

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التربية والتعليم

Credit Bearing Micro Credentials (CBMCs) Policy

United Arab Emirates

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Authorised by: NQC/CAA

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Definition	4
CBMC Characteristics	4
Objectives of CBMCs	5
Principles of CBMCs	5
CBMCs Elements	6
Recognition of CBMCs	7
Assessment of Learning Outcomes	7
Quality Assurance	7
Roles and Responsibilities	8
Glossary	9

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	2

Introduction

The UAE continues to develop an innovative education system that promotes lifelong learning and access to education and flexible learning opportunities for learners.

In order to respond to societal challenges whilst keeping abreast of economic and technological changes, upskilling and reskilling become essential factors when planning to meet the needs of ever-changing employment markets. Therefore, a micro-credential policy is established to support and improve the education, training, lifelong learning, and employability eco-systems.

the UAE aims to develop, promote and implement micro-credentials, which represent a small subset of an existing education offering(s) or standalone packages, as means to strengthen opportunities for learning and employability.

This policy sets out a national unified micro-credential system as below:

- Definition
- Principles
- Establish critical information on the design, delivery, and issuance of micro-credentials to facilitate their uptake and pave the pathway for their implementation.
- Outline the quality assurance requirements.

This policy will be under periodic review to enhance and refine its content and direction. Reviews will solicit the experience gained by different stakeholders, e.g., providers, learners, market leaders...etc. to continuously improve the concepts and delivery of CBMC.

This policy is applicable only to credit bearing micro-credentials as these are subject to the accreditation and regulation of the MoE.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	3

Definition

The policy defines a credit bearing micro-credential as a recognition of a small subset of an assessed learning. CBMCs consist of learning outcomes that a learner has achieved through assessment against transparent and clearly defined standards.

Micro-credentials can be either credit-bearing (CBMC) or non-credit-bearing. Non-credit bearing means no credit is awarded upon completion, and that these credentials are not stackable or applicable towards a full accredited qualification or degree. However, they may form part of a claim for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) depending on individual circumstances. Typical non-credit bearing micro-credentials include training such as short courses which are non-formal and are non-stackable.

Credit-bearing means that a credit is awarded upon completion of a course/unit, including its assessment requirements. The course(s)/unit(s) constituting the CBMC must correspond to a level in *QFEmirates*. CBMCs may be stackable and recognised towards meeting the admission requirements and studying for an accredited qualification or degree. CBMCs range between 1-12 credit hours.

Courses/units leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with *QFEmirates-approved* strands of learning outcome statements that respond to societal, personal, cultural, and labour market needs.

CBMCs (when achieved) are owned by the learner, portable, and can be shared. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards.

CBMC Characteristics

CBMCs have specific characteristics and typically represent a shorter or narrower engagement with a subject. These characteristics are as follows:

- Offered across all subject areas
- Offered in all settings in which formal learning may occur, whether on-site, virtual, or blended
- Credit-bearing against a recognised level of the *QFEmirates*
- Assessed according to defined standards
- Do not constitute a full qualification/degree
- Subject to best practices and defined quality assurance standards via the application of internal and external quality assurance processes.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	4

Objectives of CBMCs

The objectives of CBMCs is to support, improve, and promote the following:

- Address market needs.
- Upskilling/reskilling
- Knowledge and innovation ecosystem
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Access to education for all learners (including people of determination, elderly, minorities, low-qualified/skilled workers, and geographically remote)
- Collaboration between employers and education and training institutions
- Flexible learning pathways
- Transition and employment mobility
- Life-long learning.

Principles of CBMCs

CBMCs are learner owned and are driven to meet employability and industry needs. They are specific to help learners build the required work-related competencies. Delivery is brief and designed for upskilling, reskilling, and supporting continual professional development.

Fundamental principles of micro-credentials are as follows:

- Short period of time
- Credit-bearing
- Assessment based
- Learning pathways
- Portable
- Stackable
- Engaged with Industry
- Adherence to quality assurance standards.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	5

CBMCs Elements

A learner who achieves a CBMC, must be issued with a CBMC certificate and a transcript. The standard elements contained within a micro-credential certification are as follows:

Mandatory elements:

- Learner name
- Title of the micro-credential
- Location of the issuer (City and Emirate)
- Awarding body
- Course/Unit Learning outcomes
- Level of learning outcomes against the *QFEmirates*
- Credit value of the CBMC
- Mode of delivery e.g, on-site, virtual, or blended
- Type of Assessment.
- Quality assurance methods applied to the micro-credential
- Date of issue
- Certificate Number (Unique number)

Optional elements:

- Grade/ Achievement
- Stackability options (stand-alone or stackable towards another credential)
- Additional information, where relevant.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	6

Recognition of CBMCs

The UAE aims to support the development of a seamless system which provides a transparent and fair recognition of CBMCs through a standardised approach through which CBMCs are developed, promoted, delivered, and awarded/accredited.

