

## Micro-credentials and digital badges within EUTOPIA

a pilot at the University of Gothenburg  
7 April 2026

University of Gothenburg

Contact Svenska Search



PHASE 2 From what is to what if

Photo: Isac Lundmark

Study / Students from Gothenburg and Paris meet in workshop on inclusive tourism

**Page content**

Eva Maria Jernsand and Emma Björner from the School helped organise the workshop.

How come you invited students from different programmes to join this workshop?

What do you hope that the students got out of doing this workshop together?

### Students from Gothenburg and Paris meet in workshop on inclusive tourism

As part of the EUTOPIA Alliance, students from the School of Business, Economics and Law participated in a workshop together with Master's students from CY Cergy Paris Université visiting Gothenburg.

Eva Maria Jernsand and Emma Björner from the School helped organise the workshop:

"This workshop is part of the EUTOPIA alliance, where we collaborate across European universities within our Connected Community on Tourism and Experiences. What we try to do is bring together students, researchers, and external partners to work on real challenges, in this case focusing on inclusion, accessibility,

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## Introduction

The need to create standardised certificates for non-credit-bearing activities at the University of Gothenburg has arisen on some different occasions in recent years. In several contexts, micro-credentials and digital badges have proved to be a useful solution. This report describes a pilot in which digital badges were used as certificates for students who participated in a non-credit-bearing full-day workshop for EUTOPIA students.

## Background

The initial impetus for work on micro-credentials and digital badges emerged during the DURK project - Sharing Culture for Education, Recruitment and Knowledge Development - carried out at the University of Gothenburg in 2020-2021. The project focused on open education, open educational resources and the University's potential to develop flexible forms of lifelong learning and widening participation. During the project, a need became visible for a standard that would make it possible to issue certificates to participants in activities that do not require formal admission or general entry requirements. This was the context in which the possibility of using micro-credentials or digital badges was raised.<sup>1</sup>

A few years later, when the Unit for Pedagogical Development and Interactive Learning (PIL) was developing PIL101 into a module-based course structure, digital badges were introduced to document completed modules. Digital badges are still used in PIL101 to structure participants' progression and to enable subsequent validation of the introductory course in teaching and learning in higher education.<sup>2</sup>

Digital badges were later also introduced for certain non-credit-bearing workshops and seminars focusing on digital teaching tools and digital teaching. The purpose was to test a consistent way of documenting and issuing certificates for non-compulsory professional development. Over the years, important experience has been generated concerning technical solutions, metadata and the administration of digital badges in educational contexts, particularly in connection with internal professional development at the University.

Micro-credentials have also been explored within EduSTA, a research project in which the Department of Education and Special Education at the University of Gothenburg has been involved.<sup>3 4</sup> No other known examples of the use of micro-credentials at the University of Gothenburg have been identified.

At national level, the research institute RISE is working on a model in which micro-credentials can be used as part of efforts to strengthen lifelong learning. The purpose of RISE's work is

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<sup>1</sup> [Öppna lärresurser vid Göteborgs universitet. En förstudie om delningskultur för utbildning, rekrytering och kunskapsutbyte.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Mikromeriter vid PIL-enheten | PIL-enheten](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ERASMUS Project 2022-2025 - LU](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Empowering Teachers for Sustainable Futures: Micro-Credentials, Inclusion, and Applied Research in Vocational Education - Göteborgs universitets publikationer](#)

primarily to make learning outside higher education visible, for example in connection with professional development in industry and the private sector.<sup>5</sup>

### Micro-credentials and digital badges

Digital badges are a digital form of micro-credentials. A digital badge is portable, and the participant owns the digital certificate. A digital badge contains metadata that clarifies who the responsible issuer is and what learning content the digital certificate represents. For an introductory overview of these concepts, see Appendix 2.

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*Digital badges are a digital representation of micro-credentials: standardised digital certificates with metadata containing verifiable information about the issuer, learner, learning activity, scope and other relevant details. A micro-credential/digital badge should be portable. Open Badges is an international technical standard for documenting achievements in the form of micro-credentials. All platforms that manage micro-credentials or digital badges should therefore follow the international Open Badges technical standard. See also [Home | IMS Open Badges](#).*

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### EUTOPIA and work to standardise course certificates

Within EUTOPIA MORE (2022-2026), one explicit objective is to develop processes that enable all EUTOPIA universities to issue a standardised certificate for EUTOPIA students in courses involving learning activities equivalent to 1-2 ECTS credits or more. The purpose is to make courses included in EUTOPIA collaborations visible and to establish a certificate standard that is approved and validated by all higher education institutions in the alliance. In EUTOPIA's standardisation work, micro-credentials have been selected as the common basis for a standardised paper-based certificate that can be approved and validated by all partner institutions in the alliance. See Appendix 1.

