Designing and assuring the quality of micro-credentials

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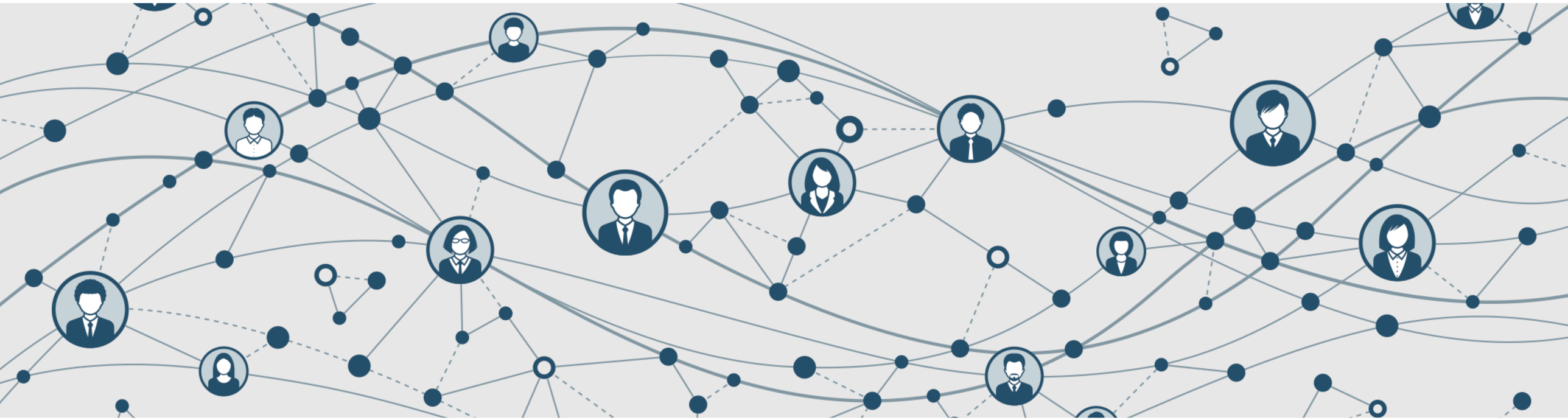

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Design and QA of Micro-credentials

Facilitated by Beverley Oliver, Emeritus Professor, Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and an Australian National Teaching Fellow, Susanna Karakhanyan, INQAAHE President, Naji AlMahdi, INQAAHE Board Member

In the rapidly changing, difficult to predict environment, an agile higher education system that ensures a swift response to the ever-growing and dynamically evolving market needs becomes a necessity if a country is to be globally competitive and benefit the economy and society at large. To remain relevant, higher education is currently facing the challenges of becoming flexible enough to respond to fundamentally altered, impossible to predict, and rapidly changing landscape. Not least is the contribution of the technological developments to the rapid diversification of expectations the society links with higher education. To be able to better meet the needs and remain relevant, it is crucial to establish quality management systems that enable higher education to be proactive in their response to the diversity.

This session will focus on micro-credentials, the design and quality assurance that leads to recognition of the credentials.

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About me

experience, limitations, motivations

Formerly: Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Deakin University (60K students; 25% online)

Implemented three types of micro-credentials

Now: working independently

Limited knowledge of your systems

My context:
Australia six states 2 territories; ~26 million population

A chasm between:

Higher education: federal governance
39 public universities (+3 private): large (60K), comprehensive, research; Many are former colleges
160+ small private providers - religious + international
Heavily leveraged to onshore international students
A long history in distance and online learning

Vocational education and training: state governance
Technical and further education (TAFE)
Registered training organisations

The **Australian Qualifications Framework** spans both, uncomfortably. Last year's review included consideration of micro-credentials.

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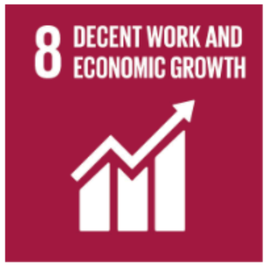
About me

experience, limitations, motivations

Sustainable Development Goals



Systemic solutions to enable **decent work** through **equitable** access to **affordable quality education….in a (post) pandemic 2020 world.**

Innovative solutions: employability, micro-credentials, edtech, new business models

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Post-COVID-19, learners VALUE employment and employability even more….

Employ*ability*: we can

- **discern, acquire, adapt and continually enhance**
- the **skills, understandings and personal attributes**
- that make us more likely to **find and create meaningful paid and unpaid work** across the lifespan
- that **benefits ourselves, the workforce, the community and the economy**.

Oliver, B. (2015). Redefining graduate employability and work-integrated learning: Proposals for effective higher education in disrupted economies. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability, 6*(1): 56-65.

Micro and macro certifications are key to employment.

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Challenges

What is driving interest in micro-credentials?

What is a micro-credential?
(and what is not, and who decides)

How to quality assure them?

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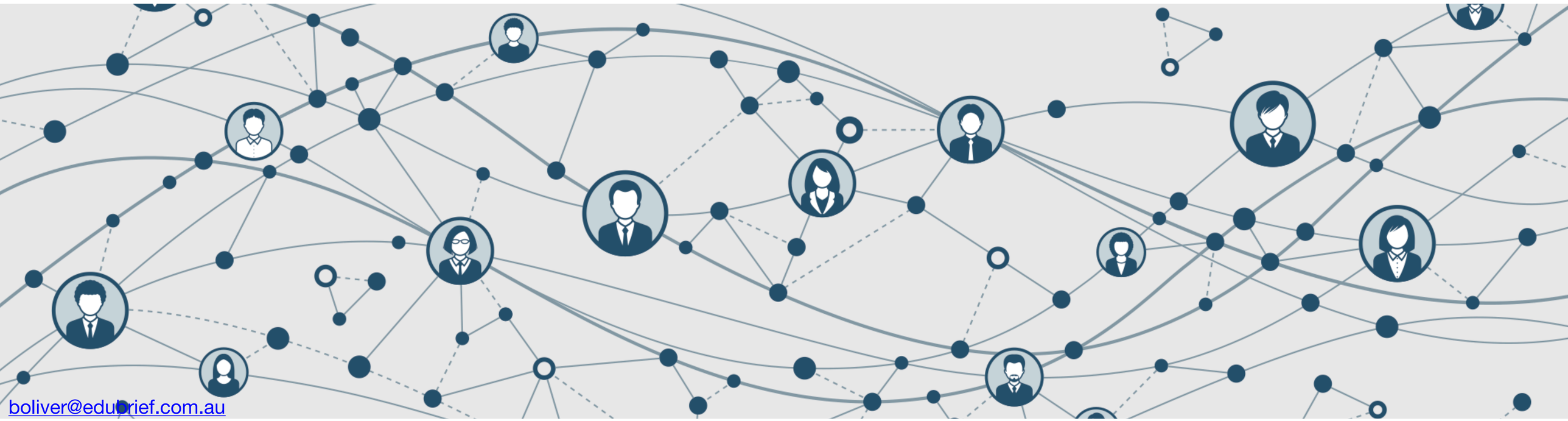
Challenge #1: What is driving interest in micro-credentials?



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Context: Two maps of Australia

