Micro Credentials and Short Courses Framework

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Contents

Micro Credentials and Short Courses at Charles Sturt

Micro Credentials

Micro-credentials are smaller units of learning than the typical Charles Sturt eight credit point subject that provide recognition of the achievement of learning outcomes from shorter duration, education, or training activities.

A micro-credential can be accepted for credit by an institution or organisation or be an attestation for industry. A micro-credential attests to specific knowledge or skill competencies with defined learning outcomes and *may or may not* be stacked towards larger units of accreditation.

Short courses

Short courses are Charles Sturt courses that are not part of accredited Charles Sturt awards or micro-credentials. They are undertaken to support work, career, lifelong learning and/or personal goals. Short courses involve curated content that is packaged, promoted, and delivered with a defined set of learning goals.

Short courses may be designed to be AQF compliant and if the learning outcomes have been assessed, may be credit bearing.

Strategic Alignment

Charles Sturt offers micro-credentials and short courses to provide study opportunities for learners seeking relevant knowledge and skills in smaller, more flexible, and more accessible components. The key intent of these offerings is to provide accessible options for rapid re-skilling, upskilling, and complementary or lifelong learning in line with industry and community needs.

Additional strategic objectives are to:

a) increase enabling pathways for entry into award programs, facilitating increased access to tertiary education, particularly from socially under-represented and marginalised groups as well as bolstering our footprint in regional Australia.

b) leverage new education opportunities that emerge through partnerships with industry, employers, professional associations, and other higher education providers.

c) open new avenues for research informed learning and promote areas of research strength.

d) test new markets, models, and disciplines.

e) build awareness and reputation.

f) generate new revenue opportunities, to act as lead generators where appropriate, and increase CSU's market presence.
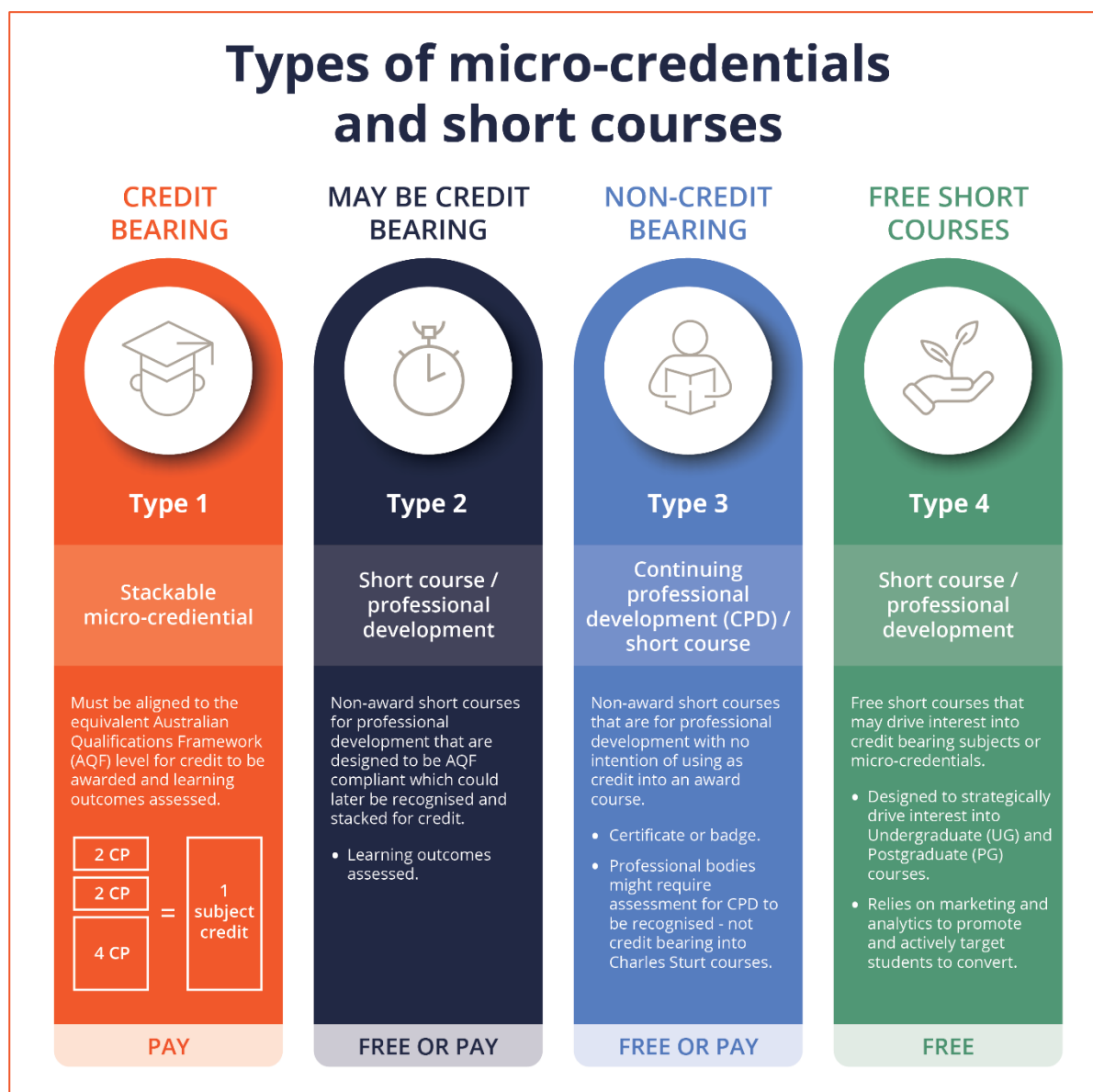
Types of micro credentials and short courses

