

Condensed Guidelines for setting up Aurora micro-credentials

AURORA



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What are micro-credentials (MCs)?¹

According to the European Council Recommendation (2022)², MCs are defined as “*the record of the learning outcomes acquired following a small volume of learning.*”

Crucially, “*These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria.*”

MCs should also observe the following characteristics:

- “*Designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs*
- *Stand-alone or combined into larger credentials*
- *Underpinned with quality insurance following agreed standards*”

Why use MCs?

- MCs can either complement or contribute to traditional qualifications offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- They allow for the targeted and flexible acquisition of in-demand competences.
- They may help HEIs promote the internationalization of study programmes.
- The standardized certificate delivered upon completion of an MC can be used in a variety of contexts (higher education, professional context).
- By the quality assurance and recognition requirements attached to them, MCs pave the way for a European Degree.³

Who can offer MCs?

- Any accredited HEI
 - **EITHER** alone **OR** in a joint offer with other HEIs (within Aurora)
 - **AND/OR** in a joint offer with non-HEI external partners (e.g. companies, NGOs)
- A variety of “providers” from (non-)formal learning environments

Design & issuance principles

Learning outcome approach:

- Focus on learners & learning outcomes, supporting quality-assured permeability

Learning outcome-based assessment:

- Supports learners in crossing (national/disciplinary/learning) borders
- Flexible & personalized learning
- The [Aurora Competence Framework](#) can be used as a toolkit for a shared descriptive language and for the verification (assessment) of learning outcomes

¹ The present document summarizes the original “Guidelines for setting up Aurora micro-credentials”, issued 12/09/2024, and retrieved from: <https://www.uibk.ac.at/en/international/aurora/aurora-european-universities-alliance/micro-credentials/>

² European Council Recommendation on micro-credentials (2022). Retrieved from: <https://www.europeansources.info/record/council-recommendation-on-a-european-approach-to-micro-credentials-for-lifelong-learning-and-employability/>

³ Proposal for a Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education (2024). Retrieved from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/161c2e3e-ec48-11ee-8e14-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/>

Subject related learning outcomes:

- HEI taxonomies & descriptors, compatible with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)/Dublin descriptors
- EQF to label levels of learning outcomes
- The [Aurora Competence Framework](#) (ACF) can be used as a toolkit for a shared descriptive language and for the verification (assessment) of learning outcomes

Non-subject related learning outcomes can be described using [LOUIS](#).

Scope⁴ ranges from 3 to 10 ECTS credits.

Quality & Quality Assurance⁴:

- All Aurora universities must assess and describe their internal processes' suitability for MCs and modify them if necessary
- Internal quality assurance procedures secure & describe the MC life cycle
- Those must align with the European Standard and Guidelines (ESG)
- Educational Hubs (TT2.1-2.4 & WP3) ensure consistency across Aurora
- Also involved: TT2.5 (accreditation), TT6.1 (digital aspects), WP4
- MCs must meet at least Level 2 of [Aurorisation](#)
- ACF description and monitoring tools: [BEVI](#), [LOUIS](#), [SEIZMIC](#)

The MC Coordination Committee reviews courses and addresses these questions:

- Are the courses part of accredited formal education and compliant with ESG standards?
- Is there an internal quality assurance procedure in place?
- Is there a system for assessing and verifying the learning outcomes?

Transparent & clear information about the Aurora MCs offered must be made available (e.g. AURORA digital Campus, [Aurora Course Catalogue](#)).

Level allocation:

- In most cases it is not possible to quantify the NQF or EQF level in an MC;
- **BUT** the level achieved must be transparently described (learning outcomes).

Assessment:

- The learning outcomes must be assessed against clear and valid criteria.
- Assessment must not be tied too closely to specific content or learning contexts.

Recognition & portability:

- Aurora MCs completed as part of degree programmes should be seamlessly recognized as part of regular studies.
- Aurora MCs completed in non-formal learning settings can lead to validation in accordance with the respective study law regulations.