1. An analogy
2. The problem - working adults not engaging in lifelong learning

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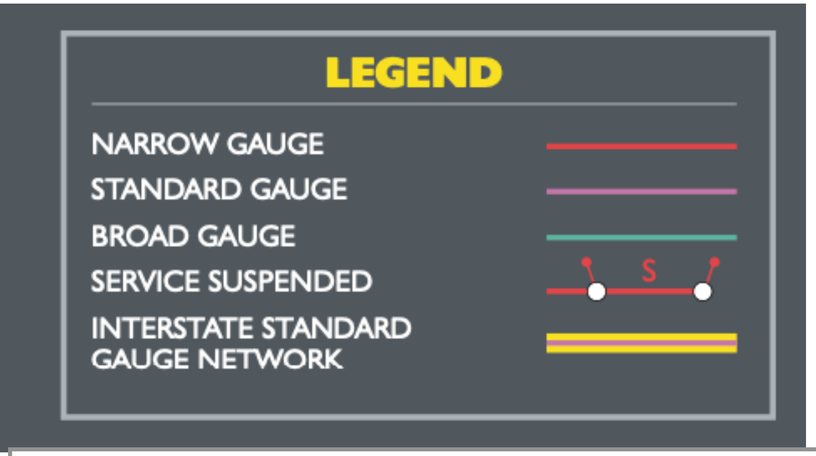
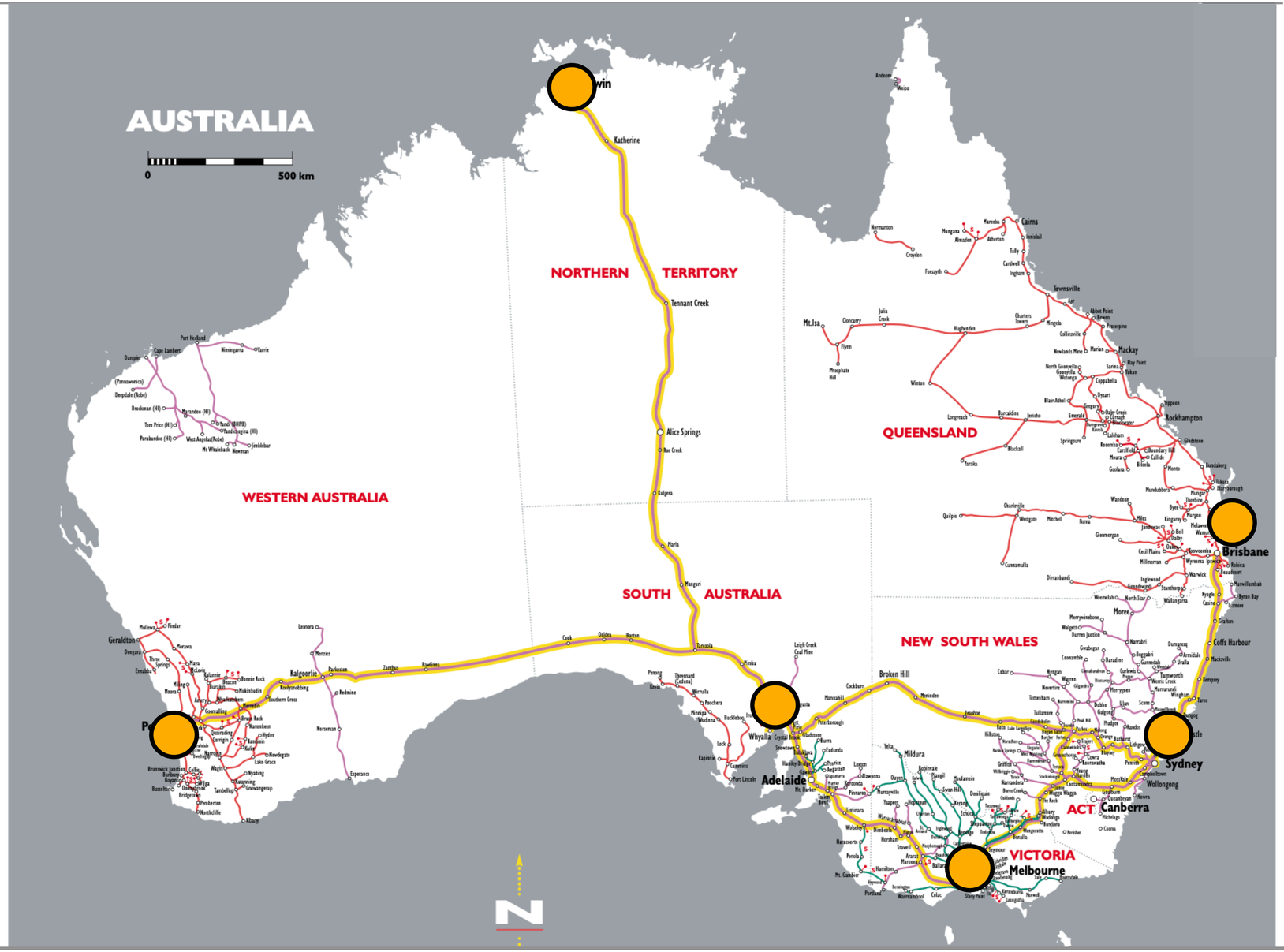
Australia

six states 2 territories; ~26 million population, lots of desert





Rail gauges in Australia display significant variations, which has presented an extremely difficult problem for rail transport on the Australian continent for over 150 years. As of 2014, there is 11,801 kilometres (7,333 mi) of narrow-gauge railways, 17,381 kilometres (10,800 mi) of standard gauge railways and 3,221 kilometres (2,001 mi) of broad gauge railways.

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The system doesn't make it easy to get around.

Some are wondering whether we still want to use this mode of transport?

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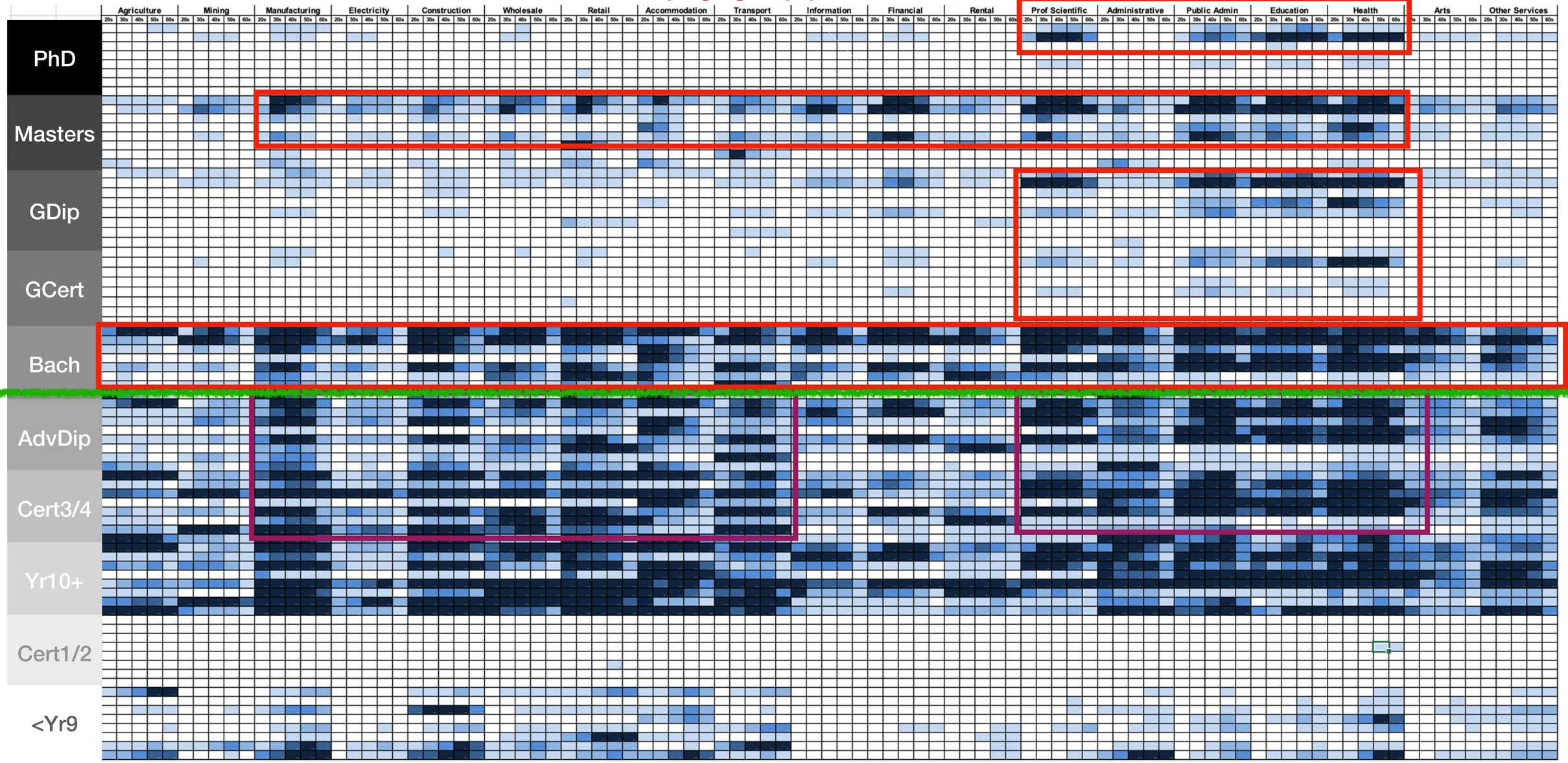
The highest qualification of working Australians aged 15-64 years

19 Industries by age group (20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s)



What: 2016 census every person who responded in Australia - excluding foreign diplomats and their families, Australian residents overseas. Including visitors to Australia. This picture: ~9.45 million responses useable data

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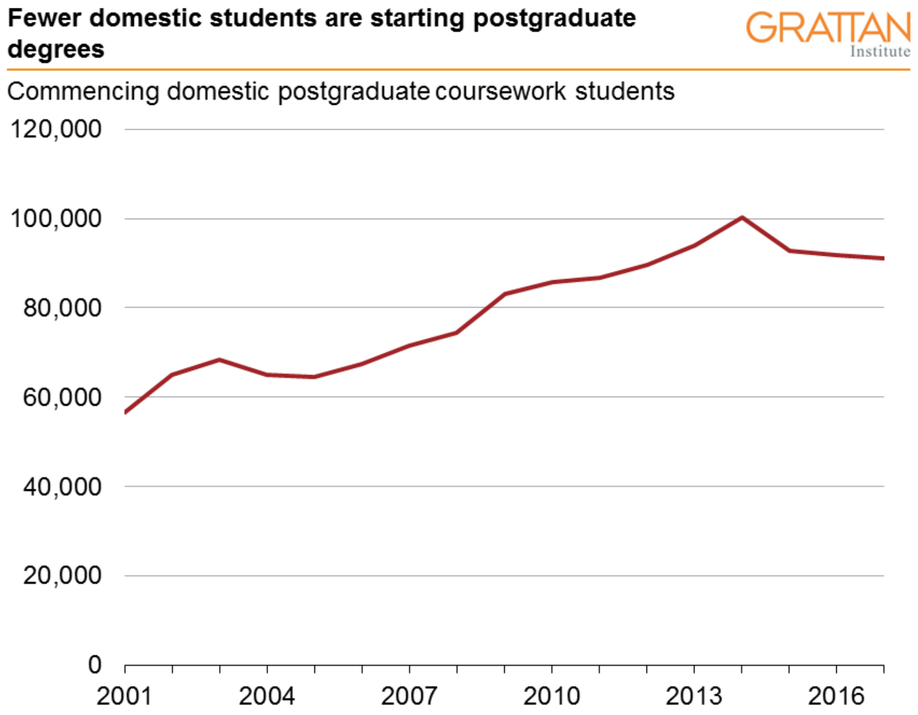
However…as in many countries