In one sense, Sweden already has an established system for micro-credentials through Ladok, the national study documentation system, in which all credit-bearing courses are documented in a standardised way. The description of micro-credentials in relation to study documentation in Ladok has therefore been clarified in a specific recommendation issued by the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [How micro-credentials can promote lifelong learning | RISE](#)

<sup>6</sup> [SUHF rekommendation 2024\\_1 Vägledning om mikromeriter](#)

Within EUTOPIA, many student-related activities take place outside the universities' regular course provision. The need has therefore remained to issue certificates to students who participate in non-credit-bearing activities within higher education and within the EUTOPIA collaboration. Against this background, a need emerged to investigate how digital badges and micro-credentials could be used for the types of activities and collaborations for which Ladok cannot be used.

### Assignment and preparations for the pilot on 7 April 2026

Against the background of the activities within EUTOPIA MORE, Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for issues regarding education, initiated an assignment in 2025 to conduct pilot trials with digital badges. The purpose was to investigate how the University of Gothenburg could in practice make visible and document smaller-scale educational activities within the EUTOPIA collaboration, where participating students are not registered in Ladok and where traditional study certificates cannot be issued.

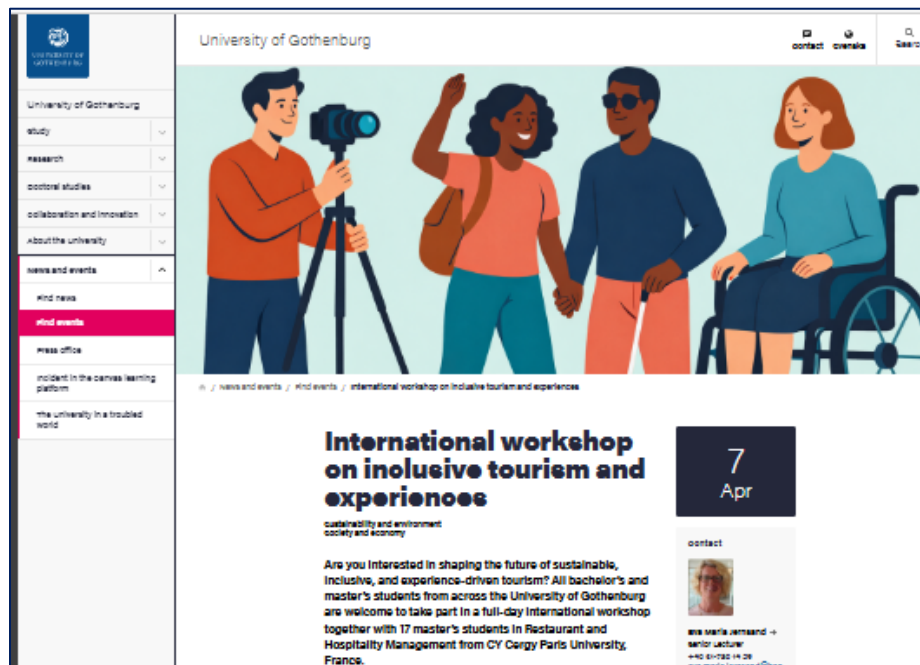
The pilot assignment was given to the Section for IT Support for Research and Education within the IT Unit, since it involved pedagogical, technical and administrative issues. The assignment also involved identifying needs relating to quality assurance, metadata, allocation of responsibilities and processes for issuing digital badges. The aim was to carry out a pilot and thereby create a basis for possible continued development and future decisions on the use of micro-credentials and digital badges at the University of Gothenburg.

