



Future Skills
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Compétences futures

Microcredentials in Flux

March 23, 2022

Are microcredentials the future of higher ed?

They've been on the lips of a growing number of postsecondary administrators and faculty in recent years, and COVID-19 has only accelerated the trend.

CONTRIBUTORS **OPINION**

Micro-credentials are trendy, but do they get people well paying jobs?

Here's the dilemma facing governments: micro-credentials are flexible and easy to get, but they don't get people the well-paying, in-demand jobs they need. University degrees get workers the education they need to get the jobs that are in demand, but they aren't accessible for a lot of people.

Part of the **THE NORTH AMERICAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE** ARTICLE

The Future of Ontario's Workers: How Microcredentials Can Be a Vital Part of the Post-Pandemic Recovery

WHAT NOW?

MICRO CREDENTIALS 'Small' qualifications, big deal

Oct 5, 2021, 06:30am EDT | 4,469 views

Small But Mighty: Why Micro-Credentials Are Huge For The Future Of Work

What are Microcredentials?

The available definitions converge on certain themes and characteristics:

- the short, **competency-focused** nature of microcredentials;
- their stackability with each other and complementary relationship with larger, conventional credentials;
- the status of **recognition** or **validation** they confer on the part of an issuing institution;
- their **mode of delivery**, with some emphasizing the digital or online components found in many microcredential offerings;
- other less common themes include quality control, emphasis on prior learning and industry recognition.

What can Microcredentials accomplish?

Examples from FSC's portfolio

Partner and Project Name	Description	Location	Budget
Mohawk College and partner colleges “Material Handling 4.0: Building pathways to employment for disadvantaged groups”	The project is testing microcredentials as a potential approach for supporting vulnerable workers in the material handling industry.	Across Canada	\$3 million
Humber College “Digital Fluency Stackable Microcredentials for the Workforce”	Humber College is testing the viability of a microcredential offering based on the recognition of prior digital learning as a practical method of upskilling.	Etobicocke, GTA	\$957,000
Calgary Economic Development “EDGE UP”	This project is testing whether digital upskilling microcredentials can act as a bridge to transition displaced professionals from employment in one industry (oil and gas) into another (tech).	Calgary, Southern Alberta	\$5.5 million

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Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace Accelerating Skills Development for Canada's Aviation & Aerospace Industry	The project is testing if microcredentials can serve as a workforce development solution for industries—like aviation-- looking to cultivate agile, resilient, and multi-skilled workforces in the post-pandemic economy.	Across Canada	\$1.5 million
NORCAT Leveraging Technology to Develop Modern Mining Skills	This project aims to test whether this integrated/blended microcredential model can have a scalable impact on the capacity of skilled labour industries to quickly design and deploy workforce development programs.	Greater Sudbury, ON	\$1.3 million
Social Research and Development Corporation/Excellence in Manufacturing Pay-for-Performance in Manufacturing	By combining a customized certification training program with an outcomes-based funding model, this innovative project aims to test whether the right incentives can increase employer investment in workforce development.	Across Canada	\$1.64 million

Perception of Microcredentials

For many workers, students and businesses, there is as yet no common accessible understanding of microcredentials – despite the fact that, when provided with a clear definition, many will express support for or interest in them.

- According to a recent Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) survey:
 - Many employers lacked basic information on microcredentials — “**59% of respondents were ‘not familiar at all’ with the term**, and only 10% indicated they had a good understanding. Related or similar terms had even less familiarity.”
 - over **70% of Canadians** interviewed say the lack of a definition makes it difficult for them to appreciate the value of microcredentials.
 - only **19% could provide some kind of definition**. (Brumwell et al., 2021, p. 13)

Ref. Brumwell, S., Han, S., Pichette, J., & Rizk, J. (2021, May 5). Making Sense of Microcredentials.

Retrieved from <https://heqco.ca/pub/making-sense-of-microcredentials/>

**Are microcredentials
hype or here to stay?**

Thank you!

**Looking forward to
hearing from our
panel...**

