



INGENIUM
European University

INGENIUM
Microcredentials and Microcourses
Guidelines and FAQs

INGENIUM Technical Secretariat, August 2026



Co-funded by
the European Union

Table of contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INGENIUM lifelong-learning offer	4
1.1. What is an INGENIUM microcredential?	4
1.2. What is an INGENIUM microcourse?	5
1.3. Types of INGENIUM Microcredentials	6
1.4. Learning volume and workload	6
2. Partnership, roles and governance	6
2.1. Accreditation authority for microcredentials	8
3. Funding, fees and the financial framework	8
3.1. Staff compensation: the unified Alliance model for microcredentials	8
3.2. Staff compensation: the unified Alliance model for microcourses	9
3.3. Student fees and financial equilibrium for microcredentials	9
3.4. Co-funding framework for microcredentials	10
4. The development and approval process	10
4.1. What the applicant needs to do	11
4.2. What happens administratively	12
5. Certification and digital credentials	14
6. Using INGENIUM microcredentials and microcourses strategically	15
7. The INGENIUM Annual Cycle Education Call	17
7.1. Application targets	17
7.2. The shared assessment framework	17
Annex 1. INGENIUM MC Idea Proposal	19
Annex 2. INGENIUM Digital Credential	20
Annex 3. Microcredential check-list	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The document sets out **INGENIUM's** guidelines for the creation and management of **microcredentials** and **microcourses**, designed to promote lifelong learning and employability across Europe.

The document clearly distinguishes between microcredentials, which award **ECTS credits**, undergo full accreditation and quality assurance, and lead to a Europass digital credential. And microcourses, which follow a lighter route without formal accreditation, linked instead to an INGENIUM certificate or badge, and can later evolve into a microcredential.

It also describes a **five-step process** for the applicant, together with a financial framework based on **co-financing** and reduced fees for students.

Finally, the document establishes strategic objectives to expand this educational offering towards **self-funded models** and closer collaboration with industry by **2027**.

1. INGENIUM lifelong-learning offer

The INGENIUM Annual Education Call brings together two related but distinct lifelong-learning formats: **microcredentials** and **microcourses**.

Both are designed and delivered in full compliance with the **European Approach to Microcredentials** set out in Council Recommendation (EU) 2022/C 243/02. They respond to the growing need for continuous upskilling and reskilling in a rapidly evolving labour market, supporting both labour-market entry and the ongoing development of employability and career progression.

Microcredentials and microcourses complement other collaborative teaching formats promoted through the INGENIUM Annual Cycle Education Call, including **Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), Pathways and joint programmes**. Together, they provide the Alliance's main framework for developing short, certified lifelong-learning opportunities.

Microcredentials and microcourses have a dual purpose:

- Providing lifelong learning opportunities to all kinds of learners, allowing them to benefit from short and flexible learning experiences that can help them to develop new competencies. These learners may be university students

Introduce more flexibility and student-centred components in the learning journeys of enrolled students at the Bachelor, Master or PhD levels. Enrolled students can expand their competences by enrolling in these formats, which could potentially be recognised as part of their courses.

In both cases, the design and/or the delivery should be done by two or more INGENIUM partner institutions. Innovative formats – such as co design with parallel delivery in two different formats – are encouraged and welcome.

The difference between a microcredential and a microcourse is explained below.

1.1. What is an INGENIUM microcredential?

It is a credential that recognises a learner's verified **learning outcomes** following the completion of a **small volume of learning** (typically less than 15 ECTS credits), **assessed** against transparent and clearly defined criteria. In other words, it records what the learner knows, understands and can do, how this was learned, and how it was assessed.

INGENIUM microcredentials are developed collaboratively by at least **two INGENIUM partner institutions** and delivered under robust **internal quality assurance processes** (IQAS). They lead to a **formal digital credential issued by any partner university on behalf of the Alliance**. The credential is recognised and awarded by all partner universities through **Europass** (European Digital Credential for Learning – EDC) and carries **ECTS credits**.

Microcredentials must be accredited in line with the European Approach to Microcredentials, the ESG 2015 and the ECTS Users' Guide, and are certified through the Europass Digital Credentials platform.