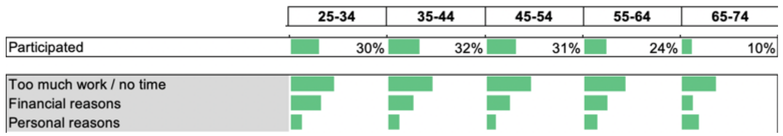
Low and declining postgraduate domestic learners

https://andrewnorton.net.au/2019/09/26/contrary-to-expectations-reskilling-and-retraining-seem-to-be-in-decline/

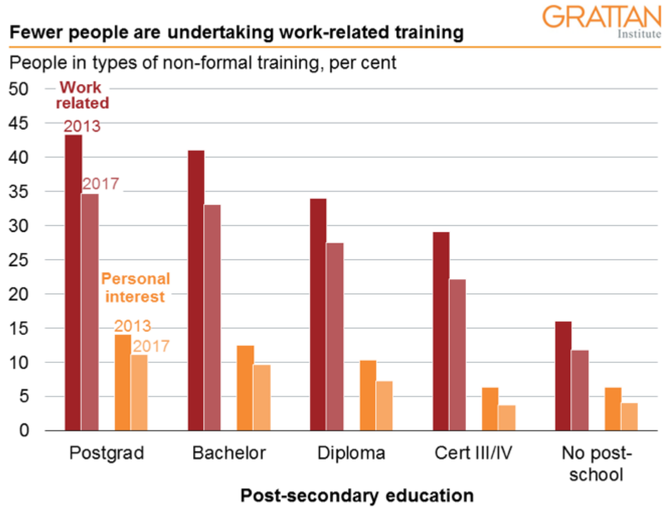


Source: Department of Education and Training, uCube (2019).

Low and declining non-formal (work-related/personal interest)



ABS, Work-Related Training and Adult Learning, 2017



Source: ABS Work-Related Training and Adult Learning, Australia.

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https://andrewnorton.net.au/2019/09/26/contrary-to-expectations-reskilling-and-retraining-seem-to-be-in-decline/

Why?

Too busy working/caring for family

Too expensive (time/money)

Where's the value?

So we could make post school education

More flexible (time and place)

Shorter/ more cost-effective

Better value.

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Where to next? Beyond the skills gap

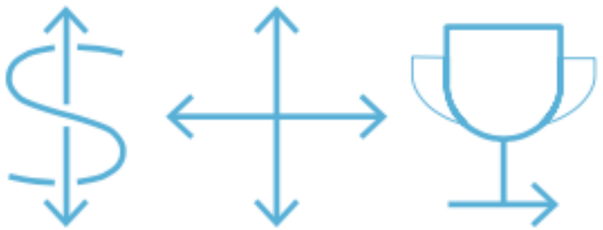
Higher education for a changing world

Report published December 2019

In 2019, Deloitte commissioned a survey to gather information about the attitudes that Australian post-bachelor workers have towards formal learning, and the factors influencing their choice of a course or an education provider.

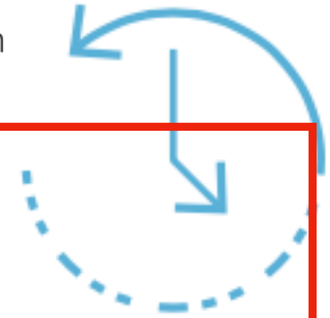
54% 49% 18%

The majority of this group show a preference for short courses (**54%**), followed by postgraduate qualifications (**49%**), and professional accreditations (**18%**).*



Affordability, flexibility, and industry reputation are the most important factors for informing workers' decisions on course and/or provider selection.

Recognition first:
Recognise what workers already know to engage them in formal learning.



71%

of those not interested in formal learning would be more likely to consider it, if the course length could be reduced, through recognition of prior learning (RPL) or recognition of prior experience (RPE).

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Where to next? Beyond the skills gap

Higher education for a changing world

Report recommendations:

1. Credit where credit is due:

Recognise prior learning and experience, to support fast track to completion

- Improve access to recognition of prior learning through clear information and greater access to academic credit, where appropriate
- Develop robust quality-assured mechanisms to assess and credit competencies developed through prior experience

2. My pace, my place:

Enable workers to learn where, when and how they live

- Provide flexibility that enables learners to engage, take a break, pick up again, and submit assessments when it suits their other work and life commitments, where feasible
- Deliver learning at the places convenient to these learners, including where they work, supported by employer and provider partnerships that retain and upskill talent at scale

3. Stack and pack:

Provide micro learning options that can stack

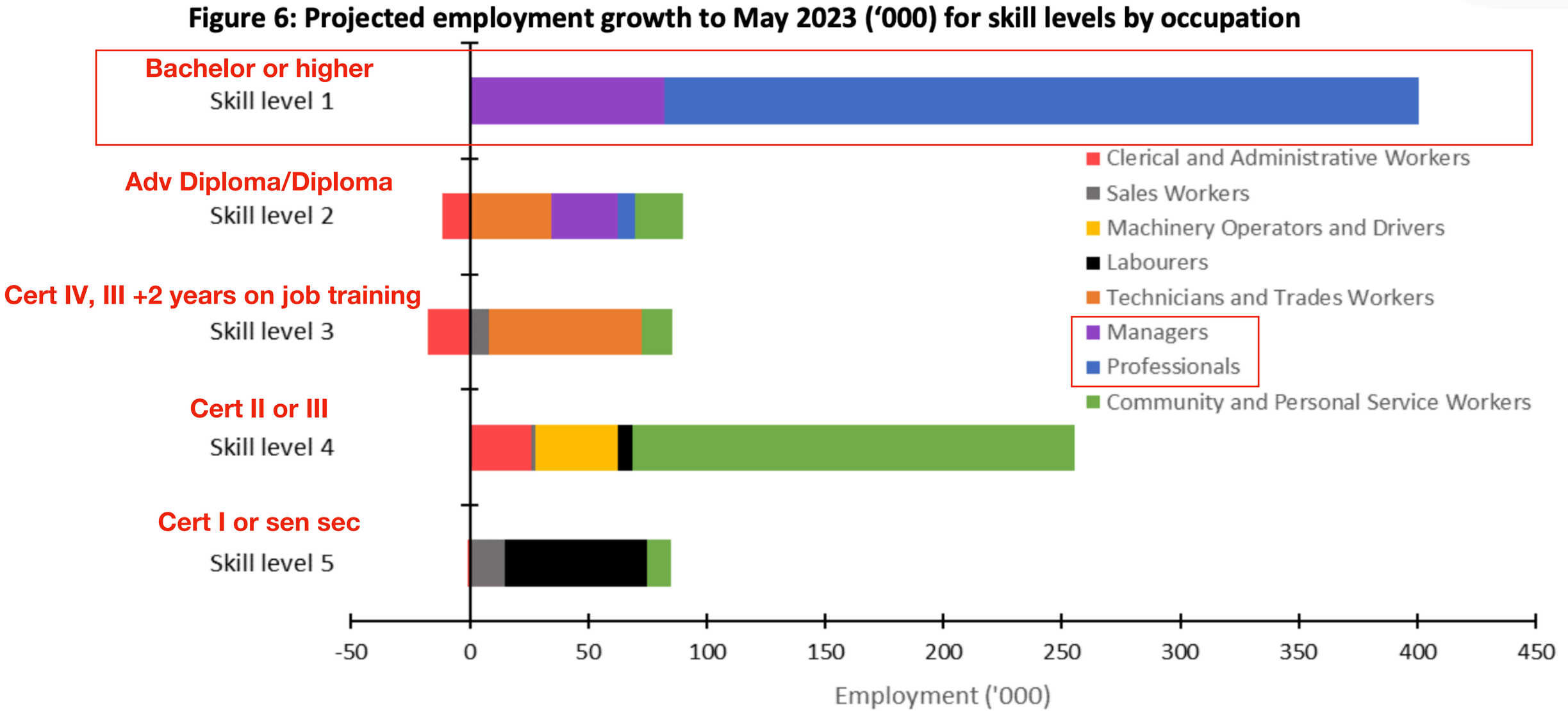
- Provide micro courses and postgraduate qualifications (or even better, short courses that stack towards qualifications)
- Provide credit or recognition that post-bachelor workers can bank until they need it, or enable them to intermit when life takes an unexpected turn

4. Show the value:

Educate workers on the value and advantages of formal learning in a changing world

- Educate workers on the labour market, employer needs for specific skills, and the value of return on investment for further formal learning
- Promote the quality, standards and industry credibility of further formal learning that leads to career advantage

Where will the jobs be? Pre-COVID projections…



Employment Outlook to May 2023

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POST-COVID

What factors influence a learner's perception of the value of a micro-credential?

Curriculum

Engagement

1 What will it cost (time/money) - and is it worth it?

2 Will this help me get or keep employment - or help me stay connected and well?

3 What will an employer think of this credential/provider?

4 Can I access it in at my place and pace? Will I get help if I need it?

What factors influence an employer's perception of the value of a micro-credential?

1 Does this provider know my industry? Can I trust their judgement about this learner?

2 Was the assessment valid and secure?

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Challenge #1: What is driving interest in micro-credentials?