It is essential that transparency by education and training institutions is maintained to provide accurate, reliable, and well-maintained information in order to enable recognition. For this to be possible, CBMCs elements must be properly documented to facilitate the relevant evaluation by stakeholders.

Records of CBMCs should be in digital format to support recognition. Licensed/Accredited education and training institutions and external quality assurers need to ensure digital systems are established to enable Stackability, portability, transparency, and reliability of information and verification of authenticity.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes of CBMCs must be assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria performed by the Licensed/Accredited education and training institution. Learning outcomes are measured through assessment methods and processes.

Quality Assurance

CBMCs are subject to the same quality assurance standards and evaluation as that of conventional qualifications to ensure portability, provide value, and ensure trust in the achieved credential. Quality assurance is essential to uphold confidence by national and international employers and education and training providers.

It is the role of accreditation and awarding organisations such as CAA/NQC/AWBs to support licensed/accredited institutions to develop their policies and processes for quality assurance and perform External Quality Assurance (EQA) processes to certify that the targeted standards are met. EQAs must ensure that licensed/accredited institutions delivering CBMCs have established reliable systems to monitor the delivery and quality of CBMCs.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	7

Roles and Responsibilities

CBMCs are delivered to learners by licensed/accredited education and training institutions which have been licensed/accredited by the MoE - CAA/NQC

Authorities accrediting micro-credentials are required to promote, support and quality assure accredited institutions delivering CBMCs. The main responsibility of the quality provision lies within the respective education and training institution. This will be subject to additional quality assurance processes by the relevant authority.

Institutions wishing to deliver CBMCs must apply to the relevant authority for approval to add the CBMCs to the scope of delivery prior to advertising and/or commencement of delivery.

The relevant authorities are as follows:

- TVET CBMCs: NQC
- Higher Education CBMCs: CAA

CBMC providers should provide prospective students with information about the CBMC they offer. They should clearly define the course/unit specifications and provide relevant support and guidance to learners.

The following information should be provided to the learners, but not limited to:

- Entry requirements
- Learning outcomes
- Content
- Workload
- Delivery mode
- Assessment
- Learning pathways
- CBMC Title
- CBMC level
- CBMC credits hours

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	8

Glossary

Accreditation of a Qualification/program- The quality assured process through which the qualification/program regulator confirms that a qualification/program conforms to the CAA/NQC standards.

Accreditation of an Education and Training Provider - A formal, and transparent, quality assured process, based on nationally and internationally accepted standards, through which an organisation is granted recognition to deliver education and training qualifications.

Credit Bearing Micro-credential (CBMC) - is a small subset of learning that the learner achieves. The course(s)/unit(s) constituting the CBMC must correspond to a level in *QFEmirates*. CBMCs and range between 1-12 credit hours. For more information, please read the definition part of this policy.

NON credit bearing micro credentials - is a small subset of learning that the learner achieves. No credit is awarded upon completion, and these credentials are not stackable or applicable towards a full accredited qualification or degree. For more information, please read the definition part of this policy.

Formal learning - planned learning that derives from activities within a structural learning setting such as, school, college, or training institution.

Informal learning - intentional or non-intentional learning gained from daily activities and experiences which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support

Non-formal learning - Learning that takes place through a structured and/or unstructured process of learning such as workshops, courses, and e-learning programmes, that does not lead to a formally recognised qualification.

Portability - The ability for a learners to access their CBMCs through a reliable and valid system and to share the credential with a party of their choice with the ability to verify its authenticity.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	9

Recognition- The process whereby qualifications/programs are aligned to a level in *QFEmirates* and approved for the purposes of employment or access to education and training in the UAE.

Stackability - The possibility, where relevant, to combine different CBMCs and build logically upon each other. Stacking does not create an automatic entitlement to a qualification or a degree. Such decisions are made by MoE, CAA or NQC, accredited/licensed institutions in line with their awarding policies and procedures.

Validation - The confirmation through the provision of objective evidence that an education and/or training course or program is appropriate for the attainment of knowledge, skill and/or aspects of competence as appropriate per *QFEmirates* levels.

Document Title	Version	Date	Owner	Approved by	Review Date/s	Page
Official MoE credit bearing Micro-Credentials Policy for the UAE	1	Dec 2022	NQC	VETAC / CAA	Dec 2023	10



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