A first step was to identify suitable student-related activities where a pilot could be carried out in a meaningful way. A dialogue was established with Tourism and Experiences, a Connected Community in which the project leads, Eva Maria Jernsand and Emma Björner at the School of Business, Economics and Law, were positive towards a pilot. It emerged that they already had an international workshop planned with Swedish students and students from CY Cergy Paris Université.<sup>7</sup>

This workshop had clear educational content and defined learning outcomes, but it was voluntary and would be carried out entirely outside regular course provision. The workshop was therefore considered particularly suitable as a pilot activity for investigating how digital badges could be used to document participation and learning within smaller, non-credit-bearing EUTOPIA collaborations.

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<sup>7</sup> [International workshop on inclusive tourism and experiences | University of Gothenburg](#)



*Invitation to the workshop published on [www.gu.se](http://www.gu.se)*

Several questions needed to be prepared ahead of the pilot:

- which platform for digital badges should be used;
- how the digital badge should be visually designed;
- what metadata needed to be specified;
- quality assurance in relation to the current Open Badges standard<sup>8</sup>;
- the process for distributing the digital badge; see Appendix 3.

Parchment, which follows the Open Badges standard, was selected as the platform for the pilot's digital badge. The University currently has a limited licence for the platform, which is used primarily by the unit responsible for teaching and learning in higher education. The platform can either be integrated into the Canvas learning platform or used as a standalone instance.

The next step was to develop the visual design, an area in which the International Centre was able to contribute and provide support. It became clear that there was no existing template for digital badges within EUTOPIA, only for standardised course certificates in PDF format. Communication officers within EUTOPIA developed a template for this purpose, and the International Centre adapted it for the pilot.

<sup>8</sup> [Home | IMS Open Badges](#)

In dialogue with the project leads at the School of Business, Economics and Law, metadata - that is, correct content relating to the workshop's content, duration, format and related information - could then be added to the digital badge.

| <b>MANDATORY METADATA FOR THE EU MICRO-CREDENTIAL</b><br>(According to EU Recommendation 2022/C 243/02) |                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metadata element                                                                                        | Description                                                                                                   |
| <b>Title of the micro-credential</b>                                                                    | The official designation or name of the micro-credential.                                                     |
| <b>Identification of the learner</b>                                                                    | The person to whom the micro-credential has been awarded.                                                     |
| <b>Issuing organisation(s)</b>                                                                          | The higher education institution, company, or other organisation issuing the micro-credential.                |
| <b>Date of issue</b>                                                                                    | The date on which the micro-credential was issued.                                                            |
| <b>Learning outcomes</b>                                                                                | A description of what the learner knows, understands, and is able to do after achieving the micro-credential. |
| <b>Workload / scope</b><br>(Notional workload)                                                          | The estimated workload required to achieve the learning outcomes, e.g. number of ECTS credits.                |
| <b>Level</b><br>(EQF or other relevant framework)                                                       | The level of the micro-credential according to a relevant framework, e.g. EQF or QF-EHEA, where applicable.   |
| <b>Type of assessment</b>                                                                               | A description of how the learning outcomes have been assessed and verified.                                   |
| <b>Assessment result / grade achieved</b>                                                               | The result of the assessment, e.g. pass/fail, grade, or another scale.                                        |
| <b>Form of participation</b>                                                                            | How the learning activity was carried out, e.g. online, on campus, blended/hybrid, or self-paced learning.    |
| <b>Type of quality assurance</b>                                                                        | Information about the quality assurance process underpinning the micro-credential.                            |
| <b>Verifiability</b>                                                                                    | Information that makes it possible to verify the authenticity of the micro-credential.                        |

*Metadata according to the EU recommendation on micro-credentials.*

## Implementation

The workshop was held on 7 April 2026. It was a full-day activity involving a total of 17 master's students from CY Cergy Paris University in France<sup>9</sup> and 11 master's students from the University of Gothenburg. The activity was conducted in English and organised as an international and interdisciplinary workshop. During the morning, the students were introduced to the topic and attended presentations by researchers and other professionals working in the field. In the afternoon, the focus shifted to practical and exploratory work in mixed groups.

The day began at Lindholmen Science Park and Visual Arena with presentations on sustainable tourism, regenerative urban development and inclusive experience design. In the afternoon, the workshop continued with research-informed and practice-oriented components linked to accessibility and universal design. The students collaborated through group discussions, workshops and joint exercises.