The changing nature of work

Skills gaps

Disruption and unemployment

The price of higher education - time and money

The efficacy of higher education

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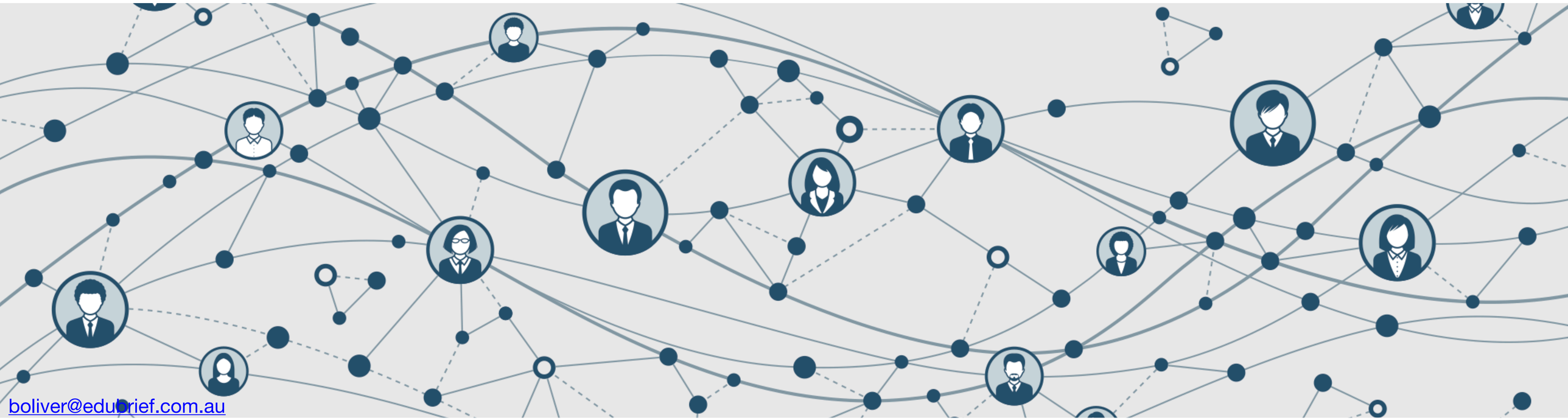
Challenge #2: What is a micro-credential?

(and what is not, and who decides)



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Beverley Oliver
Emeritus Professor and Principal Consultant at EduBrief
1w •

Yes it would be great to have a universal definition of micro-credentials, aka alternative credentials, shorter form credentials, badges, and many other terms.

In the meantime, I'm creating an updated collation of terms and definitions of these new and not-so-new credentials... *please assist and point me to your definition, or refs you know of*. I'm interested in industry refs, higher ed, vocational ed...

Feel free to post below or DM me, and pls include a URL or reference. I will post the collated document in due course. Many thanks in advance.

#microcredentials #alternativecredentials #badges #shortcourses

#micro-credentials #badges
#alternative-credentials #short courses
#certifications #shorter form credentials

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1. A **micro-credential** is “a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternate, complementary to, or a formal component of a formal qualification”. This definition, designed to mesh with UNESCO’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), was adopted by the Review of the Australia Qualification Framework in 2019 (Oliver, 2019).
2. Similarly, Kato et al. define **alternative credentials** are “credentials that are not recognised as standalone formal educational qualifications by relevant national education authorities” (Kato, Galán-Muros, & Weko, 2020). These authors focus on six characteristics of potential importance to learners, employers and policy makers: delivery modes; duration; assessment processes; areas of focus; capacity to be embedded within or cumulate into larger credentials; and characteristics of providers (p.10).
3. A **micro-credential** is a “Sub-unit of a credential or credentials (could be micro, meso, mini, etc.) that could accumulate into a larger credential or be part of a portfolio” (https://microcredentials.eu/terminology/)
4. A **micro-credential** is “any credential that covers more than a single course but is less than a full degree” (Pickard, Shah, & De Simone, 2018)
5. A **micro-credential** “is as an umbrella term that “encompasses various forms of credential, including ‘nano-degrees’, ‘micro-masters credentials’, ‘certificates’, ‘badges’, ‘licences’ and ‘endorsements’” (Chakroun & Keevy, 2018)
6. **Short Learning Programmes (SLPs)** or short degree programmes are a group of courses (units, modules or other learning building blocks) with a common subject focussing on specific needs in society and which are part of larger degrees. Different typologies and names exist throughout Europe. This definition is based on the suggested need within the Bologna structure and based on the changes in higher education offerings that have been initiated in online provision in the last 6 to 8 years (http://e-slp.eadtu.eu)
7. A **micro-credential** is “a small volume of learning certified by a credential. In the EHEA context, it can be offered by higher education institutions or recognised by them, when offered by other providers, using recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedures. A micro-credential is designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills or competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials have explicitly defined learning outcomes at a specific QF-EHEA/NQF level, an indication of their associated workload in ECTS credits, assessment methods and criteria, and are subject to quality assurance in line with the ESG” European Commission Consultation Group, cited by (Beirne, Nic Giolla Mhicil, & Brown, 2020)
8. A **micro-credential** is shorter than an award course but can represent from one to 100 hours of learning, may or may not be certified by an accrediting institution or association, and may be taken online or as a face-to-face experience. Notwithstanding this, there is generally consensus that micro-credentials are short, verified courses or learning experiences providing successful candidates with a digital certification, such as a “digital badge.” (Rossiter & Tynan, 2019)
9. A **micro-credential** is “a documented statement awarded by a trusted body to signify that a learner upon assessment has achieved learning outcomes of a small volume of learning against given standards and in compliance with agreed quality assurance principles. Micro- credentials express credit volume and they are referenced to the national qualification framework and the EQF. A micro-credential may be offered independent of the method of provision (face-to-face, online or blended learning) or the nature of learning (formal, non-formal, informal). Micro-credentials are owned by the learner and are sharable and portable in the format of a stand-alone certificate, a digital badge, or as part of a portfolio”
10. **Micro-credentials** verify, validate and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved; are endorsed by the issuing institution; having been developed through established faculty governance processes; and are designed to be meaningful and high quality. Definition used by SUNY (https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/microcredentials/definitions/)
11. The growth of online education has spawned a variety of new “**microcredentials**” – short-form, sub-degree awards that represent the completion of a learning module, course, or series of courses. Microcredentials include both generic offerings such as digital badges as well as proprietary credential constructs such as “nanodegrees” or “MicroMasters” (Gallagher, 2018).
12. **Alternative credentials** refer to the competencies, skills, and learning outcomes derived from assessment-based, non-degree activities and align to specific and timely needs in the workplace : Fong, Janzow, & Peck, 2016, cited by (Fuerte, 2019)
13. **Alternative credentials** include certificates and industry certifications, apprenticeships, digital badges, microcredentials, and new forms of online master’s degrees (Fain, 2018).
14. A **digital badge** is a validated indicator of accomplishment, skill, quality, or interest that can be earned in many learning environments. Open digital badging makes it easy for anyone to issue, earn, and display badges across the web—through an infrastructure that uses shared and open technical standards (https://www.hastac.org/initiatives/digital-badges).
15. **Digital Badges** represent a valid indicator of specific achievements, knowledge, skills, and competencies that can be earned in formal and informal learning environments (Ifenthaler, Bellin-Mularski, & Mah, 2016)
16. A **digital badge** is a form of a micro-credential that, unlike a college degree or transcript, does not display all courses completed to achieve a credential but is used to display the single course of learning usually highlighted by a specific learning activity or completed project. Digital badges and other forms of micro-credentials offer a new way of thinking about documenting what a person learns and instead transitions to specific skills, knowledge, and abilities of students that can be easily communicated with a larger audience. Digital badges are typically a graphic or image that represents specific skills, knowledge, or abilities learned by a student (LaMagna, 2017).

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What is a micro-credential?

In plain language, a micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning that is less than a formal qualification.

What is a badge?

A badge is a digital token issued to a learner based on evidence that requirements have been met: the requirement could be participation, or evidence of learning outcomes achieved, as demonstrated through assessment.

Oliver, B. 2019, Making micro-credentials work for learners, employers and providers

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More technical explanations

A micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternative, complementary to or a component part of a formal qualification.

A subset:

Credit-bearing micro-credentials lead to an offer of admission to or credit towards at least one formal qualification, regardless of whether or not the offer is taken up by the learner. They **mirror and contribute to the academic standards** required in the target qualification. The duration and effort required are in keeping with the amount of credit earned.

What is not a micro-credential?

According to these definitions, learning or participation without “proper” assessment.

