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Micro-credential Framework

The framework below was developed by Imperial's Micro-credential Working Group and endorsed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee in September 2025, with reference to guidance published by national and international agencies including the European Commission, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It will form the basis for the development of a range of pilot micro-credentials, supported by further guidance currently under development.

Framework area	Imperial Micro-credentials are…
1. Definition & Purpose	Micro-credentials are records of credit awarded for self-contained packages of learning that are rigorously assessed, and which equip learners with focused, impactful knowledge, and skills. At Imperial, our micro-credentials are designed to empower individuals to thrive in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine, and Business (STEMMB) settings, while also drawing on humanities and social sciences perspectives to enrich understanding of the human, ethical and societal dimensions of our core disciplines. This integrated approach sparks curiosity and creativity in our learners, advancing personal, organisational, and social development. Micro-credentials are flexible, accessible building blocks that can be stacked towards formal qualifications aligned with the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), allowing learners to tailor their education to their goals and circumstances. Purpose: • To champion lifelong learning and accelerate upskilling, enhancing employability in a rapidly evolving, tech-enabled world. • To respond swiftly to urgent industry and societal needs, particularly in STEMMB, by delivering agile and future-ready education. • To serve as flexible pathways into undergraduate or postgraduate study, including reskilling across disciplines. • To embody Imperial's *Science for Humanity* vision, using scientific excellence, enriched by insights from humanities and social sciences, to tackle grand global challenges and shape a sustainable, healthy, intelligent, and resilient future. • To align with Imperial's strategic pillars: fostering talent, driving research impact, supporting enterprise, and engaging society at every level.

2. Curriculum design and delivery	**Learner-centred**: Designed for a diverse range of learners, offering flexibility, accessibility, and global reach. Flexible modes of delivery and assessment facilitate learning around full time work, caring and other responsibilities.
	Authentic and engaging: Embedding opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge through activities such as peer discussions, use of case studies and real-world tasks that encourage critical thinking and problem solving. Assessment tasks are authentic and constructively aligned with learning outcomes, making a positive contribution to the learning experience.
	Accessible and inclusive learning, teaching and assessment: Supporting access and participation through universal design principles and compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Formative assessment will be used to promote assessment literacy (particularly for non-traditional learners).
	Outcome-based: Leading to the development of impactful knowledge, skills and behaviours with real-world applications, expressed as clear and measurable learning outcomes
	Industry-relevant and market-aligned: Developed in consultation with external experts (such as Imperial Business Partners) and, where relevant, aligned with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements
	Regularly updated: Continually enhanced with input from internal and external experts to ensure that content remains up to date and meets learner and employer needs
	Research-informed: Grounded in Imperial's academic excellence and innovation
	Innovative in delivery: Using cutting-edge learning technologies and pedagogical approaches, supported by the Interdisciplinary EdTech Lab and Digital Media Lab
	Stackable and transferable: Have standalone value but where relevant, contributing to or complementing macro-credentials (i.e. certificates, diplomas or degrees)
	Quality-assured: Aligned with institutional and national quality standards, including the Framework for Higher Education Regulations (FHEQ) and HE Credit Framework for England
	Learner Support: Access to flexible learning resources and tutorial support appropriate for the volume of learning and level of engagement. Facilitation of peer support and community building.

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3. Structure, Credit, Level & Duration	**Credit value**: 2.5 to 15 ECTS in multiples of 2.5 ECTS
	Level: Level 4-7 depending on audience
	Duration: up to 6 months depending on credit value and mode of delivery
	Assessment: Summative assessment will be proportionate to the volume of credit and formative assessment will be used to promote assessment literacy (particularly for non-traditional learners).
	Award: Digital badge plus formal micro-credential transcript from Imperial.
	Validity: For the purpose of stacking or transferring to a formal Imperial qualification, credit normally has a currency of 5 years, after which further evidence of current knowledge/skills/competencies may be required.
4. Quality Assurance & Governance	**Approval process**: Coherent suites of micro-credentials and the awards to which they contribute to be approved together through the university's programme approval process. Unbundling of existing approved programmes into micro-credentials will follow an enhanced version of the major programme modification process. In some circumstances, individual micro-credentials may be approved using the short course approval process.
	Learning Outcomes: Devised with reference to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)'s micro-credential characteristics statement and relevant subject benchmark statements. Proportionate in number to the volume of learning required.
	Academic standards: Subject to Imperial's assessment regulations. Optional industry/external review for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)/Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation or recognition.
	Monitoring and review: Annual monitoring incorporating course data and learner feedback. Risk-based review as required.
	Accreditation: Designed to facilitate PSRB recognition/fit with professional accreditation frameworks where appropriate.
	Validity: Include training and checks to secure academic integrity aligned with those for other Imperial awards.
	Governance: Co-owned by departments/faculties and Imperial Lifelong Learning with reference to agreed financial models. Lifelong Learning Education Committee to maintain strategic oversight of Imperial's micro-credential portfolio. Dedicated marketing support provided by Lifelong Learning.
	Casework: Subject to Imperial's student complaints and appeals processes.

5. Recognition, Portability and Stackability	**Credential Metadata**: • Aligned to 1 Edtech Comprehensive Learner Record Standard **Digital Badging**: • Through Learning Management System (LMS) or a 3rd party platform such as Credly or Badgr, with linkable metadata to showcase skills **Portability**: • Recognition within CPD frameworks and professional certification pathways as relevant to the subject area • Alignment with European Digital Credentials for Learning/Europass, or similar digital wallet initiatives **Stackability**: • Stackable towards Imperial Higher Education (HE) certificates, diplomas or degrees as specified within each approved programme specification • Where relevant, stackable towards smaller (7.5 or 15 ECTS) industry-focused professional certificates issued by Imperial
6. Partnerships	Partners for development and delivery of micro-credentials are likely to include: • Imperial Ecosystems Partners: White City Alliance, Imperial Business Partners, and other strategic collaborations including local skills partnerships • Leading industry accreditors in high skills need areas such as cloud computing e.g. Microsoft/AWS • Professional bodies and regulators: developing course content to meet ongoing training needs • Delivered in partnership with international OPMs where these facilitate access to new markets.