<sup>9</sup> [Master Management - parcours Management des services en restauration et hôtellerie internationale - CY](#)

The activities had clearly defined learning outcomes intended to strengthen the students' understanding of inclusive and sustainable tourism and experience environments, and to provide experience of international and interdisciplinary collaboration.

During the introduction to the day, the students were informed that they would have the opportunity to receive a digital badge as documentation/a digital certificate of their participation in the activity. When the workshop was later concluded, the students were able to scan a QR code that took them to an image of the digital badge certifying their participation. Access to their digital badge was provided through the same QR code; by creating an account on the platform, they could link to and retrieve their own digital badge.

Only once a student had created an account was the digital badge linked to the student's email address and thereby tied to the individual. In this way, the processing of personal data could be limited, while the students retained control over their digital badge and had the option to save, share or transfer it to another platform or digital portfolio. In this sense, the QR code also functioned as attendance registration, ensuring which participants had actually completed the workshop.

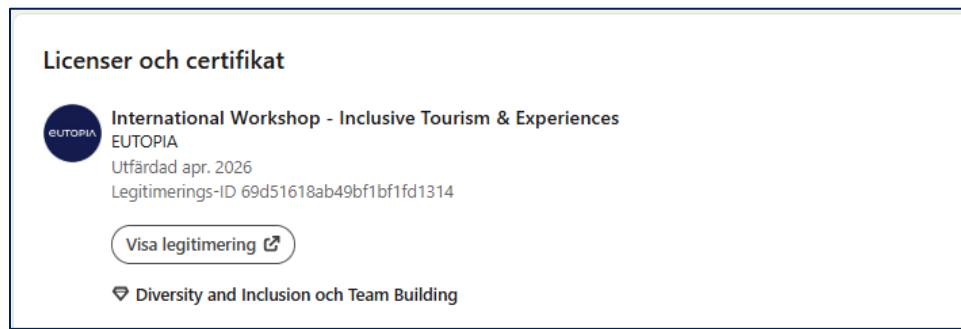
Because the digital badges are uploaded to a digital platform, participants can refer to their digital badge in professional contexts, for example via LinkedIn or other social media channels.



*Workshop with students from the University of Gothenburg and CY Cergy Paris University*

### **Experiences from the pilot**

During the day, we spoke informally with several students, who appeared very pleased with the opportunity to receive a digital badge documenting what they had completed together. Several of the students from Paris stated that international experience is an important merit in France, and they saw a clear benefit in having this workshop documented. The platform statistics later showed that as many as 19 students had shared their EUTOPIA badge via LinkedIn.



*Picture of the digital badge published on LinkedIn*

The process of asking students to scan a QR code and then create an account so that they could manage their own digital badge worked well. Most students had no difficulties, although some needed guidance in creating an account. A few students asked whether it was possible to download and print the digital certificate, which is fully possible.

Information about the pilot has been shared at a EUTOPIA meeting with those responsible for the University's Connected Communities, organised by the International Centre. Several teachers have subsequently contacted us with questions about the possibility of receiving support to issue digital badges at similar EUTOPIA events. Some teachers have also expressed interest in issuing digital badges for other non-credit-bearing study-related activities. Their motivation is to be able to give students recognition even when no higher education credits can be awarded.

## Summary

Several teachers have shown interest in being able to issue the type of certificate that a digital badge can constitute for non-credit-bearing activities, both EUTOPIA-related activities and GU-specific activities. The process applied in this EUTOPIA pilot could be adapted for other non-credit-bearing activities at the University.

At the University of Gothenburg, the Parchment platform can currently manage, store and distribute digital badges, but the procured licence only covers a limited number of users.

The European Europass platform is developed by the European Union to support the visibility, sharing and verification of competences, qualifications and learning outcomes in Europe. Europass includes support for issuing verifiable digital credentials and micro-credentials according to common European standards. Europass could therefore be an interesting alternative for digital badges and micro-credentials within the EUTOPIA collaboration.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [European Digital Credentials | Europass, Home | Europass](#)

The experience of developing a specific digital badge for this type of activity shows that it does not require an excessive amount of work. However, it needs to be clarified whether support for this process should be available centrally and, if so, to what extent.

The students who participated in the pilot appreciated the opportunity to receive a digital certificate in the form of a digital badge. Almost all students from CY Cergy Paris University uploaded their digital badges to LinkedIn.