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Situating definitions within the ISCED taxonomy

	Formal	Non-formal			Informal
Type of education (ISCED definitions)	**Formal education** is education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies, and – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country.	**Non-formal education** is education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning of individuals.			**Informal education:** Forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate but are not institutionalised.
Status and nature of certification (ISCED definitions)	**Formal qualification:** Qualifications can be obtained through: i) successful completion of a full education program; ii) successful completion of a stage of an education program (intermediate qualifications); or iii) validation of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, independent of participation in an education program.	**Non-formal qualification.** Qualification awarded upon achievement of the learning objectives of an education program in non-formal education that is not recognised by the relevant national education authorities as being equivalent to a formal qualification.			Uncertified learning
Definitions proposed in this report		**A micro-credential is a certification of assessed learning that is additional, alternate, complementary to or a component part of a formal qualification.**		Certified participation	
		Credit-bearing	**Non credit-bearing**		
		Credit-bearing micro-credentials include assessment aligned to a formal qualification level. Achievement of the learning outcomes leads to an offer of admission to or credit towards at least one formal qualification, regardless of whether or not the offer is taken up by the learner.	Non credit-bearing micro-credentials include assessment which may or may not be aligned to a formal qualification level. Achievement of the learning outcomes does not lead to an offer of admission or credit towards a formal qualification.		
Standards	Standards are required and regulated.	Credit-bearing micro-credentials mirror and contribute to the academic standards required in the target qualification(s). The duration and effort required by the learner are in keeping with amount of credit earned in the target qualification(s).	Non credit-bearing micro-credentials may or may not conform to the academic standards, including duration and effort, required in a formal qualification.	Not specified	N/A
Modes and types	Sustained program of learning or validation of learning independent of participation in a program (online, onsite, blended)	Assessed course or validation of learning independent of participation in a course (online, onsite, blended)		Online or onsite experiences	Online or onsite experiences
Certification	Testamur, academic record (paper or digital)	Certificate (paper or digital, including badges)			Nil
Examples	Diploma of History Bachelor of Commerce Graduate Certificate of Education Master of Engineering	MicroMasters (edX) MasterTrack (Coursera) A single unit in a qualification Deakin Professional Practice Credentials	Specialization (Coursera) that does not earn admission or credit RMIT Creds Deakin Hallmarks	Cranlana Program	Personal reading Viewing documentaries

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Classifying micro-credentials

Also known as alternative credentials, MOOCs, certifications, short courses, bootcamps, intensives, MicroMasters, masterclasses, nano degrees, Specializations…

What
- Certifying new knowledge and skills
- or
- Certifying prior knowledge and skills

Where
- Online
- or
- Onsite
- or
- Onsite and online

When
- Provider-paced: Set start, pace, finish
- or
- Self-paced: No set start, pace, finish

Who
- Traditional educational provider(s)
- or
- Industry provider(s)
- or
- Private provider(s)

With
- Paper certificate
- or
- Digital certificate
- or
- Digital badge

As
- Stand-alone certification
- or
- Certification that interacts with a formal qualification

  Before
  - Admission
  - or
  - Preparation
  - or
  - Credit pathway

  During
  - Additional certification
  - or
  - Achieving distinction

  After
  - Last mile services to secure employment

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A few examples

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Badge system 'future-proofs' EY employees

Edmund Tadros

EY has issued hundreds of digital badges to local staff for developing new skills, as part of a nascent in-house training program designed to provide on-demand education at a lower cost.

The EY Badge system, launched in late 2017, allows staff to earn badges for completing courses ranging from data visualisation through to design thinking and cyber security.

The firm, formerly known as Ernst & Young, has issued almost 400 badges across 18 courses to staff locally as part of the internally designed and assessed training system.

The model cuts down on the cost of classroom-based training by emphasising online learning combined with internal and client-based application of the knowledge.

"The badges are designed around the modern way of learning. So that's moving towards bite-sized content on demand. You can learn whatever, whenever," said Anne Renwick, the firm's learning and development leader.

The badges have four levels – bronze, silver, gold and platinum – and require the staff member to complete a combination of online learning and application and gold badges, originally designed for staff with significant client responsibility and subject matter experts, are now available more broadly.

In a similar way, the platinum badges, originally designed to be for the 1 per cent of EY staff globally who are industry experts, is available to any staff member who fulfils the learning requirements.

"There's three dimensions to the badges. There's the learning component and for the bronze level, you've got to demonstrate a basic understanding of the skills by doing about 20 hours of learning. There's a portal which curates different types of learning, whether it's with webcasts, Ted Talks; it might even be classroom learning that you can use to contribute to that badge," Ms Renwick said.

"Then you have to apply it, you have to activate that skill through different experiences, and there is some structure and ideas around what type of experiences you can use.

"And then the third dimension is around contribution. So, how do you give back to the firm, to our community in the application of that learning?"

The firm has designed its own curriculum for each level of badge, and the assessment is also done internally

Lifelong learning

Badges awarded by EY Oceania

Each Badge requires a combination of learning, experience and contribution

Sub-domain	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum	Awarded
Data visualization	83	8	5	2	98
Data integration	30	4			34
Data science	24	4		1	29
Data platform	3				3
Data architecture	2				2
Information strategy	2				2
Cybersecurity	5				5
Digital	32	1			33
Transformational leadership	15				15
Inclusive Intelligence	8				8
Global team leadership	3				3
Robotic process automation	34	4	1	2	41
Artificial intelligence	14				14
Blockchain	13				13
Design thinking	71	15			86
Power & Utilities	2	1			3
Oil & Gas	2				2
Financial products	2				2
Total	**345**	**37**	**6**	**5**	**393**

Levels
Bronze Has a basic understanding of fundamental concepts, tools and applications
Silver Has knowledge of broad subject area and a deep understanding of one to two capabilities
Gold Has in-depth knowledge of advanced concepts and tools and can provide advice regarding this area
Platinum Has deep understanding across all capabilities in the area

SOURCE: EY

EY's Anne Renwick says the system is designed around the modern way of learning; and Casey Barr, who has taken part. PHOTO: DOMINIC LORRIMER

"I don't have a technology background, that's why I pursued these because I work at EY day-in, day-out doing this work.

"For me, it's a way to future-proof myself," he said.

The platinum badges required at least 80 hours of training, which he did at home and at work.

"The online learning tends to be outside of work hours, the contribution and experience tends to be during work hours," Mr Barr said.

"For data visualisation, I had to work on a really high number of engagements and apply the entire spectrum of tools. I had to have used [computer applications] Tableau, Power BI and Qlik. I also had to contribute to forums, I had to write a piece that was published within EY on my views on how visualisation is changing the industry."

Ms Renwick said the badges currently sit alongside traditional classroom-based learning, which is "probably the most expensive way to learn because you generally have to fly

Employers offering micro-credentials

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Classifying micro-credentials

Also known as alternative credentials, MOOCs, certifications, short courses, bootcamps, intensives, MicroMasters, masterclasses, nano degrees, Specializations…

What
- Certifying new knowledge and skills
- or
- Certifying prior knowledge and skills

Where
- Online
- or
- Onsite
- or
- Onsite and online

When
- Provider-paced: Set start, pace, finish
- or
- Self-paced: No set start, pace, finish

Who
- Traditional educational provider(s)
- or
- Industry provider(s)
- or
- Private provider(s)

With
- Paper certificate
- or
- Digital certificate
- or
- Digital badge

As
- Stand-alone certification
- or
- Certification that interacts with a formal qualification

  Before
  - Admission
  - or
  - Preparation
  - or
  - Credit pathway

  During
  - Additional certification
  - or
  - Achieving distinction

  After
  - Last mile services to secure employment

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EY badges

What	Certifying new knowledge and skills
Where	Online
When	Self-paced: No set start, pace, finish
Who	Industry provider(s)
With	Digital badge
As	Stand-alone certification

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What graduates receive

- A robust portfolio of projects to demonstrate your working knowledge of web development.
- Graduates benefit from a Project Demo Day—quarterly networking event with local professionals to showcase their final projects.
- Continued one-on-one career coaching with your Career Director post-graduation.
- A Certificate of Completion from Monash University showcasing your accomplishments to future employers.

The Monash University Coding Boot Camp is offered in partnership with Trilogy Education Services (Australia) Pty Ltd., a 2U, Inc. brand.

MONASH University

About Trilogy Education Services

Trilogy Education is a workforce accelerator that empowers the world's leading universities to prepare professionals for high-growth careers in the digital economy. Thousands of people around the globe have completed Trilogy-powered programs, and more than 2,000 companies—including 50% of the Fortune 100—employ them.

TRILOGY EDUCATION SERVICES

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Monash coding bootcamp

What — Certifying new knowledge and skills

Where — Onsite and online

When — Provider-paced: Set start, pace, finish

Who — Traditional educational provider(s) **endorsing a course provided by a** Private provider(s)

With — Paper certificate

As — Stand-alone certification

After — Last mile services to secure employment

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Deakin’s Professional Practice Credentials

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Professional Practice Credentials

What

Certifying prior knowledge and skills

Where

Online

When

Self-paced: No set start, pace, finish

Who

Traditional educational provider(s) **And** Industry assessed

With

Digital badge

As

Stand-alone certification **And** Certification that interacts with a formal qualification

Credit pathway

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Develop in-demand marketing skills

Curtin University

MicroMasters® Program in

Marketing in a Digital World

I'm interested

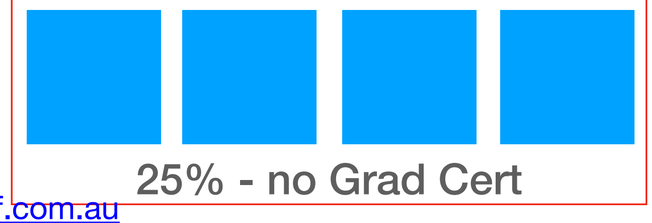
What you will learn

- To manage an online brand and to optimise paid, earned and owned digital media assets for maximum impact

Expert instruction

5 graduate-level courses

1 year



25% - no Grad Cert

edX MicroMasters Model

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Classifying micro-credentials

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- or
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MicroMasters

What — Certifying new knowledge and skills

Where — Online

When — Provider-paced: Set start, pace, finish

Who — Traditional educational provider(s)

With — Digital certificate

As — Stand-alone certification **or** Certification that interacts with a formal qualification

- Before → Admission **or** Credit pathway

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‘Found’ micro-credentials

Credentialate has been designed to assess, monitor, promote and validate learners’ attainment of evidence-backed skills, supporting the transition from learner to earner.

