



# HEFCW-funded QAA Micro-credentials Special Interest Group (MIC.SIG)

## Terms of Reference

### Background

1. QAA has been commissioned by HEFCW to support and facilitate a sector-owned virtual Tertiary Working Group on Micro-credentials led by Wales, which is also open to tertiary education providers in Scotland and Northern Ireland and employers. The group will henceforth be called the *HEFCW-funded Micro-credentials Special Interest Group (MIC.SIG)*.

### Purpose

2. The principal aims of the MIC.SIG are to:
  - a. Support the tertiary sector in ensuring that micro-credential students and learners experience the highest possible quality of education in line with other traditional tertiary education provision.
  - b. Contribute to developing excellence, independence, and trust in the quality assurance and enhancement of micro-credential provision using the QAA's focus areas of standards, leadership and quality assurance and enhancement as pillars to guide the work of the MIC.SIG.
  - c. Promote the use of the QAA Characteristics Statement to tertiary education providers developing and maintaining micro-credential provision, as well as supporting any further developments to the Statement.

### Key Objectives

3. The key objectives of the MIC.SIG are:
  - a. **Capacity Building** - to share good practice, and provide information, training and/or materials to support members' knowledge and professional development.
  - b. **Advocacy** – to develop and maintain relations with stakeholders (including funders, employers, students, learners) to influence national and institutional micro-credential policy.
  - c. **Research and Knowledge** – to monitor developments in the education sector regarding micro-credentials and disseminate this intelligence to the wider sector.

### Working Principles

4. In support of its purpose, the MIC.SIG will embrace the principle of being collaborative in working in partnership with tertiary providers, including through constructive challenge, supporting members with enhancement while respecting academic autonomy.
5. The MIC.SIG will focus on:
  - a. Building a bridge of trust through effective and respectful communication.

- b. Establishing a shared purpose and common areas of interest.
- c. Developing diversity, by encouraging everyone to participate in problem-solving.
- d. Accepting and encouraging initiative, creativity, and self-improvement.
- e. Developing a culture of information sharing.
- f. Creating transparency in decision-making for the effectiveness of solutions.
- g. Being impartial.

## Chairs

- 6. The Group will be chaired by a sector representative appointed by QAA.

## Membership

- 7. All tertiary education providers in Wales are invited to nominate up to two representatives to the MIC.SIG.
- 8. QAA will work with providers/funders in Scotland and Northern Ireland to encourage representation from these nations.
- 9. The group will be open to employers involved in the development of Micro-credentials.

## Meeting Schedule

- 10. The group will meet termly, or as appropriate, online.
- 11. Papers and resources will be made available online.

## Reporting

- 12. The MIC.SIG is a QAA facilitated group funded by HEFCW and will report to and is accountable to QAA and HEFCW.

## Approval and Review

- 13. The MIC.SIG shall approve and review these Terms of Reference annually, usually at the first meeting of each new academic cycle.

## Secretariat

Director of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, QAA or nominated deputy.

**Effective Date:** 12.03.24

**Review:** 12.03.25

**Contact:** Holly Thomas, Quality & Enhancement Specialist, QAA