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## Appendix 1. Concepts and terminology, the EUTOPIA Alliance

### Draft

## Terminology clarification on micro-credentials, micro-components, certificates, open badges and labels

Micro-credentials, micro-components, certificates, open (digital) badges, labels all document learning, but they differ in scope, integration into formal programmes, and level of formality. A definition and a distinction are provided for each of them below.

### Definitions

- **Micro-credentials** are a record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.<sup>11</sup> Micro-credentials are usually issued in collaboration across various types of organisations and can be used for complementing conventional qualifications as part of lifelong learning and continuous professional education, and as pre- and post-graduate education.<sup>12</sup>
- **Micro-components** are a small teaching/learning element embedded within a larger unit (e.g. one week of a module, a single assessed project or an online unit, etc). It is not a standalone credential by default: its primary role is to contribute to a larger credit-bearing course or module unless separately assessed and certified. If issued independently with assessment and metadata, it can function as a micro-credential.<sup>13</sup>
- **A certificate** is a formal document that may be awarded digitally or on paper after successful completion of an organised learning activity. Certificates may vary in length and formality: they can represent short learning experiences or longer vocational/academic programmes. Certificates commonly include information on scope, outcomes and awarding body.
- **Open badges (or digital badges)** are standardised digital representations of an achievement that contain embedded metadata (issuer, criteria, evidence, issue date and verification). Open Badges are a portable, verifiable format that can include micro-credentials, certificates, informal learning or other achievements. Digital badges do not inherently require assessment or formal QA. The quality and meaning depend entirely on the issuer. Microcredentials can, however, be issued as digital badges by verifiable records of learning that demonstrate mastery of specific skills or competencies acquired through short, focused learning programs, but a digital badge is not necessarily a micro-credential, but it can become one. The European Digital Credentials for learning (EDCL) is an example of a credentialing system that can be used freely by any micro-credential provider to issue verifiable credentials. It supports the requirements of using structured data by implementing the European Learning Model.<sup>14</sup>
- **A Label** is a formal recognition awarded to a course or learning component that meets a set of agreed, pre-defined

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<sup>11</sup> See definition provided by the European Commission <https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/micro-credentials%20brochure%20updated.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> See EUA's analysis on micro-credentials <https://www.eua.eu/our-work/expert-voices/micro-credentials-what-is-behind-all-the-buzz.html>

<sup>13</sup> See 2025 report prepared for the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's science and knowledge service on Micro-credentials in higher education. [https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC142086/JRC142086\\_01.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC142086/JRC142086_01.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>14</sup> See EUROPASS information on the European Digital Credentials Learning <https://europass.europa.eu/en/news/micro-credentials-and-european-digital-credentials-learning>

quality and criteria established by a specific awarding framework or community. Unlike a credential, a Label does not certify individual learner achievement or assessed learning outcomes. Instead, it indicates that the learning offer itself aligns with shared standards, e.g., pedagogical quality, internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, or collaborative design etc. Labels are issued to learning activities rather than to learners, are not credit-bearing, and do not require assessment of participants. In the context of EUTOPIA, the Label is allocated to a course or another component of the academic offering by a EUTOPIA Partner institution participating as a lead or partner in a Connected (Learning) Community.