Credentialate is a secure, configurable platform that assesses and tracks attainment of competencies and issues micro-credentials to students.

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Classifying micro-credentials

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  - Last mile services to secure employment

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Credentialate badges

What — Certifying prior knowledge and skills

Where — Online

When — Post learning experience

Who — Traditional educational provider(s) or Industry provider(s) or Private provider(s)

With — Digital badge

As — Stand-alone certification or Certification that interacts with a formal qualification

During — Additional certification or Achieving distinction

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And also, the MOOC to degree model and some things to watch out for.

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Where is the boundary between MOOC and degree?

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Challenge #2: What is a micro-credential?
(and what is not, and who decides)

We need to jointly agree a ‘good enough’ definition that can be adapted and adopted

It meeds to be understood by all key stakeholders, or they must be educated to understand it

We should build on the alliances and agreements already in place.

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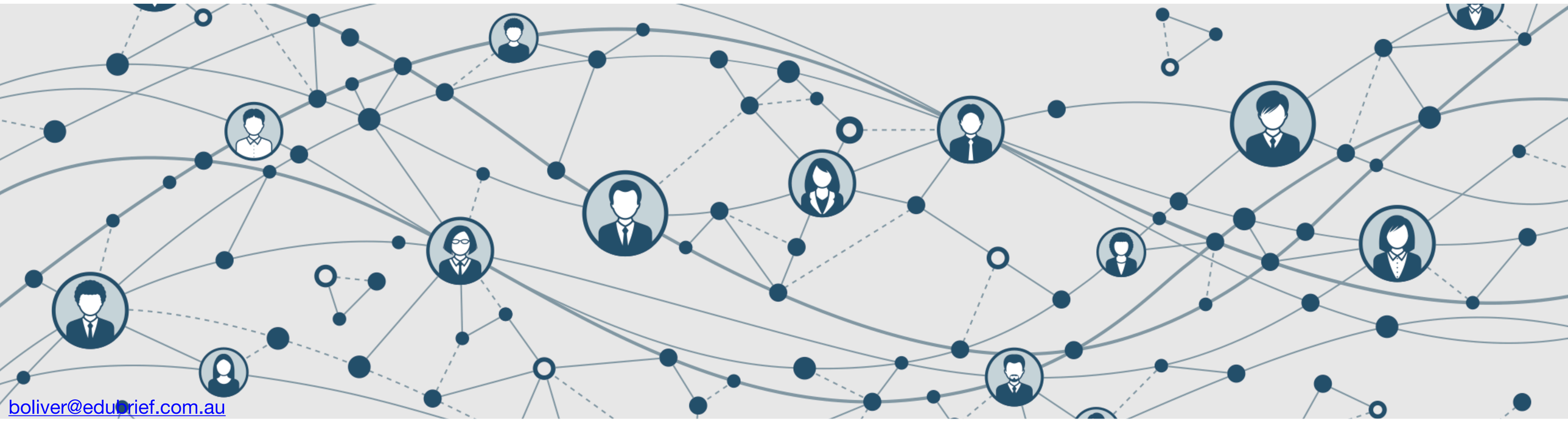
Challenge #3: How to quality assure them?



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My view: we need to explain micro-credentials in terms of formal qualifications

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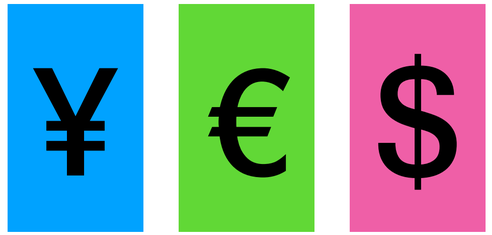
Because

credentials could work like money…

Global - not yet
Exchange value - maybe
Bankable credit - not much
Digital - increasingly
Open to fraud - a challenge
Major known qualifications
Micro-credentials explainable



Global
Exchange value
Bankable credit
Digital
Open to fraud
Major currencies
New currencies added

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What else?

All the key stakeholders need to understand them…

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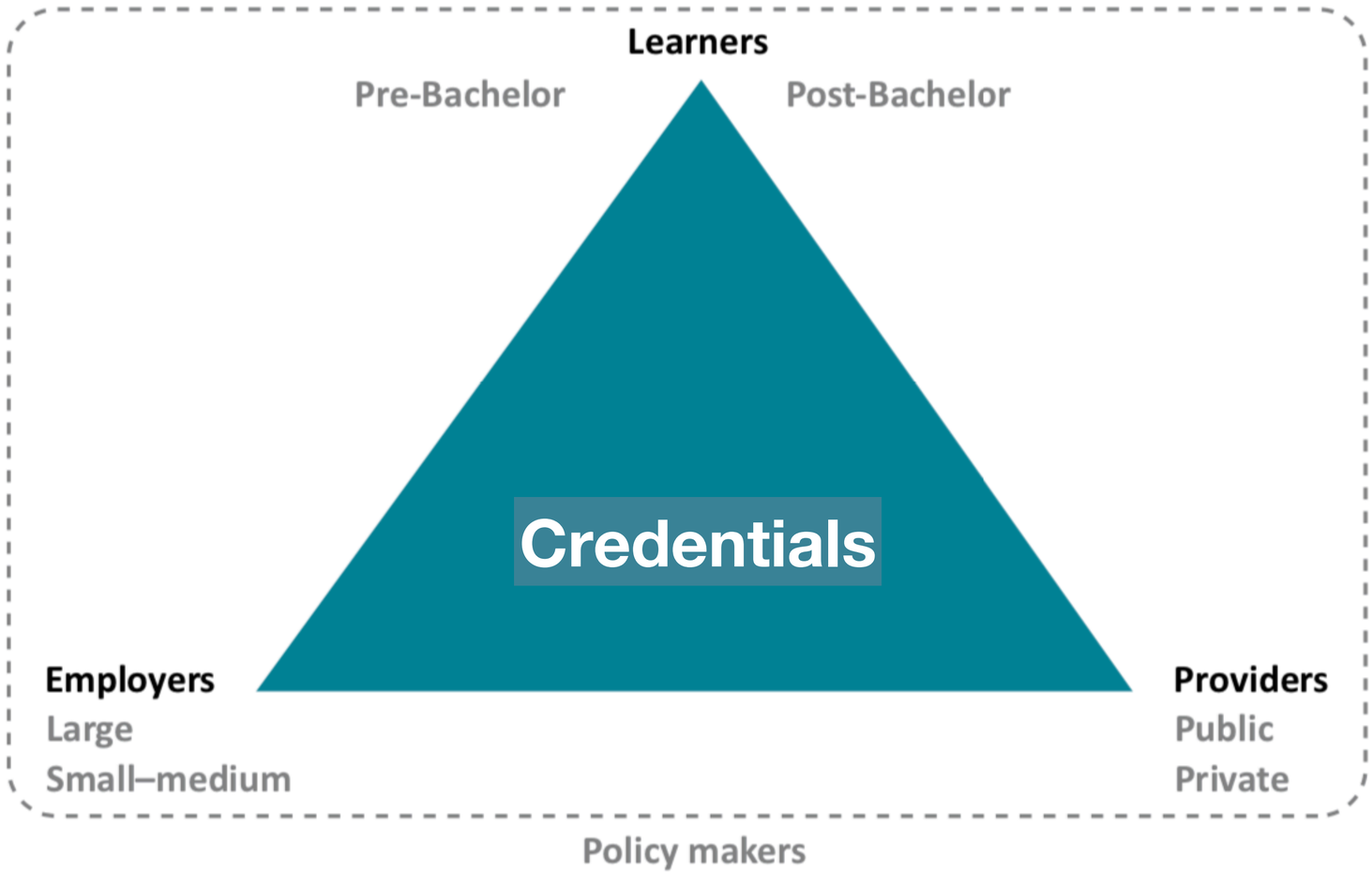
What would Edutopia look like?



The value (career advantage and quality) of a credential outweighs the costs (time, money, app cost).
Credentials are trustworthy: fake certificates and plagiarised assessments are conquered.
Credentials are interoperable across the lifespan and national borders, stack within and across sectors.
Credentials show granular skills achievement — and can be matched to gaps and opportunities for work

