ROADMAP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

Tbilisi

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Content

1. Introduction

According to the thematic analysis conducted by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, a micro-credential (MC) is defined as documented evidence of the assessment and validation of learning outcomes achieved through a small-scale learning activity conducted in a structured, formal environment.[1] A micro-credential may serve as a standalone, small qualification or be combined with other micro-credentials to contribute toward a broader qualification.

In the context of tertiary education, micro-credentials enable learners and students:

- to pursue flexible and modular learning pathways,

- to upskill and reskill in other fields, thereby enhancing their employability,

- to be provided recognition and validation of specific knowledge, skills, and learning outcomes acquired outside formal education, but within a structured learning environment.

At the institutional level, the introduction of micro-credentials in Georgian higher education may contribute to an increase in the number of prospective students, enhanced institutional visibility and reputation, improved alignment between graduate competencies and the needs of industry and the labor market, and diversification of institutional income streams.

This roadmap outlines the objectives, activities, milestones, and expected outcomes for each phase of the micro-credential implementation process in Georgia.

2. Context and Rationale

The road map is developed to identify:

National Needs and Competency Gaps

- Identify certain competency gaps in the Higher Education system of Georgia.

- Align micro-credentials with national development strategies (e.g., Vision 2030: Strategy for the Development of Georgia; 2022-2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia; Higher Education and Research Internationalization in Georgia 2030: Recommendations).

- Map how micro-credentials will promote the employability, upskilling, and reskilling of the workforce.

Alignment with the Higher Education Reforms in Georgia

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[1] https://www.eqe.ge/res/მიკროკრედიტების%20თემატური%20ანალიზი%20ინგლ..pdf

- Incorporate micro-credentials into ongoing higher education reforms, especially those aligned with the Bologna Process.

- Ensure compatibility with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the country.

- Support the alignment of micro-credentials with institutional priorities for flexible, lifelong, and/or continuous education pathways.

3. Policy Development and Stakeholder Engagement

Activities

1. Policy Development Measures

Integrate micro-credentials into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to ensure their quality implementation and assessment. The revised framework should also promote transparency, consistency, and objectivity across the sector, particularly in relation to credit recognition mechanisms, as well as the portability and stackability of micro-credentials.

- Establish a working group composed of representatives from the Ministry, higher education institutions (HEIs), training providers, employers, and the NCEQE.
- Develop a policy recommendation and guideline on micro-credentials, defining their scope and alignment with European approaches.
- Review and, where necessary, amend existing legislation to support the integration of micro-credentials.

2. Stakeholders Engagement

- Conduct informative and consultative workshops with HEIs, employers, and policymakers.
- Develop a joint strategic document outlining the implementation of micro-credentials across Georgian HEIs and other relevant training providers.

Milestones

- **Quarter 1**:
    - Work group Formed – clear roles & responsibilities assigned.
    - Draft Policy Document/ MC Guideline submitted – circulated to key stakeholders.

- **Quarter 3-4**:
    - Policy Framework/recommendations approved by relevant authorities (Parliament of Georgia, Ministry, government).
    - A joint strategic document was published, outlining shared goals and timelines.

4. Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Activities

1. **Development of the Standards**

- Adapt International best practices to create QA guidelines specific to micro-credentials.
- Define minimum requirements (learning outcomes, credit/workload, assessment) and establish transparent descriptors.

2. **Implementation of External and Internal QA**

- Pilot the QA framework in selected institutions, using learners/students' feedback, internal reviews, and external accreditation.
- Publish revised QA guidelines for wider adoption.

Milestones

- **Quarter 2-4:**
  - Draft QA Standards completed, reflecting needs in shorter course and learning outcomes.
  - Pilot Institutions Selected for initial QA testing.

- **Quarter 2-5:**
  - Pilot QA Assessments completed; feedback integrated.
  - Final QA Framework published; guidelines made available to all HEIs.

5. Integration into the National Qualifications Framework and recognition

Activities

1. **Alignment with the Existing NQF of Georgia**

   - To develop a methodology for determining the alignment of micro-credentials with the levels of the National Qualifications Framework, ensuring consistent recognition and portability.