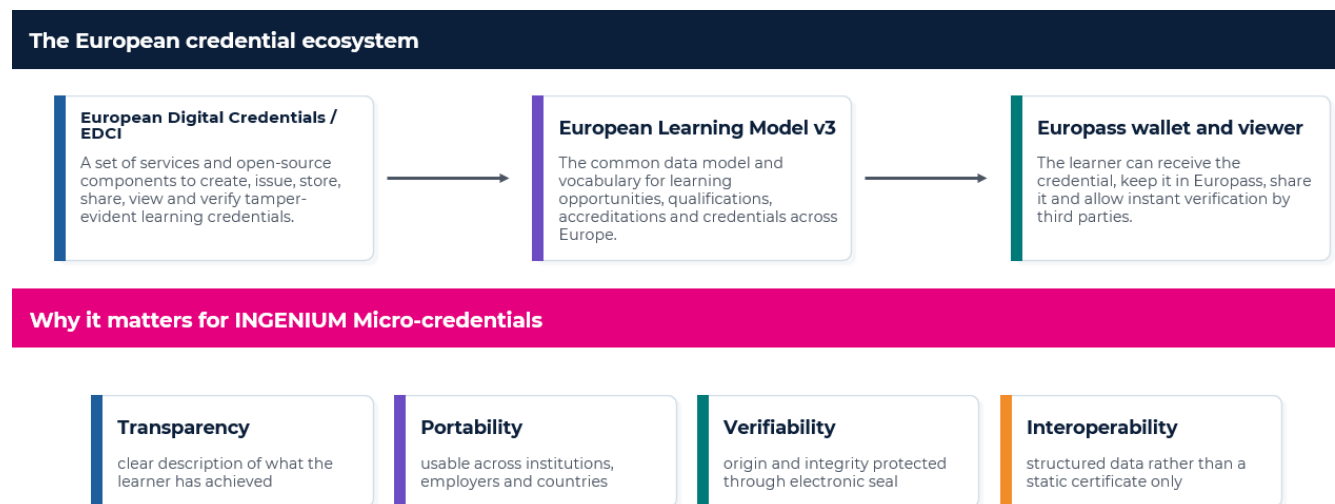


Figure 1. *The European credential ecosystem and INGENIUM*

1.2. What is an INGENIUM microcourse?

As a microcredential, a microcourse is a training experience corresponding to short-duration course (typically around 1 to 6 ECTS credits), aligned with the **European Commission's definition**, focused on the acquisition of skills and competences to respond to social, professional, and other needs. They are also developed collaboratively by **at least two INGENIUM partner institutions**.

Unlike INGENIUM microcredentials, INGENIUM microcourses follow a lighter route: they **do not need to pass through the full accreditation process** (described in Section 4), but they also do not carry the same formal recognition, ECTS certainty or EU-wide portability as an accredited microcredential. In other words, they are not required to meet all the formal requirements associated with a microcredential, such as formal accreditation, or the full IQAS quality-assurance framework. Nevertheless, they provide structured and valuable learning opportunities and may serve as a flexible pathway towards a microcredential where appropriate. **They are linked to INGENIUM certification or digital badge.** Microcourses are intended to ensure that every robust proposal has a pathway to delivery, including where full accreditation is not sought or is not yet feasible.

To wrap up, both formats provide structured learning opportunities within the INGENIUM Alliance, while differing primarily in their level of formal accreditation, quality assurance, ECTS allocation, and certification. Both formats are therefore reported under the same call category and contribute to the same Alliance targets (see Section 7). Proposers who are unsure which format best fits their proposal are encouraged to apply: the INGENIUM

Committee and the Accreditation Coordinator¹ will help determine the most appropriate format.

TIP 1

If your idea does not (yet) meet the ECTS, quality-assurance or accreditation requirements of a full microcredential, propose it as a microcourse rather than setting it aside. It can always be upgraded to an accredited microcredential in a later edition.