## Key distinctions

| Dimension                         | Micro-credential                                                                                                                                                   | Micro-component                                                                                                                          | Certificate                                                                                                                              | Open (digital) badge                                                                                                                  | Labels                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Description</b>                | Record of assessed learning outcomes from a small volume of learning.                                                                                              | Small teaching learning element embedded within a larger unit (e.g. one week, a project, online sub-unit).                               | Formal document confirming successful completion of an organised learning activity.                                                      | Standardised digital representation of an achievement with embedded metadata.                                                         | A quality mark awarded to a course, module or academic component that meets agreed standards or criteria                                                                         |
| <b>Standalone</b>                 | Yes, by design; can also stack into larger credentials.                                                                                                            | No by default; contributes to a larger course, module. Can become a micro-credential if separately assessed and certified with metadata. | Yes; can represent short courses or full programmes.                                                                                     | Not necessarily; may document anything from participation to a full credential, depending on issuer design.                           | No; a Label attaches to an educational offering, not to the learner. It does not function as a credential.                                                                       |
| <b>Assessment &amp; QA</b>        | Always includes assessment against transparent, clearly defined standards and is underpinned by quality assurance.                                                 | Assessment and QA handled at course, programme level; only becomes a credential if independently assessed and issued.                    | Assessment and QA are not inherent . It depends on the awarding body and context.                                                        | Assessment and QA are not inherent; It depend on the issuer and any linked processes.                                                 | Not linked to learner assessment. QA focuses on whether the offering meets agreed criteria. In EUTOPIA, Labels rely on criteria defined within Connected (Learning) Communities. |
| <b>Portability</b>                | Shareable and portable; designed for recognition across organisations and systems.                                                                                 | Visibility mostly internal to the programme; portability comes only if it is turned into a micro-credential.                             | Held by the learner; portability varies with the reputation and formal status of the awarding body.                                      | Portable in digital ecosystems; recognised where the badge standard and issuer are trusted.                                           | Portable only in the sense that the labelled course or module is recognised across the network issuing the Label. It does not confer portability to learners.                    |
| <b>Relation to other concepts</b> | Can complement degrees, be combined into larger credentials and be issued as a verifiable digital credential (e.g. via European Digital Credentials for Learning). | Building block that may be aggregated into micro-credentials or regular course credit.                                                   | It may document completion of a micro-credential, a full programme or informal achievement; can also be encoded as a digital credential. | It can document completion of a micro-credential or informal achievement, but a badge itself is not automatically a micro-credential. | A labelled course may lead to a credential, but the Label itself is not a credential and carries no learner-level attainment record.                                             |

## **Appendix 2. Micro-credentials - definitions and areas of use**

### **Micro-credentials - definitions and areas of use**

*Maria Sunnerstam, IT Unit, Gothenburg University, April 2026*

#### **Background**

Micro-credentials are a concept that has gained increasing importance in higher education in recent years, particularly at international and European level. They are seen as a way of making visible and validating learning that is more limited in scope than traditional courses and degree programmes.

This document provides an overview of what micro-credentials are, how they can be used and how they relate to the Swedish system of higher education credits and ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

#### **What are micro-credentials?**

Micro-credentials are digital certificates or recognitions of specific knowledge, skills or competences that an individual has acquired through a clearly delimited learning activity.

General entry requirements are not required in order to receive recognition through micro-credentials. They can therefore be used to document many different forms of learning, including learning that falls outside what is traditionally offered in higher education. However, micro-credentials are most commonly used to document, and thereby make visible, learning in contexts outside higher education, for example in adult liberal education or in industry. In this way, micro-credentials support lifelong learning.

There is as yet no single shared or formalised definition of the term micro-credential. Different organisations use related, but not identical, descriptions. Despite the lack of a formally regulated term, there is broad agreement that micro-credentials have the potential to enable standardised, transparent, quality-assured and comparable credentials that can be mutually recognised across organisational and national boundaries. Achieving greater consensus over definitions, quality and areas of use is an ongoing process.

The European Commission's definition of micro-credentials can be summarised as follows:

A micro-credential is a record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes are assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria.

Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide learners with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour-market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are supported by

quality assurance in accordance with agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity. ([Recommendations on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#), accessed 1 May 2026.)

It is worth noting that micro-credentials are “owned” by the individual. The individual's achievement is not automatically registered in any central register, as is the case, for example, with Swedish higher education credits in Ladok.

### **Why micro-credentials?**

The system of micro-credentials has developed in response to several concurrent needs:

- Making competence visible: Micro-credentials make learning that does not otherwise generate formal higher education credits more visible and more useful as a merit. They can be used to issue quality-assured and traceable documentation.
- Lifelong learning: Micro-credentials can make it possible to gather achievements from different education providers for continuous documentation of professional development throughout working life.
- Widening participation: Micro-credentials offer a way to issue quality-assured and traceable documentation for activities intended to contribute to widening participation. Examples include activities that allow potential students to “try out” higher education.
- Labour-market needs: Micro-credentials make it possible to issue quality-assured and traceable documentation where formal higher education credits cannot be awarded, for example in delimited activities designed to meet emerging skills needs quickly.
- Transparency and traceability: Micro-credentials follow an international standard in which necessary information, such as issuer, learning content and scope, is always mandatory.

