on competencies.

Competencies

- Analyze the foundations, emerging trends and international and regional frameworks related to micro-credentials, recognizing their contribution to lifelong learning and their evolving role in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Apply the UNESCO IESALC Reference Framework on Micro-Credentials in Latin America and the Caribbean to the design, management and quality assurance of micro-credentials, integrating competencies, learning outcomes, assessment strategies and evidence of learning and achievement.
- Identify and assess the institutional conditions required for the effective implementation, quality assurance, recognition, articulation and sustainability of micro-credentials.



Learning outcomes

- Explain the characteristics, purposes, and evolution of micro-credentials, distinguishing them from other forms of certification and training.
- Analyze international trends and frameworks that underpin the development of micro-credentials within the framework of lifelong learning.
- Analyze the development of micro-credentials in Latin America and the Caribbean, considering progress, opportunities, and challenges for higher education.
- Recognize the main elements of the regional framework promoted by UNESCO IESALC to guide the development of quality micro-credentials.
- Relate competencies, learning outcomes, assessment, and evidence as fundamental components of micro-credential design.
- Apply criteria from the regional framework to structure a micro-credential proposal centered on specific competencies and verifiable learning outcomes.
- Identify the institutional conditions, recognition mechanisms, and quality criteria needed for the sustainable implementation of micro-credentials.
- Integrate the main criteria covered in the course into a basic micro-credential proposal or an institutional implementation roadmap.

Course Features



TARGET AUDIENCE

Academic departments and management teams.



MODALITY

Virtual.



CERTIFICATION

Certification after completing the mandatory activities and digital credential.



LANGUAGE

English



DURATION

25 hours



Course Content

Module 1. Fundamentals and trends in micro-credentials

The module offers an integral vision of the evolution of micro-credentials in the international context and their role in strengthening lifelong learning. The participants will explore the main trends, frameworks, policies and experiences that advance their adoption, understanding how these credentials respond to demand for more flexible, inclusive and aligned higher education with the needs of work and society.

Module 2. Micro-credentials in Latin America and the Caribbean

With the conceptual foundation already established, this module focuses on the region: how micro-credentials are developing in Latin America and the Caribbean, what experiences and initiatives already exist, and what challenges institutions face in terms of recognition and trust. Participants will also learn about the main regional frameworks promoted by UNESCO IESALC.

Module 3. Designing micro-credentials with a quality approach

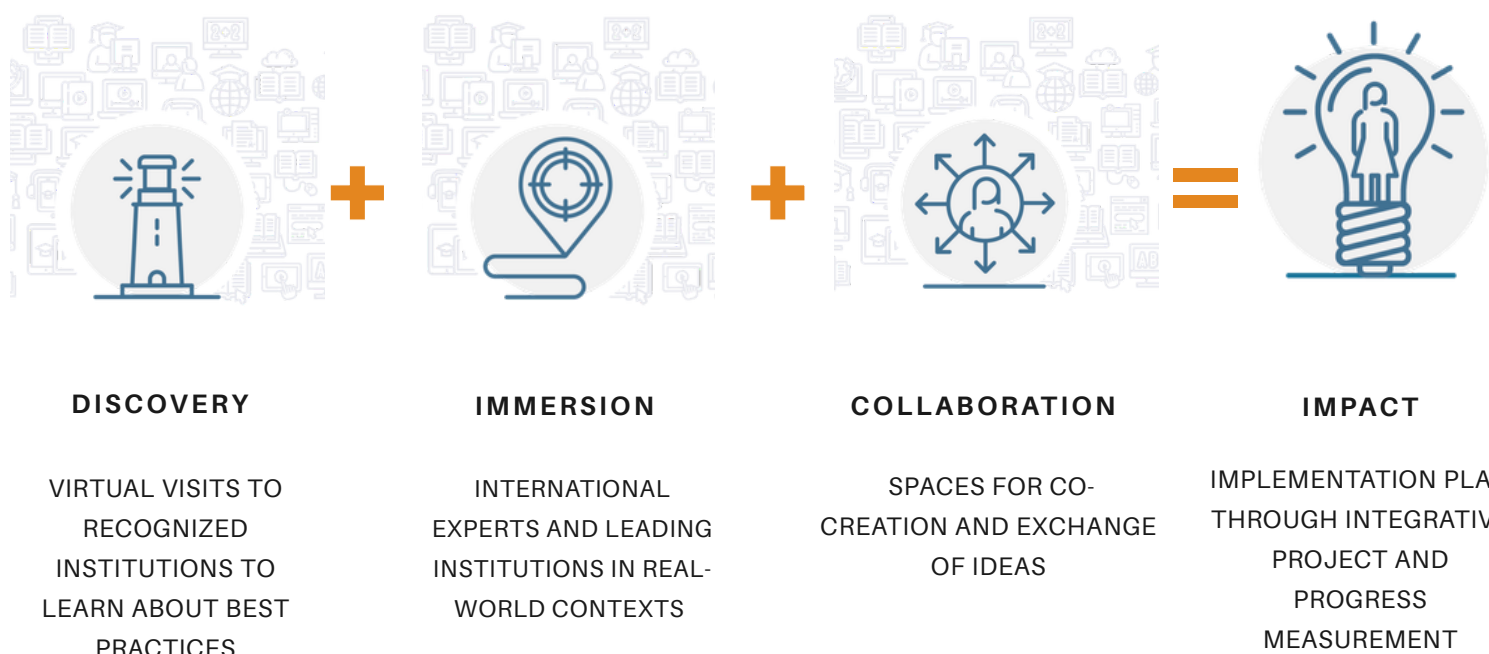
This module puts theory into practice: participants will learn to design competency-based micro-credentials, formulating verifiable learning outcomes and aligning evidence and assessment. It is the most applied module of the course, focused on building a technically sound and coherent proposal.

Module 4. Implementation, technologies and quality assurance

The final module addresses the conditions necessary to take a micro-credential from design to actual implementation: institutional governance, technologies and digital credentials, recognition, and sustainability and scalability criteria. The course conclude by integrating all the learning into a concrete institutional proposal or roadmap.

Methodology

The course and program model is based on four pillars designed to strengthen knowledge acquisition through techno-pedagogical training. The first, Discovery, is developed through virtual visits to other institutions to learn firsthand about best practices in real-world contexts. The second, Immersion, is conducted in collaboration with international experts and leading institutions. The third, Collaboration, is fostered through co-creation spaces and the exchange of ideas among participants. The fourth, Impact, is realized through the development of practical application plans that put the acquired knowledge into action.



This training contributes to the 2030 Agenda in the following SDGs:





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