1.3. Types of INGENIUM Microcredentials

These three models apply to microcredentials only —microcourses are not sub-typed. The INGENIUM Microcredentials framework distinguishes three models:

- > **Jointly Developed Microcredentials:** new microcredentials collaboratively designed and developed by academic staff from at least two INGENIUM partner institutions. The microcredential is coordinated by a primary developer institution, while the accrediting partner institution provides the necessary institutional oversight for accreditation and delivery.
- > **Realigned Microcredentials:** a new or existing institutional microcredential, already accredited by a partner university, that is adapted, harmonised and re-accredited through a partner institution or any other compatible accreditation system, enabling multi-institutional recognition and learner mobility.
- > **Decentralised Microcredentials:** microcredentials made up of components (modules, units, assessments) delivered by different partner institutions but integrated into a coherent whole, accredited as a single, unified programme by the accrediting partner institution.

1.4. Learning volume and workload

As mentioned before, microcredentials must include a learning volume of a minimum of **1 ECTS and less than 15 ECTS credits**, while microcourses usually have a workload of between **1 and 6 ECTS credits**.

One ECTS credit is considered 25 hours of total learning volume, with a variable amount of teaching hours depending on the specific conditions of the microcredential — typically between 7.5 and 12.5 teaching hours per ECTS, the remainder being autonomous and group work.

¹ The main responsible of the accreditation process from an administration perspective. This person will normally be an academic from the partner institution that provides the accreditation framework.

2. Partnership, roles and governance

An INGENIUM microcredential or microcourses is a collective Alliance offer. Several roles interact throughout its lifecycle:

Role	Description
Development team	The group of academics from two or more INGENIUM partner institutions working together on the design and delivery of the microcredential or microcourses.
Academic Responsible	Faculty member at any INGENIUM institution acting as key teacher, in charge of the academic design and implementation of the microcredential or microcourses, and of handling learners' enquiries on educational matters.
INGENIUM Committee	The INGENIUM Alliance Academic Committee responsible for strategic oversight, quality assessment and approval of microcredential idea proposals, composed of senior academic leaders from each partner institution.
INGENIUM Steering Committee	Validates financial balancing, waivers and budgetary matters concerning the microcredential/microcourses portfolio.
Accreditation Coordinator	Member of the accrediting partner institution responsible for the administrative coordination of the microcredential, serving as the primary liaison between the development team, the INGENIUM Committee and the institution's internal processes throughout enrolment, delivery, and accreditation.
Accrediting Institution	A partner institution, which provides formal institutional accreditation and digital certification for INGENIUM microcredentials on behalf of the Alliance, through its established microcredential framework.

Table 2. INGENIUM microcredential & microcourses roles

These roles are fully engaged for microcredentials. For microcourses, the accreditation-related roles (Accreditation Coordinator, Accrediting Institution) are lighter or not required, since microcourses do not go through the full accreditation process.

TIP 2

If you are developing an microcredential, identify or agree an Accreditation Coordinator as early as possible. This colleague shepherds the proposal through the accreditation process and is the single point of contact for the accreditation institutional procedures — the earlier this role is filled, the smoother administrative steps (table 4) will run.

FAQ — Roles, enquiries and student records

Q: Who will handle learner enquiries before and during the programme?

A: The Academic Responsible handles enquiries about educational aspects. For other enquiries, the Accreditation Coordinator, together with the INGENIUM offices (technical, pedagogical and certification aspects), also offers support.

Q: Who will be responsible for maintaining student records?

A: The Academic Responsible generates and maintains student records and, upon completion, sends the grades to the Accreditation Coordinator, who uploads them to the accrediting partner institution official grading platform.

Q: Is there a formal consortium agreement defining roles and responsibilities?

A: Roles and responsibilities are established in the Microcredential's application form and approved by the INGENIUM Committee and the Steering Committee. The general model is defined in the INGENIUM Microcredentials agreement.

Q: Who will be responsible for quality assurance and reporting?

A: The Accreditation Coordinator.

2.1. Accreditation authority for microcredentials

Any INGENIUM partner institution may serve as the accreditation partner for INGENIUM microcredentials, provided that they comply with the European Approach to Microcredentials, the ESG 2015, and the ECTS Users' Guide, and are certified through the Europass Digital Credentials platform or similar.