Types of micro-credentials and short courses

CREDIT BEARING	MAY BE CREDIT BEARING	NON-CREDIT BEARING	FREE SHORT COURSES
Type 1	**Type 2**	**Type 3**	**Type 4**
Stackable micro-credential	Short course / professional development	Continuing professional development (CPD) / short course	Short course / professional development
Must be aligned to the equivalent Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level for credit to be awarded and learning outcomes assessed. 2 CP 2 CP = 1 subject credit 4 CP	Non-award short courses for professional development that are designed to be AQF compliant which could later be recognised and stacked for credit. • Learning outcomes assessed.	Non-award short courses that are for professional development with no intention of using as credit into an award course. • Certificate or badge. • Professional bodies might require assessment for CPD to be recognised - not credit bearing into Charles Sturt courses.	Free short courses that may drive interest into credit bearing subjects or micro-credentials. • Designed to strategically drive interest into Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) courses. • Relies on marketing and analytics to promote and actively target students to convert.
PAY	**FREE OR PAY**	**FREE OR PAY**	**FREE**

Figure 1. Types of micro credentials and short courses offered at Charles Sturt

1.1. Credit bearing micro-credentials; approved micro-credentials that are 2- and 4-point micro-subjects that can be directly stacked into a course structure

1.2. Non-award short courses for professional development that are designed to be AQF compliant which could later be recognised and stacked for credit if the learning outcomes have been assessed.

1.3. Non-award short courses that are for continuing professional development (CPD) with no intention of using as credit into an award course. This type of non-award short course may have a cost associated with it or be free. This type of non-award short course may be assessed for professional accreditation to be recognised (where applicable).

1.4. Free short courses that may drive interest into credit bearing subjects or micro-credentials.

Standards and Alignment

Key Principles

1.1. Credit bearing micro-credentials

1.1.1. Credit bearing micro-credentials must be aligned to the equivalent AQF level that credit is being awarded and must have been assessed.

1.1.2. The University's standard student workload expectation (20 hours per unit of credit including class contact hours, other learning activities, preparation and time spent on all assessable work) should be used on a pro-rata basis for award course equivalency measures (i.e., a micro-credential should typically be calculated at 80 hours workload for 4 units of credit, and 40 hours for 2 units).