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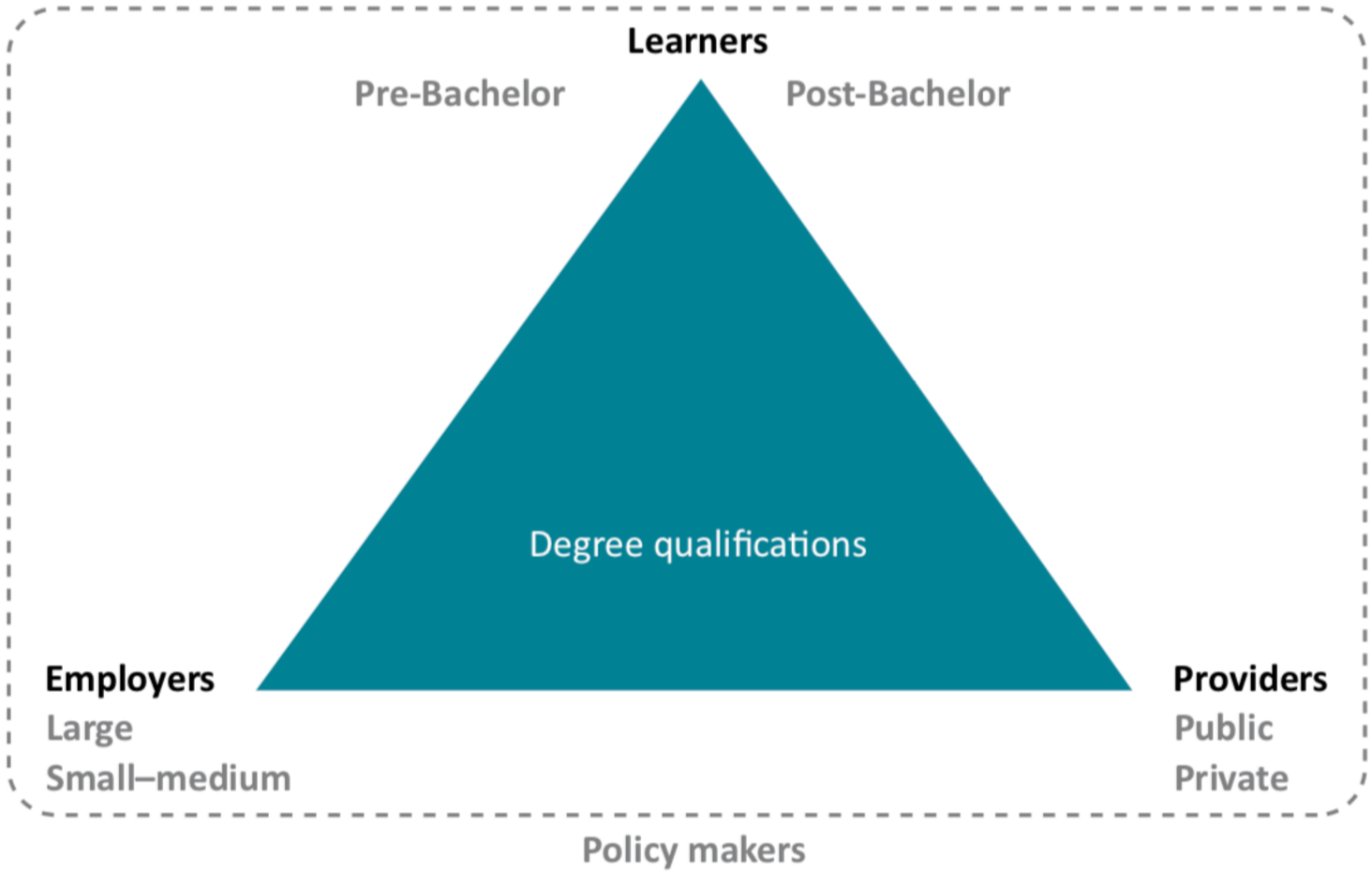
Formal qualifications now



Costs outweigh outcomes
Trustworthiness questioned
Very limited interoperability between providers, sectors, borders, lifespan
No granular skills achievement readily communicable.

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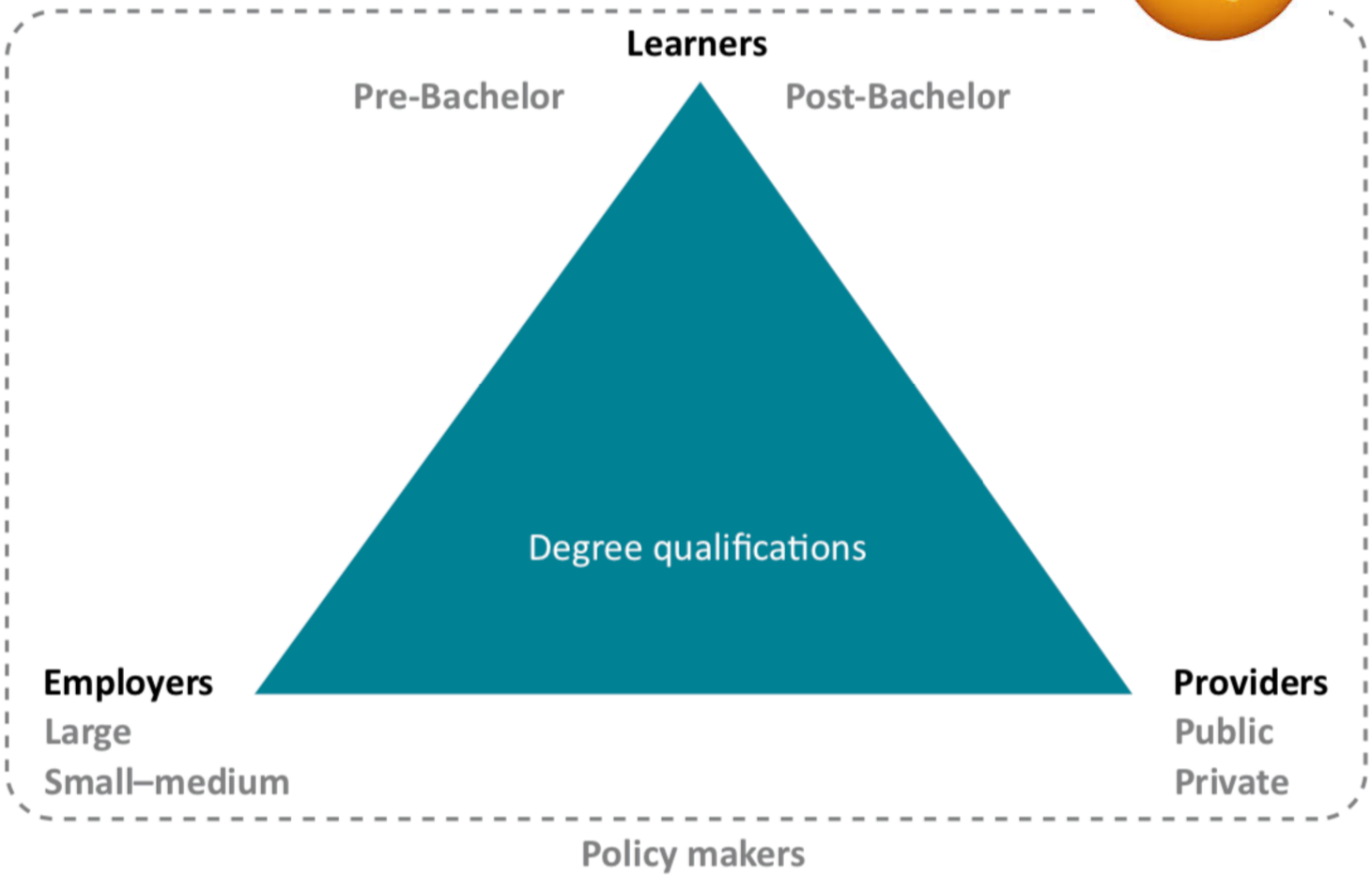
Micro-credential distopia

Diffident…



Confused

Excited:
MOOCs etc

Cost is usually better but what outcomes?
Trustworthiness questioned - including online
Not interoperable with formal qualifications, or across lifespan, sectors and borders
Granular skills achievement demonstrated - by how does that map to the big picture?

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What else could we try?

Critical information summaries

See “Making Micro-credentials Work”

Nutrition Facts

3 servings per container

Serving size **3 pretzels (28g)**

	Per serving		Per container	
Calories	**110**		**330**	
		% DV*		% DV*
Total Fat	0.5g	**1%**	1.5g	**3%**
Saturated Fat	0g	**0%**	0g	**0%**
Trans Fat	0g		0g	
Cholesterol	0mg	**0%**	0mg	**0%**
Sodium	400mg	**17%**	1200mg	**52%**
Total Carb.	23g	**8%**	69g	**24%**
Dietary Fiber	2g	**7%**	6g	**21%**
Total Sugars	<1g		3g	
Incl. Added Sugars	0g	**0%**	0g	**0%**
Protein	3g		9g	
Vitamin D	0mcg	0%	0mcg	0%
Calcium	10mg	0%	30mg	2%
Iron	1.2mg	6%	3.6mg	18%
Potassium	90mg	0%	270mg	5%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

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What else could we try?

Critical information summaries

See "Making Micro-credentials Work"

Table 3: Information that could be included in a critical information summary

Title and brief description (30 words)	Insert name of certificate
Certified learning	In up to 100 words, describe what the successful learner knows and can do based on their assessed learning
How learner participated	Choose one: Online only, Onsite only, Both onsite and online
Effort required (including assessment)	Insert number of hours (for typical learner)
Complexity of main assessment task	Choose one (best fit): No assessment Testing recall of facts Application of a skill to a routine problem Application of a skill to a complex problem Application of multiple skills to routine problems Application of multiple skills to complex problems Portfolio and reflective evidence for validation of proficiency
Supervision and identity verification	Choose one (best fit): Unsupervised, no identity verification Supervised **online or on-site**, identity not verified Supervised **online**, identity verified (one factor) Supervised **online**, identity verified (two factors) Supervised onsite, identity verified (one factor) Supervised onsite, identity verified (two factors)
If assessed, equivalent level (main task)	Choose one: Not at degree level/Pre-Bachelor/Bachelor/ Pre-Masters/Masters/Doctorate
Quality assurance	Nil, or insert names of governing or endorsing bodies
Successful learner earns: • admission to a degree program • credit towards a degree program • If yes, how much credit?	 Choose one: No/Yes – state degree(s) and institution(s) Choose one: No/Yes – state degree(s) and institution(s) State credit in units (a unit is a typical semester of study in a degree program). For example: Credit is less than one unit: 0.4 unit Credit is one unit: 1.0 unit Credit is more than one but less than two units: 1.5 units

