Aga Khan University

Lifelong Learning, **E**ducation **A**nd **D**evelopment of **S**kills
(**LEADS**)

Micro-credentials

A GUIDE

Multiple Learning Pathways:

LEADS will provide *multiple and flexible learning pathways* to enable people at all educational levels to engage in learning at various points, including entry and re-entry. These pathways aim to help strengthen connections between formal and non-formal education systems and involve the recognition, validation, and accreditation of knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education. LEADS will complement and support the university's continuing education programmes. As described below LEADS will award *Micro-credentials* and digital badge for courses where applicable.

Micro-credentials:

Micro credentials awarded by AKU will be:

- **Assessment based:** they will provide a record of what the learner knows and describe the learner's achievement against clearly defined standards.
- **Skills based and Granular**: they will be related to a specific skill or a small set of skills and competencies. Information will be provided about pre-requisite skills and knowledge required for performing the tasks in the course/s.
- **Industry aligned**: the micro-credential will be relevant and reflect the needs of industry.
- **Transferable**: micro-credential will be awarded in the form of a digital badge that can be shared across multiple platforms to showcase learners' skills and competencies.
- **Quality assured**: the micro-credential courses will be verified and recognized by industry and other institutions.
- **Learner focused**: the micro-credential will allow multiple pathways for learning and continual improvement.
- **Stand-alone or Stackable**: Currently, stand-along but in future Stackable allowing learners combine with other micro-credentials to demonstrate broader learning and may lead to macro-credentialing/ qualifications.

Micro-credential framework:

Usually, micro-credentials are based on the skills acquired and not on the number of hours spent in the classroom.

The Micro-credential at AKU is aligned with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (provide weblink). Accordingly, 1 micro-credential at AKU LEADS typically equals about 25-30 hours of work. This would include about 7-8 hours of teaching and 16-17 hours of self-study, completion of tasks assigned, assessment or any other work.

This is the first or the **base credential** and in LEADS a micro-credential could range from 1-6 credits (25-180 hours of workload).

Note: Until further notified, the micro-credentials would be stand alone and non-credit bearing i.e., they will not appear on transcripts. But in the long run we may offer micro-credential that could be stacked with other micro-credentials or lead to macro-credential. Participants would be clearly informed whether completing the micro-credentials would help them transfer to other credential programmes.

Digital Badge: A digital badge is a visual representation of a micro-credential in the form of digital asset. To ensure its credibility and validity, the badge will have meta-data outlining the competencies achieved by the earner, the evidence provided by the earner, the qualifications of the issuer, and the limits set by the issuer (e.g., expiry date). Details which will be mentioned in the digital badge include:

- competencies achieved (e.g., how to develop a lesson plan for an ECED class)
- evidence provided (e.g., worked through the online module; participated in online discussions, submitted five lesson plans with feedback incorporated)
- Any limits set by the issuer (e.g., expiry date if the competency requires regular updating)

References:

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(2021) University continuing education in Canada. An overview of micro-credentials and the adult learning eco system in Canada's universities. https://cauce-aepuc.ca/documents/news/2021_university-continuing-education-in-canada.pdf

UNESCO (2022a). *Towards a common definition of micro-credentials*. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381668

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LEADS COURSE SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Items	Yes	No
1. Basic Information		
Course name is clearly provided.		
Aim of the course is stated clearly, reflecting specific skills aligned with target audience needs.		
2. Target Audience		
Target audience is clearly defined (e.g., demographics, professional background).		
Eligibility criteria are specific and appropriate for the course level.		
3. Prerequisites		
Prerequisites are aligned with the identified target audience.		
4. Notional Working Hours		
Estimated hours are suitable a micro-credential (e.g., 25-30 hours).		
5. Competencies / Learning Outcomes		
Course has 2–5 clear learning goals (what learners will be able to do)		
6. Content & Schedule		
Course structure is outlined by topics/units/modules		
If in-person teaching is involved, location and timing are specified.		
7. Teaching & Learning Modality		
Modality (self-paced, synchronous, asynchronous, blended, hybrid) is clearly stated.		
8. Assessment & Digital Badge Criteria		
Types of assessments are listed (e.g., quizzes, assignments, projects).		
Rubrics or criteria for assessing each competency are outlined.		
Evidence required for earning the digital badge is described.		
9. Budget and resouces		
Teaching and other resouces are available		
Adequate budget is available for offering the course		
10. Course has been approved by the Dean or designate		

Course Leader:----------------------. Signature:----------------------. Date:----------------------------

COURSE TEMPLATE

Aim: What is the aim of the course?

Eligible to participate: Indicate who will be the target audience or eligible to participate in the course for this micro-credit. List as many demographic or professional characteristics that you believe are important for the team to consider when planning the implementation of this microcredit course.

Prerequisites (if any): This would depend on the target audience. For example, if the target is youth who have not entered higher education, pre-requisite could be high school leavers 18 years or above. If the target audience is primary teachers, pre-requisite would be primary school teachers or aspiring teachers.

Micro-credentials:

Teaching & Learning hours: Notionally how much time would the participants take to develop the competencies in the programme? Actual time would vary for individuals.

Development of Competencies or Learning Outcomes: List the competencies participants will be able to develop through the micro-credential course. This list will also help you plan the assessments and evidence needed.

Content and schedule: Include only titles for each topic or learning unit covered in the course. Include a proposed sequence or structure, (e.g., unit 1, unit 2 or topic 1 & 2) to guide the course progression.

Note: If there is in-person teaching involved, it is important to indicate the specific placement and location of these sessions within the course, whether it be in the first week, middle, or towards the end, at AKU Karachi campus, Chitral, Syria, etc.

Teaching & Learning Modality: Programme delivery would be flexible. Below are some possible online modalities:

- Online self-paced
    - (No direct faculty-participant interaction; participants access course materials and complete the course requirements at their own pace, at the time and place of their choosing.)
- Online asynchronous
    - *(Faculty-participant interaction held asynchronously. This is a time-delayed mode of teaching where participants are not required to participate in teaching sessions at the same time. The AKU-VLE, in addition to offline digital resources, can be used in this mode. Students can access instructional material whenever and wherever it is most convenient for them.)*

- Online synchronous
  - *(Faculty-participant interaction held in real-time. Participants complete tasks before or after the session.)*
- Blended Online
  - *(Blend of synchronous and asynchronous modality)*
- Hybrid
  - *(Mix of in-person and online teaching, where online teaching can be synchronous, asynchronous. Online materials and activities complement, supplement, and build upon in-person teaching time. In-person time should not exceed 40% of the overall course learning hours to ensure the principle of flexibility)*

Assessment: Micro-credentials are usually graded on the basis of pass (demonstrates the skill) or fail (does not demonstrate a skill). Course designers would have to build in the evaluation of competencies into the programme delivery. Ensure that you strategically position your assessments within the course at the most suitable points. Provide details that outline the various types of assessments, rubrics, evidence submitted to learners to earn digital badge, and other related materials.