Through the incorporation of the INGENIUM Committee's assessment, the accreditation confers formal recognition on behalf of the entire Alliance, enabling mutual recognition by all partner institutions. The process incorporates:

- > INGENIUM Committee review and quality assessment.
- > Approval in accordance with the accrediting partner institution's microcredential framework.
- > A formal institutional accreditation decision within approximately 3-4 months from complete proposal submission.

3. Funding, fees and the financial framework

In this section, we'll look at how the financial side of INGENIUM microcredentials and microcourses actually works: who pays staff, what students are charged, and how everything

balances out to zero. We'll also cover how co-funding costs are shared among partner institutions and where additional funding can come from. Finally, we'll take a quick look at what's planned for Next INGENIUM starting in 2027.

3.1. Staff compensation: the unified Alliance model for microcredentials

INGENIUM microcredentials are collective Alliance offerings, designed and delivered on behalf of all INGENIUM partners. Generally, for microcredentials, it depends on the institutional procedure of the accrediting partner institution. As an example, and following the current accreditation procedure of the University of Oviedo (UNIOVI), different options exist:

- **Option A:** The accrediting partner institution (UNIOVI) serves as the central paying institution for academic and expert staff involved in a microcredential, according to the rates indicated in the budget proposal made by the development team. Those rates should be within the limits defined by the budgetary framework of UNIOVI. The amount is tracked in the joint budget of INGENIUM, and the other partners compensate UNIOVI for those expenses afterwards.
- **Option B:** The compensation for the academic staff involved in the microcredential is done by their employer institution, either financially (through a dedicated payment) or any other mechanism (such as a compensation of the hours) There is no payment done by UNIOVI to the staff member. The cost of those teaching hours appears as 0.
- **Option C:** A combination of those two mechanisms. In the same microcredential, some staff members may be paid directly by UNIOVI, while others may be compensated in any other way by their employer institution.

The funding model for each INGENIUM microcredential will be approved by the steering committee.

3.2. Staff compensation: the unified Alliance model for microcourses

As a general rule, each partner will determine the specific compensation model for the involvement in micromodules. The compensation models may include:

- Lump sum payment
- Career advancement mechanisms

Counting of hours for potential teaching reductions

3.3. Student fees and financial equilibrium for microcredentials

- > For each microcredential, student fees are defined so that, together with all applicable co-funding, the approved budget results in a final **balance of zero** between income and expenses.

- > Microcredentials should include a **student fee** to cover the costs of issuing the digital credential. Under current practice, for example, this fee is set at €35 per learner and covers platform, administrative, and certification costs, together with overall INGENIUM co-funding. This student fee may vary depending on the accrediting partner institution.
- > Fees are collected and managed by the accrediting partner institution.
- > A minimum and a maximum number of participants must be established in the application; costs are calculated on the minimum number to ensure sufficient funds are allocated, and the microcredential is delivered only if enrolment falls within the agreed range.

FAQ — Fees, income and cost adjustments under the current model (there may be variations in the future)

Q: Which institution collects student fees, and who manages programme income?

A: The accrediting partner institution collects the fees and manages the payment corresponding to title issuance and insurance (current model: 35€/person); fees are used only to cover these two items.

Q: How will platform, administration, marketing and certification costs be shared?

A: Platform, administration and certification costs are included in the 35€ fee and in overall INGENIUM co-funding. Marketing beyond the regular promotion on INGENIUM channels (a priority for every microcredential) should be budgeted separately — ideally covered by one of the partner institutions, to keep budget planning simple.

Q: Is there a budget allocation for programme administration?

A: Yes, shared between the two co-directors — one from the accrediting partner institution, the other from the academic partner university.

Q: If participant numbers are lower or higher than expected, how will costs be adjusted?

A: A minimum and maximum must be set in the application. The microcredential runs if enrolment falls within that range, with costs covered by INGENIUM and calculated on the minimum number of participants.

