# Micro-Credential: Stacking and Laddering an Assessment Pilot Project

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Overview

- Purpose: using PLAR processes, prototype, test, and document a repeatable process for assessing micro-credentials to assign possible credit

- Late 2022, TRU was awarded $73,143 to support the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education & Future Skills, in developing a framework for assessing micro-credentials (MC), second phase added in January 2023, assessment through TRU Credit Bank

- Open and collaborative conversations with Ministry officials and various PSI

- This project has positioned TRU as a leader in MC and re-asserted our excellence in prior learning assessment
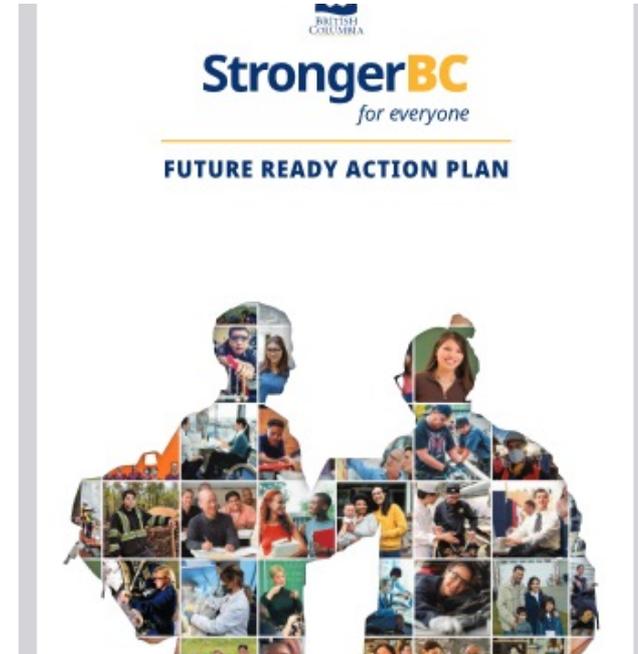
Project Activities

- Coordination of a micro-credential (MC) Assessment Committee (MCAC)

- Scanned, documented, and analyzed micro-credential research and practices

- Designed a prototype data collection form and handbook for participants

- Conducted assessor orientation

- Collected data using a self-study process

- Collated and summarized the data we collected

- Surveyed participants for feedback on the data collection process

- Met with assessors and MCAC to discuss self-study findings

- TRU Credit Bank assessment (we are here)

- Coordinate findings with the Ministry and post-secondary institutions

Micro-credential Assessment Committee

- Members are senior leaders from:
  - UBC-O
  - Royal Roads
  - BCIT
  - VCC
 - KPU
  - BCCAT
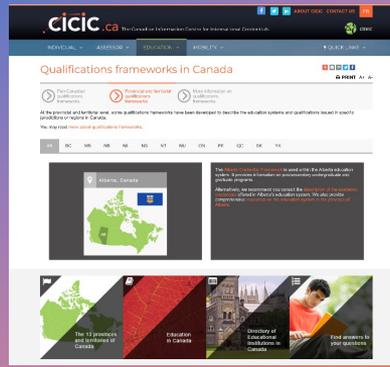
Scan of Qualifications Frameworks

- In Canada, five provinces have qualifications frameworks (AB, ON, NB, NS, PEI)
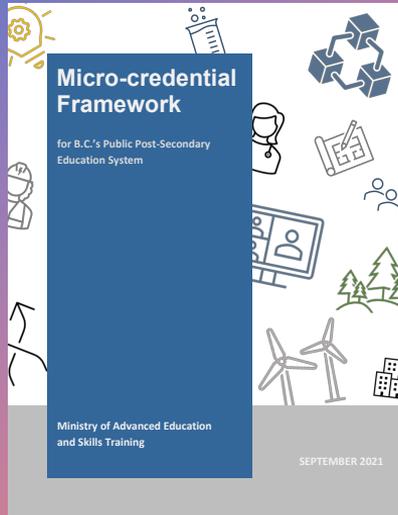
Figure 12: Microcredential Quality Markers for Postsecondary Institutions[9]