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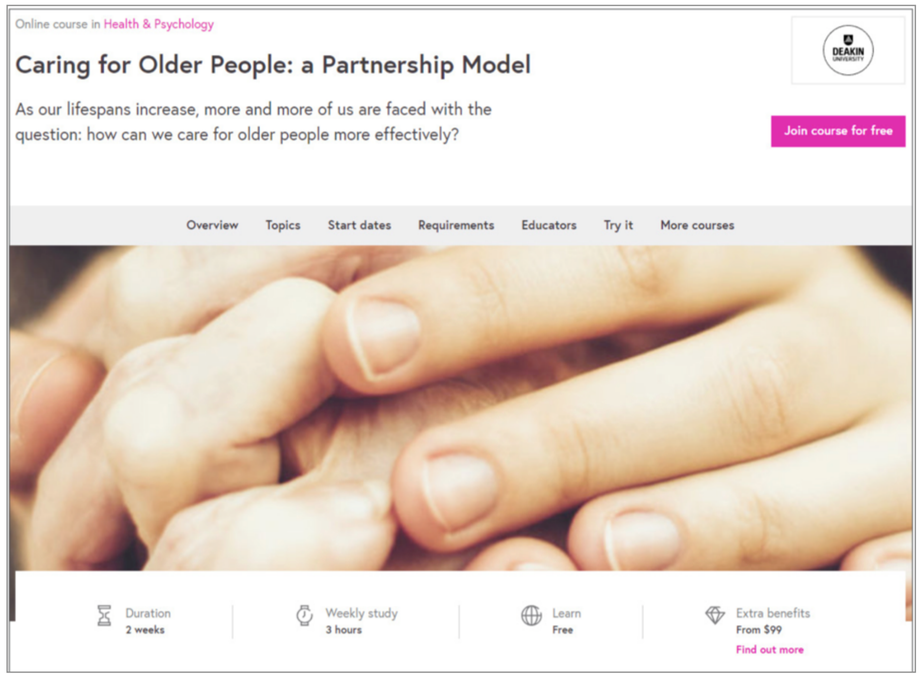

Title and brief description (30 words)	Caring for older people: a partnership model
Certified learning	Successful learners can: describe partnership-centred care; explain the benefits of a partnership-centred model of care for older people, their family and healthcare teams; explore how partnership-centred care strategies can be developed and applied to best support the needs and preferences of older people.
How learner participated	Online
Effort required (including assessment)	6 hours
Complexity of main assessment task	Application of a skill to a routine problem
Supervision and identity verification	Unsupervised, no identity verification
If assessed, equivalent level (main task)	Not at degree level
Quality assurance	Deakin University supported by the Wicking Trust
Successful learner earns • admission to a degree program: • credit towards a degree program • If yes, how much credit?	 No No

Deliver value

Offer micro-credentials that deliver the promised benefits, particularly a path to decent work through quality education

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A quick guide to the Australian Higher Education Standards for coursework students

One hour course? — 25% of Masters — > 25% of Masters

Student Participation and Attainment: Policies and procedures, applied fairly and consistently, designed to ensure academic preparation and proficiency in English; prior to enrolment and before fees are accepted, students informed of rights and obligations; admission and other contractual arrangements are in writing, include conditions of enrolment and participation

Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning: Assessment of prior learning undertaken for granting credit for units of study, result recorded and students receive timely written advice of outcome; granted only if students are not disadvantaged and integrity of course and qualification maintained

Orientation and Progression: tailored to needs of students; early assessment provides formative feedback on progress; access to advice and timely referral to academic or support; methods of assessment validly assess progress; timely feedback; identify students at risk; retention, progression and completion; equivalence irrespective of background, entry pathway, mode or place

Learning Outcomes and Assessment: Expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, including knowledge, generic skills, required for employment and further study; independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning; assessment consistent with the learning outcomes; on completion students have demonstrated the learning outcomes

Qualifications and Certifications: Qualifications awarded only if a course of study leads to the award of that qualification and all of the requirements of the course of study have been fulfilled; awardees of qualifications are issued with testamur, and either a record of results or an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement; records of results.

Facilities and Infrastructure: Facilities, including placements, fit for purpose; secure access to electronic information and adequate electronic communication services is available continuously; learning environment, whether physical, virtual or blended, support academic interactions among students outside of formal teaching.

Diversity and Equity: Policies, practices and teaching and learning designed to accommodate student diversity; specific consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; participation, progress, and completion by identified student subgroups monitored and the findings are used to inform admission policies and improvement of teaching, learning and support strategies

Wellbeing and Safety: Timely, accurate advice on access to personal support services is available, nature and extent informed by the needs of cohorts, including mental health, disability and wellbeing needs; safe environment promoted and fostered, advising students and staff on safety and security on campus and online; critical-incident policy and procedures

Student Grievances and Complaints: Mechanisms for resolving grievances; timely resolution of formal complaints and appeals against academic and administrative decisions without charge or at reasonable cost; applied consistently, fairly and without reprisal; confidentiality, independent professional advice, advocacy and other support

Course Design: Qualification(s); structure, duration and modes; units of study; entry requirements and pathways; expected learning outcomes, assessment, indicative student workload; compulsory requirements; exit pathways; advanced knowledge and inquiry, and current research or advances in practice; activities foster progressive and coherent achievement, regardless of place or mode; professional accreditation.

Staffing: Staffing complement meets educational, academic support and administrative needs of cohorts; level and extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity; staff with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses or units of study are equipped for their roles; others have their teaching guided and overseen by staff who meet the standard; Teaching staff are accessible to students seeking individual assistance with their studies.

Learning Resources and Educational Support: Resources, e.g. library, creative works, notes, laboratory, studio, simulations, software up to date and accessible; learning management system: timely access and training available; no unexpected barriers, costs or technology requirements for access; support services consistent with course, mode of study and needs of cohorts, including off campus

Course Approval and Accreditation: Processes for internal approval of course, overseen by peak institutional academic governance processes and applied consistently

Academic and Research Integrity: Policies address misconduct; mitigate risks to integrity including misrepresentation, fabrication, cheating, plagiarism and misuse of intellectual property; student guidance on misconduct; accountability maintained in arrangements with other party, including placements, joint awards

Monitoring, Review and Improvement: Courses have periodic comprehensive reviews overseen by peak academic governance processes; external referencing or other benchmarking

Delivery with Other Parties: Work-integrated learning, placements, community-based arrangements quality assured, quality of supervision of student experiences; courses delivered with another party(ies)

Corporate Governance: Formally constituted governing body, includes independent members, exercises competent governance oversight, accountable for provider's operations

Corporate Monitoring and Accountability: Provider can demonstrate, and corporate governing body assures itself, that provider is operating effectively and sustainably

Academic Governance: Processes, structures for effective academic oversight of quality of teaching, learning

Representation: Representation of provider, educational offerings and charges accurate and not misleading; Accurate, relevant and timely; publicly available and accessible to enable informed decision making; prior to acceptance of an offer; Publicly-available information about the provider's operations; regulatory status and authority; instrument establishing the entity; information systems and records are maintained, securely and confidentially

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Challenge #3: How to quality assure them?

Build on QA processes in place for formal qualifications

Educate key stakeholders to look for aspects of importance

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Designing and assuring the quality of micro-credentials

Emeritus Professor Beverley Oliver PFHEA ALTF GAICD
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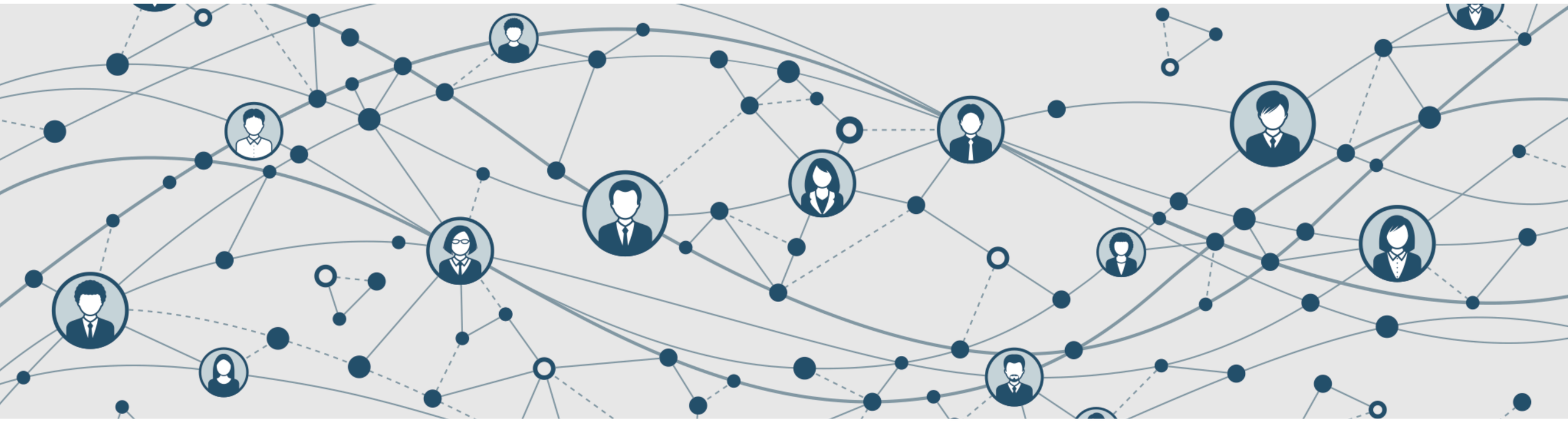
You can find me at edubrief.com.au or on LinkedIn: here



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