- Arrange technical consultations with NQF experts to validate credit values and learning outcomes.
- Develop the elements for fair recognition of micro-credentials, ensuring transparency and completeness of information provided by the HEIs in line with the main principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

2. **Standardization of the Descriptors**

- Design a standardized template for pilot micro-credentials to ensure consistent description of learning outcomes, workload (in ECTS or a comparable system), and credit values**.**
- Make MC portability possible, as well as examine how they can be stacked and integrated into formal qualifications**.**

Milestones

- **Quarter 2-3**:
    - NQF Mapping Document created; micro-credentials assigned to appropriate levels.
    - Standard Description Template finalized, covering outcomes, workload, and credits.
- **Quarter 3-6**:
    - Official Recognition of micro-credentials within the NQF; published guidelines for institutional compliance.

6. Digital solutions

Activities

1. **Adaptation of Digital Credentialing Platforms**

- Assess existing platforms or develop a national/institutional solution for digital badge issuance and verification.
- Ensure open standards to support interoperability and international recognition.

Milestones

- **Quarter 2-3**:
    - Platform Selection/Development decided; basic functionality outlined (badge issuance, verification).
- **Quarter 3-6**:

    o Pilot Launch of Credentialing Platform in select institutions; feedback gathered on user experience and security.

7. Pilot Curriculum Development

Activities

1. **Design Relevant Micro-Credentials**

- Design short learning programs/courses/modules on previously Identified in-demand skills (Computer Network Administration, Microcontroller Programming for Drone Applications, GIS for Tourism, Programming for Data Analysis in medicine), leading to the required micro-credentials.
- Ensure their stackablity – learners can progress to larger qualifications (diploma, degree).

2. **Collaborate with Industry**

- Engage employers or sector experts in curriculum design to align with industry standards.
- Embed practical components (case studies, simulations) to strengthen employability outcomes.

Milestones

- **Quarter 2-3**:

    o Initial MC course/module/program prototypes developed (short, competency-based units).

    o Industry representatives are engaged in the validation of the curriculum's relevance.

- **Quarter 4-5**:

    o Curriculum is finalized, resulting in micro-credentials (with industry endorsements).

    o Stackable Pathways are documented, detailing credit transfers to formal programs.

8. Awareness and Capacity Building

Activities

1. **Stakeholder Training**

- Hold workshops and seminars for HEIs and industry representatives to demonstrate the benefits and mechanisms of micro-credentials.
- Train educators, administrative staff, and employers on the development of infrastructure and implementation of courses/modules, leading to micro-credentials.

2. **Guidance Provided**

- Create online toolkits (manuals, FAQs, video tutorials) for institutions and individuals.

Milestones

- **Quarter 2-3**:

    o Awareness Workshops are conducted for pilot institutions and early adopters.

    o Initial Guidance Materials (leaflets, online content) distributed.

- **Quarter 3-5**:

    o Training Sessions: Additional seminars for expanded HEI participation and industry partners.

    o Toolkit Expansion based on pilot feedback (case studies, short, animated video in Georgian).

9. Monitoring and Evaluation of the MC Implementation

Activities

1. **Impact Assessment**

- Track enrollment, completion rates, and employability outcomes (job placement, promotions).
- Use surveys, focus groups, and analytics from the digital platform to gather feedback.

2. **Continuous Improvement**

- Hold periodic review meetings with stakeholders to interpret data and adjust policies or curricula.
- Monitor global trends (e.g., European Commission updates) to keep micro-credential practices aligned internationally.

Milestones

- **Quarter 2-3**:

    o Baseline Data collected on pilot micro-credentials (learner demographics, satisfaction levels).

- o Mid-Term Review is scheduled to address emerging challenges.
- **Quarter 4-6**:
  - o Impact reports are published, showing learning outcomes, employability metrics, and stakeholder feedback.
  - o Policy and practice refinements are integrated into QA frameworks and institutional guidelines for ongoing improvement.

10. Conclusion

The roadmap outlines a strategic and integrated approach to implementing micro-credentials within Georgia's higher education system. It addresses essential pillars of policy formulation, quality assurance mechanisms, digital infrastructure, curriculum development, stakeholder involvement, recognition procedures, and long-term sustainability. Consistent completion of the above-described activities will enable Georgia to develop a credible micro-credential system that is aligned with national development goals, as well as international standards.

The successful integration of micro-credentials into the Georgian higher education system involves harmonization with national strategic objectives, regulatory frameworks, and international best practices. Emphasis on quality assurance, institutional readiness, active stakeholder participation, and a clear communication strategy will support the establishment of a flexible, future-ready ecosystem for delivering short, targeted learning opportunities. This framework will serve as an effective mechanism for gaining new skills and competences, which ultimately will promote both individual employability and the competitiveness of the national workforce.