1.1.3. Credentials that are smaller than 40 hours workload (2 units of credit equivalent) may not be stacked or contribute towards pre-defined credit into a Charles Sturt course.

1.1.4. Assessment should also be proportionate and align to the Assessment Design Principles.

1.1.5. Credit bearing micro-credentials can be stand-alone modules or may be co-taught with award courses, but the cohorts should be distinct, and they have a credit relationship only with award offerings.

1.1.6. Students on international student visas will not be able to enrol in micro-credentials that constitute part of a subject to ensure full compliance with ESOS regulations.

1.2. Non-award short courses designed to be AQF compliant which could later be recognised and stacked for credit

1.2.1. Non-award short courses that could later be stacked for credit, must have been assessed and comply to the equivalent AQF level for credit later being sought.

1.2.2. Non-award short courses must stack to the equivalent of an 8-credit point subject workload (140 - 160 hours), i.e., a non-award short course should typically be calculated at 80 hours workload for 4 units of credit.

1.2.3. Non-award short courses must be no smaller than 40 hours workload (2 units of credit equivalent) to be stacked to a subject.

1.2.4. Students on international student visas will not be able to enrol in, nor stack non-award short course for credit to ensure full compliance with ESOS regulations.

1.3. Non-award, non-credit bearing that are for continuing professional development (CPD)

1.3.1. Non-award short courses that won't be stacked for credit, usually will not involve assessment, but professional bodies might require assessment for CPD to be recognised.

1.3.2. This type of non-award short course may be smaller than 40 hours of workload.

1.3.3. Students on international student visas will not be able to enrol in, nor stack non-award short course for credit to ensure full compliance with ESOS regulations.

1.4. Free, non-award, non-credit bearing short courses for professional development

1.4.1.   Free 'tasters' will be designed for high-school students in year 11 & 12, and TAFE students drive interest and provide advanced standing in high level skills-based learning (i.e., critical thinking and academic skills) into CSU undergraduate courses and will be assessed.

1.4.2.   Free tasters will also be designed to encourage students into post graduate studies, where it is strategic, or to drive interest and growth.

Governance and Procedure

Assessment

Recognised credentials are awarded with the integrity of assessment assured through the application of equivalent governance and standards to those used in award courses. Student expectations and rights around assessment should be comparable to those for standard CSU award courses.

Micro-credentials and short courses that may be credit bearing, should include a summative assessment component to validate achievement of the stated learning outcomes.

Micro-credentials may only be awarded where the required assessments are passed and learning outcomes are achieved.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Micro-credentials may be stacked or collectively contribute towards into a Charles Sturt award course in accordance with the requirements of the Charles Sturt Credit Procedure. They may also be used as part of a portfolio of evidence towards meeting admission criteria.

Standard Charles Sturt expectations for recognition of prior learning (Credit Policy) will apply including the application of criteria such as equivalency of standard of learning, learning outcomes (conceptually mapped to the relevant AQF level), content, hours of learning, and assessments.

For micro-credentials to be eligible for specified credit, they must aggregate to the *equivalent of at least 8 units of credit*, as credit towards Charles Sturt subjects is only granted for whole subjects, not part subjects. Credit bearing micro-credentials will be multiples of whole components of a subject, i.e., 2 x 4 credit point modules, or any combination of 2 and 4 credit point modules adding to 8 CP, which will be fully assessed. Once a learner has completed all modules that constitute a particular 8 credit point subject, they can convert this into RPL. Governance of credit equivalence and quality assurance of micro-credentials will be overseen by the Faculty Courses Committee and University Courses Committee.

Non-credit bearing short courses are not classified as formal learning for the purposes of recognition of prior learning (RPL) because the requirements for quality assurance and assessment are not equivalent to the requirements for micro-credentials.

Short courses may sometimes be used for RPL under the provisions for informal learning in the Credit Procedure. This may be the case where they contribute to a comprehensive portfolio of learning activities which evidence an appropriate aggregate set of learning outcomes across the range of activities.

