

## CAULLT virtual conference 25 & 26 March 2021

### ABSTRACTS (in presentation order)

#### Thursday 25 March

**11.30 am:** Keynote speaker: *Snapshot: Micro-credentials in Australia and beyond in 2021*, Emeritus Professor Beverley Oliver (Deakin University):

This presentation will be an update on micro-credential scholarship and implementation programs - broadly and locally. As well as mapping emerging definitions in Europe, Canada, the UK and US, the presentation will include a scan of more recent micro-credential innovations underway at Australian universities.

**12.20pm:** *The state of micro-credentials implementation and practice in Australasian higher education*, Dr Ratna Selvaratnam and Prof Michael Sankey (ACODE).

Micro-credentialing is rapidly growing globally as learning that is both life-long and life-wide, and this has only accelerated due to COVID-19. To understand what this means for higher education, The Australasian Council on Open, Distance and eLearning (ACODE, 2020) conducted two surveys on the implementation and practice of micro-credentialing in the Australasian sector. With the surveys conducted a year apart, before and after the pandemic, significant changes are noted in the delivery of learning. The results show an increased interest and intention in rolling out micro-credentials, as evidenced, particularly, in work undertaken at the policy level. What is evidenced in the results is that this form of credentialing will continue to grow rapidly. Higher education institutions are investing in infrastructure and establishing working groups that are placing a governance model for micro-credentials in universities, while ensuring dedicated resourcing is directed to this endeavour. Moving forward institutions will require significant planning and coordinated delivery at both the local and global level if the potential benefits of implementing micro-credentialing, such as portability and stackability over time, are to be realised.

**12.50 pm:** *Volume-of-learning: a model for micro-credentials?* Prof Rowena Harper, Dr Katrina Strampel (Edith Cowan University).

While the AQF review recommends increased use of micro-credentials across the Australian education system, it recognises that volume of learning remains an unresolved challenge to developing micro-credentials that are AQF compliant. The review recommends a change to how volume of learning is measured (in hours rather than years), however we suggest that resolves only part of the problem. Moreover, the debate about volume of learning runs parallel to issues of credit and how micro-credential credit might be counted, recognised and aligned to AQF qualification levels. The AQF review suggests a move towards a national credit point system, based on the 'notional average hours' needed to achieve learning outcomes. This would create a 'common currency' for credit transfer to enable portability, however Universities Australia has expressed concern with the implication that recognising volume may become mandatory. At ECU, our work to help convert post-graduate, professional short-courses into for-credit micro-credentials – a common

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starting point for many universities – has highlighted the need for a clearer and more innovative and flexible model. In this presentation we present a brief critical analysis of the AQF review. The aim is to generate robust discussion among participants and gather feedback to determine whether CAULLT, as a collective, might contribute to the national volume of learning discussion.

Friday 26 March

**11.40 am:** *Micro credentials in a CPD environment* Duncan O’Hara (Massey University).

Although micro-credentials are often associated with the for-credit market, an institution’s CPD offer provides a rich environment to use micro-credentials to increase staff confidence and competence in teaching and learning. Massey University has embarked on a journey to encourage and incentivise staff development through a micro-credential for CPD model. This model sets out to amplify the benefits of staff development, provide a clear and coherent development pathway and to socialise micro-credentials more generally. This presentation will explore the model and touch on the wider micro-credential environment in New Zealand.

**12.20 pm:** *Framing credentials for HE educators*, A/P Maree Dinan-Thompson, Dr Andrea Lynch (James Cook University).

This CAULLT-funded project is exploring a framework for micro-credentials for educators in higher education. Research has shown many variables to consider including the Australian Qualification Framework (knowledge, skills, application, general capabilities), volume of learning (notional hours), continuing professional development units, assessment, validation of evidence for RPL, stackability and portability across institutions. Important too is the Higher Education Standards Framework Domain 3: Teaching, which outlines capabilities of teachers to include contemporary knowledge, continuing scholarship, relevant teaching skills, and provisioning of professional development. The influence of the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), and growth of institutional engagement with the Advanced Higher Education Fellowship scheme, is an additional influence. This presentation will share descriptions and classifications of professional knowledge, skills and application for educators in higher education to enable a credentialing framework, with institutional flexibility.