Q: Are there any hidden or indirect costs that partner institutions should anticipate?

A: No — where students pay only the 35€ fee and staff costs are covered by the INGENIUM budget, there are no indirect costs.

3.4. Co-funding framework for microcredentials

Microcredentials are financed through a combination of student fees, INGENIUM Alliance co-funding, and —where relevant— other sources:

- > National or regional public funding schemes.
- > Employer or sectoral sponsorship.
- > Stakeholder or project-based funding, scholarships or vouchers for specific learner groups.

The exact amount of **INGENIUM co-funding** for a given microcredential **is decided case by case**, together with the decision on student fees, following consultation with the INGENIUM Committee and subject to validation by the Steering Committee. External funding reduces the total amount to be shared through Alliance co-funding, but does not change partners' agreed pro-rata percentages (see the pro-rata distribution model in Annex 2 of the INGENIUM Microcredentials agreement).

4. The development and approval process

The development and approval of a microcredential (MC) or microcourses (MM) combines two parallel tracks: Table 3 sets out the 5 steps the applicant — the development team and its Academic Responsible — needs to carry out, from the initial idea to learner assessment and evaluation; while Table 4 sets out what happens administratively at INGENIUM and the accrediting partner institution in response to each applicant step.

4.1. What the applicant needs to do

Step	Process element	Responsibility	Format	Timeline
1	Idea Proposal submission	Development team	MC MM	By the call deadlines (Section 7)
2	Formal accreditation proposal submission	Development team	MC	At least 2 months before start
3	Content development, delivery preparation & credential management	Development team	MC MM	4-8 weeks
4	Implementation & course delivery	Development team	MC MM	Per course schedule (4-12 weeks)
5	Learner assessment & evaluation	Development team	MC MM	Upon completion & post-delivery

Table 3. Steps for the applicant

Step 1 — Idea Proposal submission. Any staff member from any INGENIUM partner institution may propose a microcredential or microcourses idea using the **Idea Proposal Form (Annex 1)**. The idea proposal should include the working title and brief description, target learners, a first draft of learning outcomes, estimated workload in ECTS and hours, the proposed development and teaching team, alignment with INGENIUM strategic objectives, and a preliminary budget estimate. Idea proposals must be submitted by the deadlines of the INGENIUM Annual Cycle Education Call — the Fast Track or the General Call (see Section 7).

Step 2 — Formal accreditation proposal submission of a microcredential. Following INGENIUM Committee approval, the development team submits a **Formal Microcredential Proposal** to the accrediting partner institution, using the Microcredential Proposal Model, at least two months before the proposed start date. Required supporting documentation includes INGENIUM Committee approval, Data on Participating Teachers and Commitment-to-Teach forms signed by all contributing staff, an Expression of Interest and Institutional Endorsement from partner institutions, and, where relevant, letters of authorisation for the use of institutional facilities.

Step 3 — Content development, delivery preparation and credential management. Content development (learning modules, materials, assessment tools, learner-support guides, accessibility review) should be hosted in the **INGENIUM LMS Platform**, based on Moodle and hosted by INGENIUM, although a development team may use a different LMS if that better suits its technical needs. It typically takes 4-8 weeks.

Delivery preparation also covers credential management: confirming the evaluation system (numeric or pass/not pass) and preparing the learner and certification details needed to issue the digital credential after delivery — see Section 5 and Annex 2.

FAQ — Learning platform

Q: Which institution hosts the learning platform?

A: The INGENIUM LMS Platform, based on Moodle and hosted by INGENIUM.

Q: Will partner institutions have administrative access to the platform?

A: Individual teachers identified in the design of the microcredential can upload and edit course materials and resources.

Q: Who provides technical support to learners, and who uploads and maintains course materials?

A: The teachers of the microcredential, coordinated by the Academic Responsible.

Step 4 — Implementation and course delivery. The microcredential is delivered according to its schedule, typically over 4-12 weeks. Teaching staff deliver instruction and learner support through the INGENIUM LMS and Platforms; the Accreditation Coordinator is the primary institutional contact during delivery, and the development team may agree a co-manager from another institution.