### **The relationship to Ladok, higher education credits and ECTS**

In June 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability. The recommendation highlights opportunities for quality and transparency through the use of micro-credentials across the EU. Micro-credentials are expected to contribute to more flexible learning pathways, make it easier for individuals to combine learning activities over time and across education systems and sectors, and make education accessible to more groups, including those outside traditional education systems.

To clarify the Swedish system of higher education credits in relation to the Commission's recommendation, SUHF has developed guidance. ([SUHF rekommendation 2024\\_1 Vägledning om mikromeriter](#) accessed 1 May 2026). It states that the Swedish system of courses and higher education credits in Ladok corresponds to what the Commission is seeking. In Swedish higher education, higher education credits can be equated with micro-credentials, and

Swedish higher education institutions therefore already have a strategy for what the Council of Ministers recommends. Within Swedish higher education, the term micro-credentials should consequently be used for credit-bearing courses where relevant. For non-credit-bearing activities within Swedish higher education, a badge may instead be issued. The concept of a digital badge is described later in this document.

The broad range of credit-bearing freestanding courses available in Sweden is less common in other European countries. Within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), degree programmes are the dominant form. Students who complete a degree programme receive a degree certificate together with a Diploma Supplement, which describes the level, content, scope (ECTS) and learning outcomes of the education. For individual courses at European universities, a Transcript of Records (TOR) is normally issued, specifying the course, its scope in ECTS and the grade. A Transcript of Records can be issued regardless of whether the course was taken as part of a programme or as a freestanding course.

A Transcript of Records is a well-established European study certificate, but it is based on document logic rather than digital verifiability. There is no common standardised space where study achievements can be displayed and verified. Certificates must be actively requested, shared and checked, which entails both administrative burden and risk of forgery. Micro-credentials as digital certificates address these limitations by being learner-owned, verifiable and adapted to an international and lifelong-learning perspective.

### **Micro-credentials and digital badges as an international standard**

One advantage of micro-credentials compared with traditional certificates and diplomas is that there is an international standard for how a micro-credential should be documented and managed digitally. Open Badges is the international technical standard for documenting achievements in the form of micro-credentials. ([Home | IMS Open Badges](#) accessed 1 May 2026)

Digital badges are therefore standardised digital certificates with metadata that contains verifiable information about the issuer, learner, learning activity, scope and other details. The digital representation of a badge can vary in appearance, but it always has mandatory metadata associated with it.

In order for individuals to collect, store, share and, where necessary, transfer their micro-credentials, all platforms that manage micro-credentials must follow the international Open Badges technical standard.

A badge in itself is no guarantee of assessment or quality; its value is determined by the issuer and by the learning content specified by the issuer. A digital badge issued by a reliable and trusted organisation is likely to have greater value than a digital badge issued by a temporary, unknown or potentially unserious actor.

Digital badges can be used to make visible everything from informal learning to formal education. Micro-credentials *can be issued in the form of digital badges, but they do not have to be digital badges*, as SUHF's example of higher education credits in Ladok illustrates. Another example is how micro-credentials and digital badges are used at the PIL unit to document participants' achievements within the modules that make up the course PIL101. Digital badges are also awarded to participants in certain non-credit-bearing workshops at the Section for IT Support for Research and Education, IT Unit.

### **Micro-credentials as a complement to higher education credits**

There are several areas within higher education where the possibility of issuing micro-credentials could complement the system of higher education credits. Micro-credentials could, for example, be used to make visible and document learning in activities such as:

- non-compulsory theme days for students;
- workshops and other forms of meritorious professional development for students, for example at university-wide level;
- short non-credit-bearing student collaborations within courses and programmes;
- short non-credit-bearing student collaborations in Nordic, European or international contexts;
- certain forms of commissioned education;
- professional development for university staff.

Within the EUTOPIA Alliance, discussions and work are underway to explore how micro-credentials could be used to make visible collaborations, activities or shorter components that fall outside the regular process for course certificates or transcripts of records. The purpose is to find a common standard so that students participating in EUTOPIA activities can receive some form of certificate of their participation through the system of micro-credentials and Open Badges.

To clarify the definition of micro-credentials and related concepts, a working group within EUTOPIA has developed the document Clarification of terminology, which at the time of writing is being circulated for consultation among EUTOPIA's higher education institutions.

### Appendix 3. Process for digital badge pilot, 7 April 2026