Key Outcomes

- National policy and frameworks for micro-credentials developed and integrated.
- Quality assurance mechanisms established and piloted.
- Stakeholder readiness for partnership is achieved.
- Digital infrastructure for credentialing operationalized.
- Industry-relevant programs/modules/courses leading to micro-credentials launched.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation procedures established for sustainable MC development.

Appendix 1

Timeframe	Key Activity	Milestone	Responsible Bodies
Quarter 1-4	**Policy Development & Stakeholder Engagement** - Form National work group.	work group operating	MES, NCEQE, GTU, GRENA, UG
Quarter 2-5	**Quality Assurance Mechanisms** - Develop a QA framework for micro-credentials (learning outcomes, workload, assessment). - Select pilot HEIs.	Draft QA Standards Completed, Pilot Institutions Selected	NCEQE
Quarter 2-5	**Awareness and Capacity Building** - Conduct awareness workshops for HEIs, policymakers, and employers. - Distribute initial guidance materials.	Awareness Workshops Held, Guidance Materials Published	UG, MES, NCEQE, GTU, GRENA
Quarter 2-6	**Integration into National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** - Map micro-credentials to NQF levels. - Validate alignment with national education standards.	NQF Mapping Document Completed Standardized Description Template Finalized	NCEQE
Quarter 2-4	**Baseline Data Collection for Monitoring & Evaluation** - Track pilot program enrollment and completion rates. - Collect employer feedback on skill relevance.	Baseline Data Report Published	NCEQE, GTU

Quarter 1-5	**Curriculum Development** - Develop micro-credential courses in priority fields (IT, Agriculture, etc.) - Ensure course stackability with existing programs.	Initial Micro-Credential Prototypes Developed	NCEQE, HEIs
Quarter 2-4	**QA Pilot Implementation & Review** - Conduct QA audits in pilot HEIs. - Gather learner feedback. - Adjust QA guidelines as needed.	Pilot QA Assessments Completed, Revised QA Standards Finalized	NCEQE
Quarter 4-5	**Expanded Training & Toolkit Development** - Conduct training sessions for additional HEIs and industry partners. - Expand online toolkit with case studies.	Comprehensive Training Sessions Held Toolkit Expansion Completed	GTU, GRENA, UG, NCEQE, MES
Quarter 2-3	**Draft policy framework for micro-credentials**. - Conduct legal review and gap analysis.	Established Draft Policy Document Circulated	NCEQE, MES
Quarter 2-4	**Launch of Pilot Micro-Credentials** - Implement courses in selected HEIs. - Issue first batch of digital badges/certificates.	Pilot Micro-Credentials Running Credentialing Platform Operational	GRENA, GTU, UG
Quarter 3-5	**Impact Evaluation & Refinement** - Conduct mid-term assessment of pilot programs. - Analyze learner/employer feedback.	Impact Reports Published Adjustments to Policy & QA Based on Findings	GRENA, GTU, UG, NCEQE
Quarter 5-6	**Scaling & Institutional Adoption** - Expand micro-credential offerings to more HEIs. - Establish stackable pathways for long-term qualifications.	Micro-Credentials Integrated into Degree Pathways	NCEQE

Quarter 2-6	**Continuous Monitoring & International Alignment** - Review global trends and update policies accordingly. - Establish partnerships for international recognition of micro-credentials in Georgia.	Ongoing Global Best Practice Alignment	MES, NCEQE, GTU, GRENA, UG
Quarter 2-6	**Technological Infrastructure Development** - Select or develop a digital credentialing platform. - Implement security and verification standards.	Platform Selection Finalized, Initial Security Measures Implemented	GRENA, MES/EMIS

Appendix 2

#	ACTIVITIES	2025		2026			
		Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q6
1	Policy Development & Stakeholder Engagement	■	■	■	■		
2	Quality Assurance Mechanisms		■	■	■	■	
3	Awareness and Capacity Building		■	■	■	■	
4	Integration into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)		■	■	■	■	■
5	Baseline Data Collection for Monitoring & Evaluation		■	■	■		
6	Curriculum Development	■	■	■	■	■	
7	QA Pilot Implementation & Review		■	■	■		
8	Expanded Training & Toolkit Development				■	■	
9	Draft policy framework for micro-credentials		■	■			
10	Launch of Pilot Micro-Credentials		■	■	■		

#	Task						
11	Impact Evaluation & Refinement			■	■	■	
12	Scaling & Institutional Adoption					■	■
13	Continuous Monitoring & International Alignment		■	■	■	■	■
14	Technological Infrastructure Development		■	■	■	■	■