Step 5 — Learner assessment and evaluation. Upon completion, learners who meet the standards of achievement receive a digital certificate — see Section 5 for details on certification (model Annex 2).

FAQ — Module results

Q: Who will process module results, and which marks and standards apply?

A: The Accreditation Coordinator processes module results. The evaluation system can be numeric (0-10) or pass/not pass, but it must be defined during the microcredential's design process.

After delivery, a satisfaction questionnaire is administered to learners, teachers and employers; the Accreditation Coordinator prepares a monitoring report on enrolment, completion, demographics and satisfaction; and teaching staff and the academic coordinator prepare a self-assessment report on learning outcomes, pedagogical effectiveness and areas for improvement. Findings are reviewed by the INGENIUM Committee and lessons learned are shared across INGENIUM partners.

4.2. What happens administratively

In parallel, INGENIUM and the accrediting partner institution carry out the following administrative steps in response to the applicant's submissions, so no action is required from the applicant beyond what is set out in Table 3. Steps 2, 3, 4 and 6 —the full accreditation process — apply to microcredentials only; microcourses go through Steps 1 and 5 only (see Section 1.1 and 1.2).

Step	Process element	Responsibility	Format	Timeline
1	INGENIUM Committee approval	INGENIUM Committee	MC MM	Monthly review cycles
2	Initial processing & formalities review	Accreditation body	MC	Within 2 weeks
3	Quality review, public notice & approval	Accreditation body	MC	4-6 weeks
4	Administrative management setup	Accreditation body	MC	Concurrent with approval
5	Platform setup & enrolment	Accreditation body/ INGENIUM LMS	MC MM	2 weeks before start
6	Evaluation & continuous improvement	Accreditation body &	MC	Throughout & post-delivery

		INGENIUM Committee		
--	--	-----------------------	--	--

Table 4. *Administrative steps*

Step 1 — INGENIUM Committee approval. The INGENIUM Committee reviews idea proposals against criteria including alignment with INGENIUM strategic priorities and institutional capacity, quality and feasibility of the proposed learning outcomes, qualification of the proposed teaching team, potential for involving multiple INGENIUM partners, learner accessibility and market demand, and financial feasibility. The **Committee may decide whether it is a microcredential or a microcourses and approve it** unconditionally, approve with recommendations for revision, or decline with an explanation, recorded in the minutes of its approval meeting.

Steps 2-4 — Administrative review, public notice and approval. The accrediting partner institution conducts an initial administrative review, typically within two weeks, checking completeness, budget justification and quality-assurance requirements.

The registered proposal is then published for public review for seven calendar days on the accrediting partner institution and INGENIUM websites and communication channels, allowing comments, suggestions or objections.

Once approved, the Microcredential is included in accrediting partner institution's official catalogue and listed on the INGENIUM Educational Platform.

Steps 5 — Enrolment

Enrolment take place through the INGENIUM website. The Course Catalogue Officer of the responsible partner institution sets up the course on the INGENIUM Catalogue.

FAQ — Registration and the learning platform

Q: Which institution acts as the lead institution for learner registration, and how do learners register?

A: The accrediting partner institution, through the INGENIUM LMS Platform/Helpdesk, via a central INGENIUM process through the INGENIUM Catalogue.

Q: If learners register centrally, will they end up with multiple accounts and email addresses?

A: No. Students from INGENIUM universities access the platform with their own institutional accounts, through a coordinated INGENIUM credentials access system. Professionals or other external students are given a temporary account upon enrolment.

FAQ — Marketing, recruitment and selection

Q: Who is responsible for marketing the microcredential or microcourses?

A: The INGENIUM platform promotes every microcredential and microcourses, but everyone involved should promote it too. The team can designate an ultimate responsible for marketing (e.g. for generating promotional materials).

Q: Will each institution recruit learners independently or through a joint campaign?

A: All institutions should recruit students, either independently or through a joint campaign.

Q: Who manages the application and selection process?

A: It is encouraged to define objective selection criteria at design stage (e.g. order of application). Otherwise, selection is carried out by the Accreditation Coordinator together with the Academic Responsible.

5. Certification and digital credentials

This certification model applies to microcredentials, which carry ECTS credits and are registered on Europass. Microcourses follow the lighter route described in the previous section and are not required to issue this formal digital credential.

Learners who successfully complete the learning activities of a microcredential and meet the required standards of achievement receive a **digital certificate issued by the accrediting partner institution on behalf of the INGENIUM partners, who act as awarding bodies**. The certificate:

- > Displays the INGENIUM Alliance logo and branding, together with accrediting partner's institutional branding and official seal.
- > Displays the logos of all participating universities.
- > Includes the learner's name and a unique learner identifier, the verified learning outcomes and competencies achieved, and the ECTS credits awarded.
- > States the alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level and includes a URL for verification and digital authentication.
- > Is registered on the Europass Digital Credentials platform, making it verifiable and shareable across Europe — this is also the mechanism through which ECTS credits and assessment results are recorded and transferred between partners.

Learners are registered at the accrediting partner institution and are therefore recognised as members of the INGENIUM Alliance; there is no separate transcript of records beyond this digital credential. A template of the certification model used for INGENIUM microcredentials is reproduced in Annex 2.

FAQ — Certification and recognition

Q: Which institution issues the microcredential certificate, and who is responsible for transcripts?

A: The accrediting partner institution issues the digital credential on behalf of the INGENIUM partners (as awarding bodies); it is valid for the EU. There is no separate transcript of records — the Europass digital credential, managed by the accrediting partner institution, is the only record.

Q: Will the certificate display the logos of all participating universities?

A: Yes.

Q: How are ECTS credits awarded and recorded, and how are assessment results transferred between partners?

A: Both are handled through the Europass digital certificate.

Q: Will learners be registered at one institution, or recognised across all partner institutions?

A: Learners are registered at the accrediting partner institution and are therefore members of the INGENIUM Alliance.

6. Using INGENIUM microcredentials and microcourses strategically In Next INGENIUM, microcredentials are set to acquire a **stronger stakeholder engagement** dimension. Microcredentials that include stakeholders in the design or the delivery (including through consultation and other type of engagement) will be prioritised.

Some microcredentials —particularly those developed with or for industry partners, or in cutting-edge fields— are expected to become **self-financed**, raising fees from participants or from those funding the microcredential.

Microcredentials will remain an instrument for **inclusive lifelong learning** and for building **flexible learning pathways** for citizens from all walks of life, without this being limited by financial constraints.

Microcredentials are also expected to become a stronger tool for **configuring flexible learning pathways for higher-education students**, embedded across a wider share of programmes.

Microcredentials and microcourses also aim to foster educational innovation and the adoption of innovative teaching formats and assessment methods. They are closely aligned with the transformative work that INGENIUM has been carrying out.

FAQ — Sustainability and future delivery**Q: What is the plan for future iterations after the initial delivery?**

A: Microcredentials are one of the key activities for Next INGENIUM, which would provide continued financial support at a discounted rate if funded. INGENIUM also plans to strengthen stakeholder involvement in design and delivery, and to develop a more structural categorisation of Microcredentials from 2027 — with some becoming self-financed (particularly industry-linked or cutting-edge ones) while the format remains a tool for inclusive lifelong learning and for flexible learning pathways for higher-education students.

Q: What commitments are expected from each partner beyond the pilot delivery?

A: None. There is no expected commitment beyond the pilot delivery, although partners are encouraged to keep improving their microcredentials in future cycles—in particular by building in a stronger stakeholder-involvement element in both design and delivery.

The following elements help a proposal succeed and deliver lasting value for the Alliance:

- > **Involve stakeholders from the outset.** Microcredentials should be co-developed or co-implemented with industry partners or other stakeholders, ideally identified through the Knowledge Ecosystems and the September engagement process. Microcredentials developed by academics alone remain possible but should demonstrably take societal needs into account.
- > **Choose the right format.** See Section 1.1 and 1.2 and TIP 1—if full accreditation is not feasible or not yet sought, propose a microcourses instead of setting the idea aside.
- > **Plan the budget with your Partner Coordinator.** Confirm early which compensation model applies to your institution and staff, and take into account INGENIUM's commitment to inclusive, accessible and affordable lifelong learning when proposing fees and compensation rates.
- > **Decide the assessment approach at design stage.** The evaluation system (numeric 0-10 or pass/not pass) must be defined during design and stated in the application form, before formal approval.
- > **Promote widely and budget for anything beyond the basics.** All Microcredentials are promoted across INGENIUM channels (website, newsletter, social media) as a priority; additional marketing—paid promotion or dedicated campaigns—should be planned and budgeted separately, ideally covered by one of the partner institutions to keep budget planning simple.
- > **Design for future iterations.** Even though there is no commitment beyond the pilot delivery, plan the microcredential so it can be improved and repeated in future cycles, with a stronger stakeholder-involvement element in both design and delivery.

TIP 3

Microcredentials and microcourses are one of the formats most likely to grow into self-financed offers under Next INGENIUM, particularly where industry or cutting-edge-field partners are involved. Building in stakeholder involvement now makes that transition easier later.

7. The INGENIUM Annual Cycle Education Call

Microcredentials and microcourses are proposed through the same two routes as the rest of the INGENIUM Annual Education Call:

- > **The Fast Track.** Open 14 September to 16 October 2026, for initiatives that have already matured and are ready for delivery in the second semester of 2026/2027 (February-June 2027). Fast-track proposals skip the expression-of-interest step; feasibility is assessed on a rolling basis, with approvals confirmed by the INGENIUM Committees in early November.
- > **The General Call.** For microcredentials and microcourses launching in academic year 2027/2028: expressions of interest from 14 September to 13 November 2026, followed by structured networking and matchmaking, and final applications by 18 December 2026.

7.1. Application targets

Preliminary application targets for this call category are at least 4 proposals through the fast track and at least 8 through the general call. By M24 of Next INGENIUM, the Alliance targets at least 20 microcredentials with at least 15 associate partners, at least 200 enrolments, and European Digital Credentials for all completions.

Call category	Fast track (Feb-Jun 2027)	General call (AY 2027/2028)	Next INGENIUM commitments (by M24)
Microcredentials & microcourses	≥4 proposals	≥8 proposals	≥20 microcredentials with ≥15 associate partners; ≥200 enrolments; European Digital Credentials for all completions

Table 5. Application targets

7.2. The shared assessment framework

All proposals—including microcredentials and microcourses—are assessed against the same three-dimension framework used across every category of the call, adapted from the structure used across Erasmus+ actions. Each dimension is scored from 1 to 10, giving a maximum of 30; a proposal must reach a minimum score to qualify for funding.

Dimension	What it asks	Sub-criteria (adapted per category)
-----------	--------------	-------------------------------------

Relevance 1-3	Does the proposal advance what the Alliance has committed to?	Contribution to the European Campus and to genuine jointness in design and delivery · alignment with an existing or proposed Pathway · societal and labour-market relevance, drawing on the ecosystem dialogue and the Knowledge Ecosystems.
Quality 1-4	Is it well designed and can it actually be delivered?	Feasibility and regulatory realism, with an honest classification of what requires accreditation (Microcredential) or not (Microcourses) · student-centred design connected to clear learning outcomes · quality of online and blended design, with no passive formats · inclusion, multilingualism and sustainability built into the design.
Impact 1-3	What will change, and will it last?	Societal impact within and beyond the classroom · breadth and novelty of the partnership, including associate partners and stakeholders new to INGENIUM · contribution to the Alliance targets in Section 7.1 · prospects for continuing beyond the pilot.

Table 6. *Proposal assessment criteria*

On governance: technical assessment of microcredential and microcourses proposals is carried out jointly by the INGENIUM Committee and the relevant INGENIUM work packages, in coordination with the INGENIUM Technical Secretariat and, for the accreditation dimension of microcredentials, the accrediting partner institution.

Annex 1. INGENIUM MC Idea Proposal

Annex 2. INGENIUM Digital Credential

Annex 3. Microcredential check-list