

A milestone reached: ECIU University is the first European Alliance to issue e-sealed micro-credentials

**ECIU University position paper
on e-sealed micro-credentials**

23 October 2023

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In a historic European first and building on ECIU University's micro-credential journey, the European University Alliance is rolling out centralised, tamper-proof micro-credentials to its learners. E-sealed by the ECIU (European Consortium of Innovative Universities) and issued using the EDC (European Digital Credentials) platform, micro-credentials offer students new opportunities to broaden their horizons and gain practical skills through real-life challenges.

Centralized Micro-Credentials: The Important Benchmark

ECIU University learning opportunities are about gaining new skills and competencies, connecting with peers or potential employers, and having an impact on the societies where we live and work. These opportunities are also part of the University's wider micro-credential vision that aims to encourage active citizenship and empower learners. 'Micro-credentials are short, industry and society-relevant certified learning opportunities that are credit-bearing in a higher education context', explains Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Director of Micro-Credential Strategy and Innovation at Dublin City University and ECIU University Micro-Credential Lead.

'These learning opportunities can be accessed via our central Engage platform. They are designed to help learners develop new skills and competencies in a focused, supported, and flexible way.'

As a forerunner in the European dimension of micro-credentials, ECIU University is now taking another leap in this direction – by issuing centralized micro-credentials with an ECIU e-seal for their learners in Europe.

'Learners will receive non-forgable and tamper-proof micro-credentials that meet European standards for digital credentials, with their quality assured by ECIU University members'; notes Padmasheela Kiiskilä, researcher from Tampere University and activity lead of micro-credential platform.

Reaching this benchmark has included a variety of steps. Among them, engaging with the European Digital Credential Early Adopter Program and deep collaboration with experts and practitioners.

Associate Professor Henri Pirkkalainen, ECIU University activity leader for learner guidance, says centralisation is the key advantage here.

'Although many Alliance partners will eventually issue micro-credentials from their own university or national systems, the Engage platform's centralized solution removes many bottlenecks for member universities,' he explains. "From now on, they do not need to make major adjustments to their processes and technology base to issue micro-credentials'.

Micro-credentials issued by the ECIU University detail the competencies obtained during the learning process, including expertise level and ESCO (European skills, competencies, and occupations). They can also be stored on the Europass platform for learners to access and manage easily.

Through the ECIU University Engage platform, students are able to navigate personalized learning pathways, supported by tools and functionalities such as motivation scan and competence passport. Meanwhile, the competence passport facilitates learners in tracking the progress of their competence and skill development in their profile. All of this helps students shape a personalized learning path and enhance their employability, providing support on their life-long journey.

ECIU University's vision 2030

Micro-credentials are already changing the game, providing enhanced opportunities for flexibility – but there's even more to come. Now, further investigation of gamification and artificial intelligence techniques to support and assist learners is underway.

'Developing co-constructed micro-credentials with industry and societal stakeholders is a key element of the ECIU University's 2030 vision, so it will play an even bigger role in the future', adds Mairéad Nic Giolla Mhichíl.

'We hope to continue to pave the wave for micro-credentials in Europe and today's announcement is another important milestone both for the wider European University mission but also for progressing the European Approach to Micro-Credentials'.

On November 17th for a **webinar** was organised on centralized micro-credentials that offered a broader look at the milestone and the future of micro-credentials. ECIU University is an alliance of the innovative universities united by a joint goal to make an impact. Co-funded by EU and being one of the first alliances to join European Universities Initiative, **ECIU University** is an ecosystem where learners, teachers, and researchers work with cities, communities, and businesses to solve real-life challenges – and foster change.