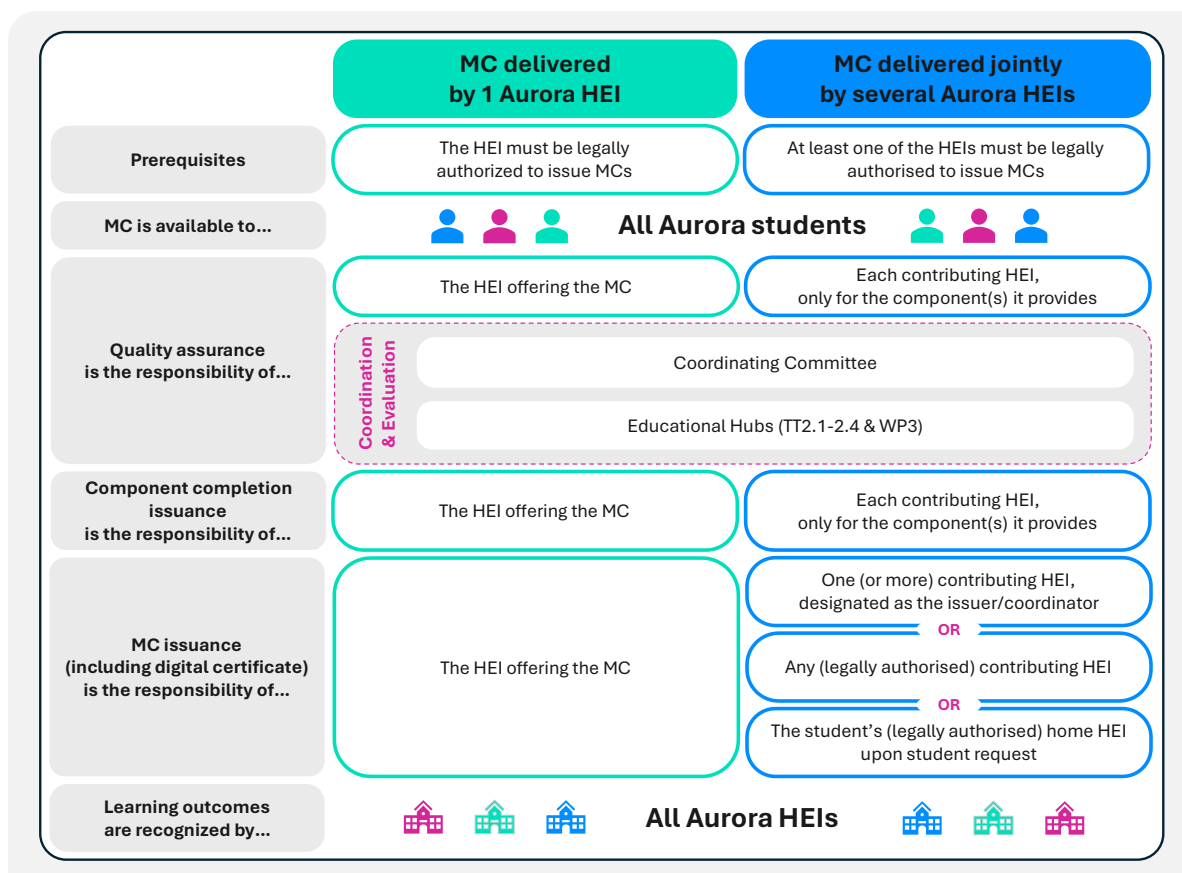
Issuing:

- At term: tamper-proof “digital wallet” (see TT6.1)
- In the meantime: officially signed electronic documents or badges that meet European standards for MC description

MCs are **valid indefinitely**, unless expiration is inherent to the specific profile/objective.

⁴ These requirements are specific to Aurora.

Possible scenarios for realization⁵



⁵ These are hypothetical configurations that may be considered based on legal, practical and digital feasibility in the context of a particular MC.