Relevant
Consulted or involved industry/community

Accredited
Recognized or issued by a professional accrediting body

Standardized
Meets a government-set quality standard

Assessed
The learner must demonstrate skills/knowledge to earn the credential

Flexible
The pace and/or structure of learning can be personalized
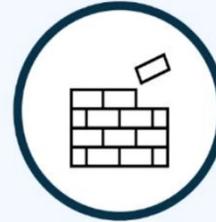
Stackable
Can be "stacked" or combined toward a larger credential, e.g. a diploma or degree

Quality Features Required of all Micro-credential Programs

Source: Pichette, J., Brumwell, S., Rizk, J., Han, S.(2021) *Making Sense of Microcredentials*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

High-level Scan of MC frameworks and Practices and Their Relationship to Credential Systems

- Next, we examined micro-credential practices globally

- We noted key requirements for aligning micro-credentials with credential systems

- Proven practices from New Zealand & Australia (emerging best practices, EU and USA)

- Asked "what data is important to collect for assessment?"
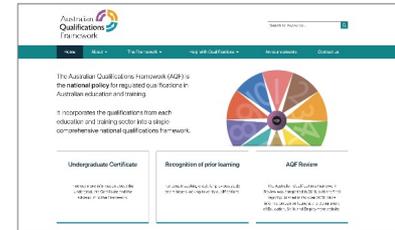
Designed Assessment Process and Tools

Prototype process for assessment with three features:

- Digital form to be used for the MC information summary, assessor report and recommendations

- Handbook for assessors

- Orientation session to guide the assessment process

We leaned heavily on existing TRU practices and documents with some additions from Australia's CIS

Assessment Recording Form

An online form: 4 sections, 22 data fields, completed by the assessors using a self-study approach

Micro-credential Assessment Online Recording Form

1. **Institution Name**
The BC institution delivering the micro-credential. A provider is any company that provides a micro-credential in partnership with an institution.

   Enter your answer

2. **Institution Department**
The academic department that developed and delivers the micro-credential.

   Enter your answer

3. **Institution leads and position**
The academic or training lead for the micro-credential. A dean, associate dean, department head, faculty member, or other member of the department who can provide additional information about the micro-credential.

   Enter your answer

4. **AEST Micro-credential Funding Phase**
Phase 1, 2 , or 3 of Ministry micro-credential funding program.

   Enter your answer

5. **Title of micro-credential**
The title of the micro-credential, described in plain English.

   Enter your answer

Other Fields Included

- Pre-requisites (if any)

- Content description

- Learning outcomes

- Delivery mode: pace and structure

- Course syllabus/lesson plans and inherent requirements

- Learner effort, volume of learning and contact hours

- Existing credit recognition status (if any)

- Pathways associated with MC: stacking and laddering

- Quality Assurance process or statement

- Additional comments (ie depth of learning, linkage to an industry competency framework)

- Instructor qualifications and/or organizational policy on instructor hiring

- Award recording, transcription, or method of recording of the micro-credential at institution offering the course

- Endorsement by industry or employer groups

# Overview of Data Collection From the Self-study Process

- Self-assessments done on 10 micro-credentials

- 8 institutions participated in the assessment pilot (6 universities, 2 colleges)

- Each of the participating institutions completed a full and detailed assessment report, based on the assessment criteria provided (22 fields)

- Institutions contributed web links to course descriptions, to the course syllabus, to institutional policies, and/or to instructor bios

- Assessment reports were summarized in a tabular format for analysis and the final report to the Ministry, with a focus on maintaining some consistency in the amount of data and details reported (23 pages)

Fields of Study Represented

- Industrial automation
- Mass timber construction
- Essential skills for data literacy
- Climate adaptation fundamentals
- Future of hospitality
- Independent living strategies and actions
- Production assistance in film
- Introductory drawing using digital tools
- Quantifying forest health
- Metabolomics

