National pilot with Microcredentials in The Netherlands
Introduction

- Paul den Hertog
- Captain of the Flexible Education team at the National Acceleration Plan
- Senior Consultant Flexible Education at SURF
A National Pilot with Microcredentials

- Challenges
- Technology
- Design Process
Why Microcredentials?

- Trend: Digital Transformation of Higher Education
- Certificates for smaller units of HE support personal learning pathways, flexible education and student mobility
- MC present a great opportunity for professionals who struggle to find time for degree-programs
- MC enable a personal stack of HE certificates, potentially leading up to a degree
How did we end up here?

• **December ‘20**
  • roadmap structuring relevant questions such as governance, quality assurance, scope, target audience and of course, funding

• **June ‘21**
  • formal pilot proposal was approved by steering commitee and umbrella organisations. All public HE-institutes are invited to participate in the pilot

• **October ‘21**
  • Start of the pilot, with 32 (out of 55) institutes!

• **December ‘23**
  • Evaluation of the pilot including proposal for formal legislation
Our challenges

• Currently, Dutch HE certificates are mostly non-standardised, which presents challenges:
  • Citizens, employers and HE-institutes don’t know the exact ‘value’ of a certain certificate
  • Requirement: an unambiguous definition of:
    • Contents (Learning Outcomes?)
    • Level (EQF/NLQF?)
    • Study load (Hours / ECTS?)
  • To enhance and simplify recognition for students, employers and HE institutes
Some more challenges

• **Which bits of higher education could be a Microcredential?**
  • Should there be a minimum or maximum size and/or level? Eg. EQF-5 and upwards, maybe ranging from 3-30 Ec?
  • Which (small) programs are 'worthy' of issuing a microcredential?

• **What about accreditation?**
  • The Netherlands has program-level accreditation, but this system is not applicable on a micro-level. Does the Microcredential perhaps require Institutional Accreditation?
  • What QA-measures need to be in place in order to guarantee the quality of the Microcredential?

• **Can we do this in-line with Europe (ESGs and Microbol)?**
  • Press release last Friday!

• **How do you think QA for Microcredentials should be regulated?**
SURF Edubadges Infrastructure

- Our pilot will be hosted on the Edubadges infrastructure, developed by SURF, based on a derivative of Open Badges technology.
- During the pilot we hope to migrate the infrastructure to DUO, which is an administrative organisation affiliated to the Ministry of Education.
- Edubadges are already accessible for all participating HE Institutions.
- Edubadges infrastructure will accommodate for a tailored metadata-set for our Microcredential pilot.
Design Process

• Monthly meetings for the institutes:
  • Quality Assurance
  • Technology
  • Meta-data (Level, Study load and Learning Outcomes)
  • Communication

• Steering Committee w. umbrella’s, SURF

• Working Groups
  • Identity and Access Management
  • Legal
Let’s keep in touch!

Paul den Hertog

paul.denhertog@surf.nl

https://versnellingsplan.nl/english/