Approval and Review

Credit bearing micro-credentials and short courses must be approved in accordance with the requirements for the establishment of a non-AQF course or credential in the Course and Subject Life Cycle Procedure. Micro-credentials and short courses should be reviewed each time they are offered including some form of student evaluation to inform quality improvements.

Faculty Courses Committees have responsibility for formally reviewing all micro-credentials and short courses at least every three years and for determining metrics to inform decisions about whether they should continue to be offered. Reviews should include an assessment of financial viability, delivery against market intelligence, performance metrics, credit and student completion and satisfaction rates. Offerings that do not meet identified measures of success at a three-year review, will cease to be offered. A summary of outcomes should be included in annual reporting to Academic Senate.

Certification and Record keeping

Certificates issued for short courses and micro-credentials must comply with brand guidelines.

To comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework, these offerings must not be described publicly using the nomenclature of the AQF or implied to be a qualification recognised in the AQF.

Short courses and micro-credentials should issue a CSU branded certificate stating the name of the student, title of the course, issuance date, volume of learning, and name of the person authorised to issue the certificate. For short courses, this should be entitled a Certificate of Completion and for micro-credentials it should be entitled a Certificate of Attainment.

Recognition may also be issued digitally using badging technology. Digital badges should comply with Charles Sturt branding, guidelines, and taxonomy and should be approved by the Associate Dean Academic of the relevant Faculty.

Learner records for short courses and micro-credentials (including levels of attainment if applicable), must be kept in line with the Records Management Policy and the Records Management Procedure. Records about the attributes of micro-credentials must include enough information to allow for future RPL assessment.

Management of Risk

Where a third party is involved in academic or student support activities, due diligence must be undertaken and Charles Sturt oversight maintained, in line with the Course and Subject Policy.

Faculties should provide a report to the University Courses Committee and Academic Senate annually about their short course and micro-credential offerings including outcomes against high-level performance metrics.

Business Case Principles

Micro-credentials should have a stated audience and purpose and be aligned to the University strategy. They should be financially and commercially viable, and generally driven by market demand. By exception, they may be approved with a strong strategic case rather than for commercial reasons.

Micro-credentials and short courses may be derived from the unbundling of component parts of award courses. Entry level modules, unbundled from award subjects, may be loss-leaders into Charles Sturt courses by exception. Where relevant, the University will investigate partnering to develop micro-credential or short course curriculum, subject to relevant academic and commercial approval processes.

Micro-credentials and short courses are required to be consistent with TEQSA obligations (https://www.teqsa.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework-2021) (https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guidance-notes)

Micro-credentials and short courses should incorporate best practice in curriculum design and development, delivering a high-quality educational experience that is equivalent to Charles Sturt University's award offerings. Learning outcomes should be clearly articulated and supported by constructively aligned learning and teaching, and assessment strategies (where relevant).

Due to licensing restrictions, it is not permissible to reuse copyrighted materials or Leganto reading lists in these unbundled offerings if not offered on the University LMS. Learners enrolled in micro-credentials or short courses outside the LMS are not considered to be award students of CSU. Staff should refer to the library's [Online Resources for Graduates Guide](#) for advice.

The language of instruction will be English unless explicitly approved as an exception, in which case the language of instruction should be clearly acknowledged on certification documentation or badges. Appropriate advice about assumed knowledge or entry criteria should be published to ensure that learners are equipped with the necessary prior skills and knowledge.

The assumed level of English Language competency is equivalent to Charles Sturt University's minimum requirement and all learners are referred to University resources on academic literacy and integrity as part of orientation materials and advice prior to commencement of learning.

(https://www.csu.edu.au/current-students/learning-resources/build-your-skills/academic-skills-help)

(https://www.csu.edu.au/current-students/your-course/course-essentials/subject-enrolment/types-of-subjects/academic-integrity)

Micro-credentials are not eligible for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme/Higher Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP) or Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) support