Upskilling and Reskilling the Workforce for the Future
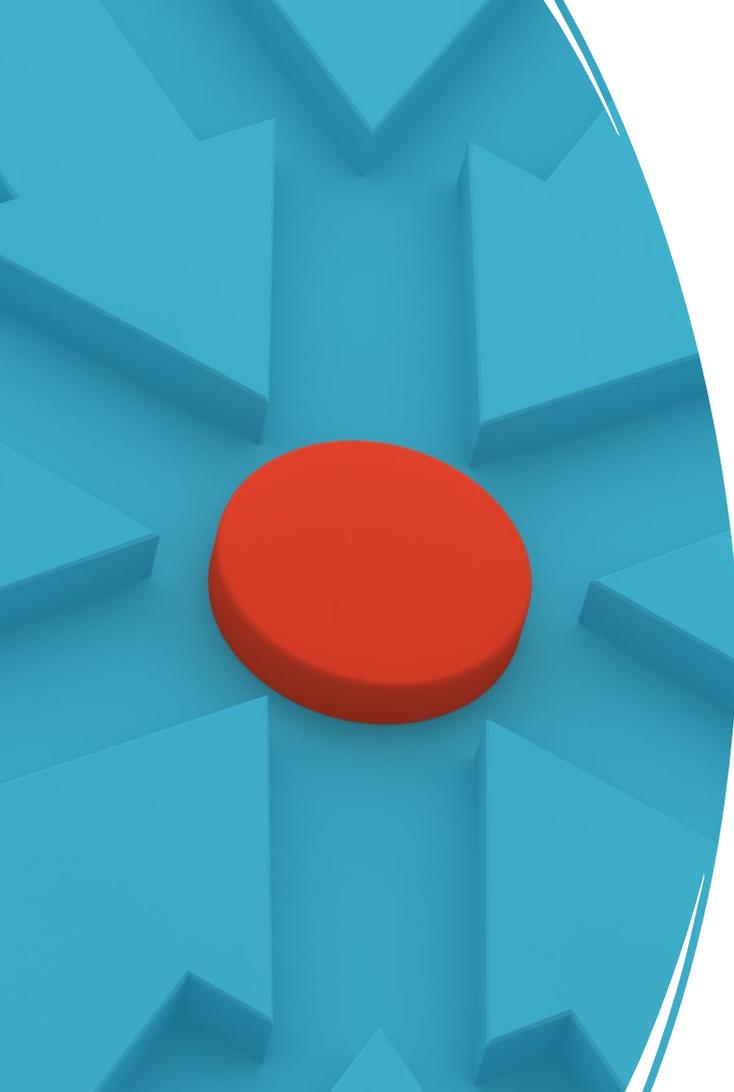
Initial Insights

- Comprehensive data about a micro-credential can be collected using a critical information summary (CIS) approach

- A micro-credential registry might use this data model to provide a consistent and transparent approach to communicating and marketing an institution's micro-credentials to both learners and employers

- A provincial Credit Bank might make use of the data model as a basis for assessments for credit by external assessors

- BCCAT might find this approach helpful in determining whether micro-credentials are a fit for the provincial Transfer Guide

Participant Feedback (Self-Study)

- Asked about data collection tool (83% sufficient)

- Usefulness in helping an institution make a recommendation about MC's potential to be awarded credit (75% useful)

- 8 hours allocated for assessment (100% sufficient)

Recommendations For Documenting and Assessing MCs
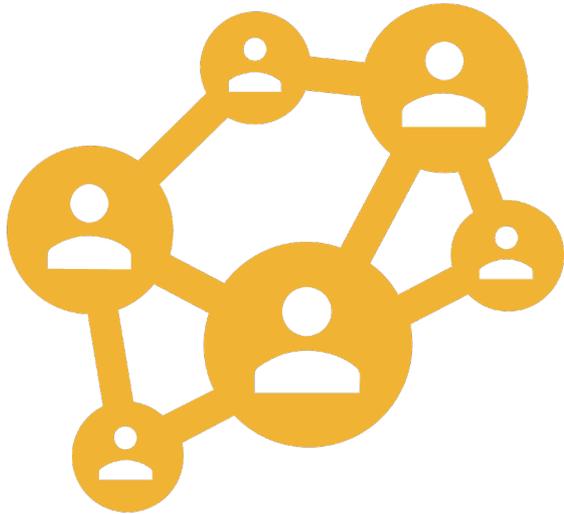
"Appreciate the standardization, [need] more collaboration between institutions regarding micro-credentials"

"Handbook was incredibly useful and fulsome"

"This would complement a/the provincial MC registry"

"How recommendations for credit would be implemented across the institution if not accepted by the institution?"

TRU Credit Bank Assessment

- 8 of 10 MC will be assessed through the TRU Credit Bank

Dissemination of Findings

REPORT TO PSE AND FUTURE SKILLS

OPEN ACCESS WEBINAR

PRESENTATION AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE?