

South Australian micro-credentials pilot

South Australian Skills Commission Endorsement Guidelines

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<https://skillscommission.sa.gov.au/careers-and-pathways/micro-credentials>



South
Australian
Skills
COMMISSION

South Australian Skills Commission Micro-credentials Pilot Guidelines

These guidelines outline the process for industry-endorsed micro-credential courses in South Australia.

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Overview

Importance of micro-credentials for individuals and businesses

Nationally recognised training is an important pathway for post-secondary education, supporting strong educational and employment outcomes for individuals and labour market mobility.

Industry has said it requires a modern, flexible and accessible training system capable of meeting current and future workforce skill needs. The 2019 review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), led by Professor Noonan, stated that future workers are increasingly likely to access formal, non-formal and informal learning through a process of lifelong learning. The availability of courses to meet this demand is likely to increase rapidly¹.

Australian businesses are increasingly relying on shorter forms of training and non-accredited training to meet their skill needs. According to NCVER's 2021 survey of 5,615 Australian employers on the use of the VET system, nearly 62 per cent of businesses could not find any comparable nationally recognised training available. More than 52 per cent of these employers used non-accredited training to train their employees in 2021². The survey also showed that South Australian businesses are increasingly relying on shorter forms of training to meet their skill needs, with 57.2 per cent of SA employers providing non-accredited training to their employees in 2021.

There is an opportunity to strengthen connections between nationally accredited units of competency and non-accredited training to provide individuals with a meaningful certificate that represents the learning outcomes achieved³.

We have heard from industry, and from training and education providers, that important features needed in South Australia's approach to micro-credentials include:

- ensuring relevant industry standards are met and learning outcomes can be validated
- alignment with AQF where possible
- co-design and endorsement by industry and professional organisations
- contemporary industry relevance to meet current and emerging skill needs
- certification of learning that verifies the knowledge, skills and attributes achieved
- new pathways to further education and training, including full qualifications.

Micro-credentials play a role in a range of settings, including work readiness, upskilling and reskilling, transitioning workers, additional skills, and developing knowledge outside qualifications. They provide an opportunity for people to support changing workplaces by enabling the provision of focused training for new or transitioning employees in specific skills to better support businesses and industries to adopt innovations and improve productivity.

Individuals and businesses benefit from participating in and developing micro-credentials. They provide individuals with an opportunity for lifelong learning through shorter courses and a credential that is recognised by industry. For businesses, they provide timely access to contemporary industry endorsed training that meets current and future skill needs.

1 The 2019 review of AQF led by Professor Noonan [<https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-reviews-and-consultations/resources/review-australian-qualifications-framework-final-report-2019>, page 55]

2 NCVER, Employers' use and views of the VET system 2021 [https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0042/9669183/Employers_use_and_views_of_the_VET_system_2021.pdf]

3 The 2019 review of AQF suggested that AQF Pathways Policy should be revised to define and provide for recognition of shorter form credentials, including micro-credentials, towards AQF qualifications [<https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-reviews-and-consultations/resources/review-australian-qualifications-framework-final-report-2019>, page 11]

What are micro-credentials?

Micro-credentials are bite-sized courses linked to industry needs that are relevant for people at all stages of their career. Extensive industry engagement across South Australia resulted in the following definition:

A micro-credential is shorter than a qualification and certifies the assessed learning of a defined set of skills, knowledge and attributes.

In South Australia, micro-credentials can include:

- nationally recognised units of competency⁴
- nationally accredited skill sets⁵
- skill clusters or local skill sets to meet specific industry or individual needs
- non-accredited training that is industry endorsed to meet specific industry or individual needs.

All micro-credentials include a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, training provider delivery standards, and evidence of current or anticipated need by industry, business or the community. On successful completion of a micro-credential, learners are issued with a recognised credential by their training or education provider.

A pilot initiative to explore new industry training approaches

The South Australian micro-credentials pilot is an initiative enabling the South Australian Skills Commission (the Commission) to endorse micro-credentials, upon request by industry proponents.

The South Australian micro-credentials pilot will explore innovative approaches to training that comprise a mix of existing units of competency from National Training

Packages and/or non-accredited training responding to the needs of industry, the workforce and individuals.

The process for Commission endorsement of micro-credentials will continue to evolve and be refined to improve its effectiveness for individuals and industry.

4 The specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training package.

5 A single unit of competency or a combination of units of competency from a training package that link to a licensing or regulatory requirement, or a defined industry need.



Developing a new South Australian micro-credential

When developing a new micro-credential course, prior to it being considered for endorsement by the Commission, the industry proponents require to ensure the following conditions are met:

1. Review existing nationally recognised skills sets, accredited courses, and endorsed micro-credentials in South Australia and other Australian jurisdictions, and provide evidence to demonstrate the proposed training addresses a **genuine gap** in the market: <https://training.gov.au/>
2. Clearly identify target cohorts, entry requirements and learning outcomes for the proposed micro-credential.
3. Be able to demonstrate industry need for the proposed micro-credential course by businesses in one or more industries, including written material and identifying referees with relevant expertise.
4. Identify suitable delivery facilities, physical resources and learner support systems to enable sustained delivery of the proposed micro-credential course.
5. New South Australian micro-credential course material should be developed in consultation with relevant technical experts, industry practitioners and training providers.

For non-accredited⁶ components of the micro-credential course, the following additional conditions apply:

6. Training and assessment material should include learning requirements, assessment conditions, modes of delivery, performance standards for trainers and assessors, and other relevant material to support delivery of the training.
7. Identify any copyright and licensing arrangements, along with the proposed micro-credential course material, that enable other training and education providers to deliver the proposed micro-credential course.
8. Identify connections between the learning outcomes and the job, along with the equivalent AQF level where relevant.

Applicants are encouraged to review the South Australian Skills Commission micro-credentials checklist at <https://skillscommission.sa.gov.au/careers-and-pathways/micro-credentials> to ensure relevant material has been prepared prior to seeking Commission endorsement.

Certification and recognition of the credential

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) certification and recognition requirements continue to apply to any nationally recognised units of competency within an industry endorsed micro-credential.

Non-accredited subjects or components within the Commission-endorsed micro-credential course must be certified by the education provider or registered training organisation (RTO) delivering the course in accordance with training and assessment standards endorsed by the Commission.

Certification of an individual's attainment of learning outcomes, assessment type, and competency achieved through the completion of a micro-credential course should:

- verify and validate that specific skills, knowledge, experience, and/or attributes have been achieved
- be portable and could contribute towards a formal qualification.

⁶ Non-accredited training refers to training that is not government quality assured and not recognised or accredited by the Australian vocational education and training accreditation authorities

Support provided to develop a new South Australian micro-credential

Skills SA within the Department for Education (Skills SA) can provide support to develop new accredited and non-accredited micro-credentials that address skills gaps in priority sectors or meet emerging industry needs.

Skills SA will prioritise assistance for courses that support South Australia's economic growth through a skilled and capable workforce and/or startup community.

Organisations are invited to submit an expression of interest (EOI) to seek assistance from Skills SA at [South Australian Micro-Credentials](#).

Skills SA will contact the proponent organisation within two business days of receiving the EOI to begin discussing options for assistance.

South Australian Skills Commission endorsement of micro-credentials

The Commission meets monthly and will consider requests for endorsement and provide timely responses to proponents. The Commission's endorsement provides industry with recognition that the micro-credential courses meet contemporary industry and learner needs.

Proponents who have developed South Australian micro-credential courses that demonstrate industry need can request endorsement by contacting the Commission.

To discuss a concept for a new micro-credential or for assistance with developing a proposal for endorsement, contact Skills SA.

The Commission endorsement lasts for approximately 12 - 18 months, though the duration may vary depending on the pace of change and specific needs of the relevant industry, or the nature of the course. The duration is set by the Commission when it makes its endorsement determination.

Endorsement by the Commission is limited to providing an assurance that:

- the learning outcomes will meet contemporary industry needs
- learners will gain job relevant skills, knowledge and attributes that are recognised by industry.

Responsibility for maintaining the quality of the training remains with the owner of the endorsed micro-credential in line with relevant state and national requirements.

The Commission endorsed micro-credential courses are listed on the Commission's website at [Register of Endorsed Micro-credentials - South Australian Skills Commission](#) and describe the course and its copyright owner. Individuals or organisations retain copyright on the courses endorsed by the Commission.

Principles for endorsement

The principles for endorsement have been adapted to meet local needs from the national Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy

South Australian Skills Commission's micro-credential endorsement principles

Principle 1:	Industry recognised skills gap unable to be met through the current nationally accredited training systems.
Principle 2:	Certification of a person's learning outcomes, including skills and competencies that reflect elements of licensing and other regulatory requirements (local, national and international) or contemporary industry practices.
Principle 3:	Assessment of learning outcomes include core transferable skills and core job-specific skills required for job roles as identified by industry.
Principle 4:	Supports people to adapt to changing job roles and workplaces, and/or to transition to a new industry.
Principle 5:	Supports pathways between the school, vocational education and higher education sectors and can provide a pathway to accredited courses.



Delivery of South Australian Skills Commission's endorsed micro-credentials

Education providers and RTOs in the public and non-government sectors can deliver the Commission's endorsed micro-credentials.

Nationally recognised training must be delivered by an RTO that has the parent training packages for the relevant units of competency within its scope of registration, as required by [ASQA](#) and with permission from the copyright owner of the course. RTOs may partner with other education providers or industry

partners to deliver training in accordance with requirements for third party arrangements⁷.

Organisations delivering non-accredited subjects in the micro-credential need to adhere to the training and assessment standards outlined in the course material endorsed by the Commission, and any licensing and copyright arrangements that are in place with the owner of the Commission's endorsed micro-credential course.

Monitoring and reporting on delivery

The owner of an endorsed micro-credential course will report to the Commission once a quarter on their activities and performance in order to maintain the endorsement status of the micro-credential course.

Information that may be required to be reported includes:

- adherence to any conditions set by the Commission

- number of course sessions offered during the quarter
- number of learners enrolled per course offered
- learning outcomes achieved
- learner and industry satisfaction with the course
- certificates issued or not issued per learner
- new training providers licensed to deliver the course.

Renewal of endorsement by the Commission

To seek renewal of endorsement, the industry proponent must complete an [Application for renewal duration of endorsement of a micro-credential](#) and provide supporting evidence to demonstrate the micro-credential continues to meet contemporary industry needs or has been updated to accommodate new industry approaches and technology.

Please send a completed application form together with supporting evidence to the Commission via email at skillscommission@sa.gov.au.

Renewal of endorsement will be determined by the Commission.

Opportunities to improve nationally accredited training

Micro-credentials endorsed by the Commission may be recommended to apply for course accreditation or to update the related nationally accredited training

package units of competency through the ASQA. Skills SA can assist with this process.

⁷ <https://www.asqa.gov.au/resources/fact-sheets/third-party-arrangements-0>

Find out more and/or provide feedback

To find out more about industry endorsement of micro-credentials, or to provide feedback about the endorsement process, please contact:

South Australian Skills Commission

Toll free phone: 1800 006 488

E: skillscommission@sa.gov.au

W: <https://skillscommission.sa.gov.au/careers-and-pathways/micro-credentials>

To request assistance from Skills SA to develop a new micro-credential course, please contact:

Skills SA, Department for Education

Toll free phone: 1800 673 097

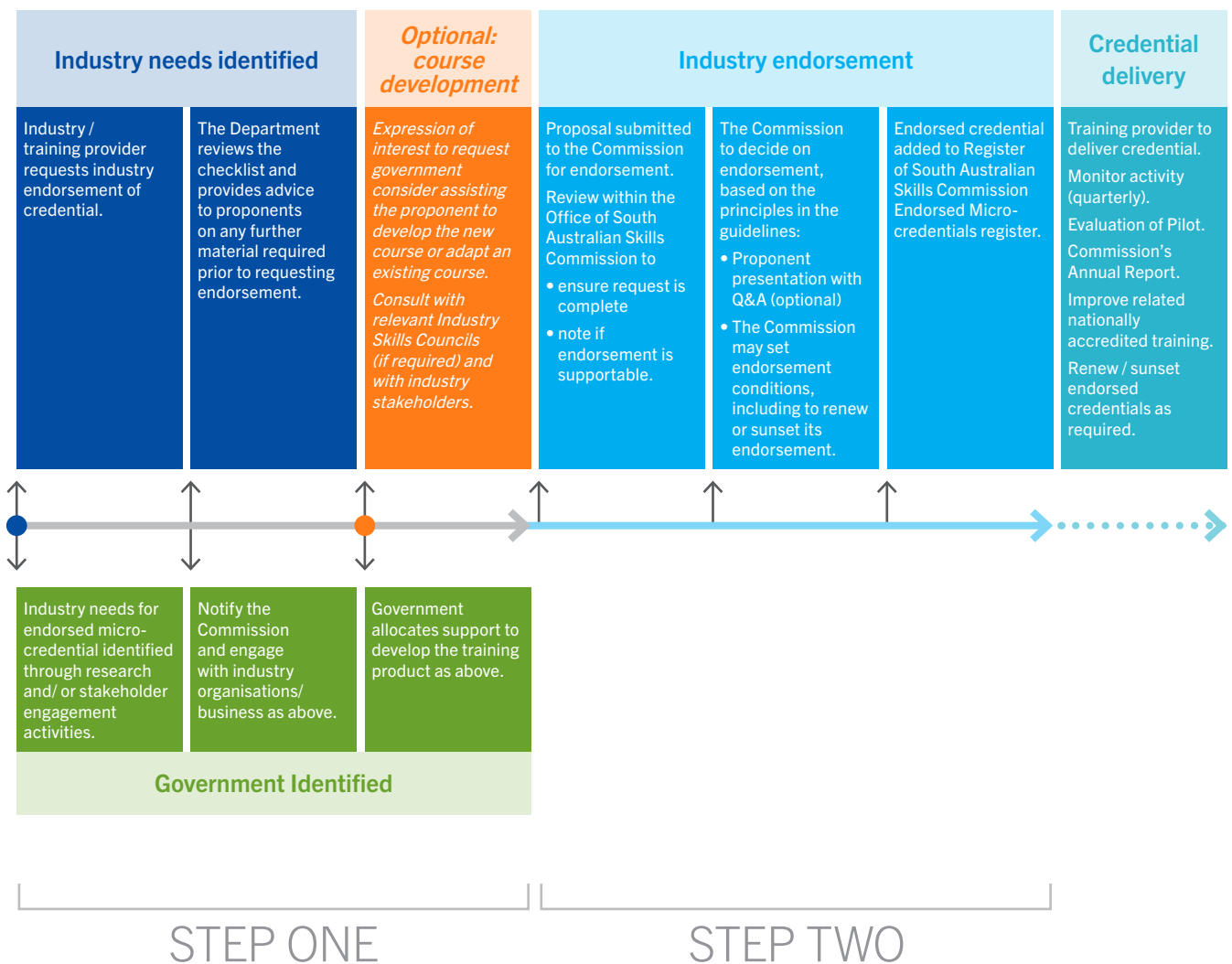
E: DIS.Feedback@sa.gov.au

W: www.skills.sa.gov.au/business

Feedback and complaints are a vital mechanism for understanding the effectiveness and impact of South Australia's micro-credentials endorsement pilot in supporting individuals and organisations to gain the contemporary skills, knowledge and attributes needed by industry.



South Australian Skills Commission approach for industry endorsement of micro-credentials



The South Australian Skills Commission provides independent, industry-led advice to Government on workforce development priorities, oversight of the skills system and promotes career pathways and lifelong learning. The Commission also provides independent dispute resolution services for aspects of post-secondary training in South Australia.

South Australian Skills Commission

Call: 1800 006 488

skillscommission.sa.gov.au



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