

Micro-credential Center QAU

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Micro-credentials are helping to bridge the skill gap which is emerging due to rapid technological and digital technology. It is estimated that the online learning market will be around \$500 million by 2025. Covid-19 pandemic has opened our eyes to the amazing potential of digital learning to build skills, flexibly and remotely.¹ Pakistan has huge youth bulge and is suffering badly from low-skill traps which is resulting into stagnant or declining productivity in many sectors of the economy. Moreover, due to increasing life expectancy over time in the last two centuries, work span has increased and skills obtained at age 20-22 become obsolete for a work life of 40 to 55 years. There is a huge cost of inaction for employees, employers and the national economy. How can one facilitate working learners, job seekers, part-time learners, workers who are in need of upskilling/reskilling among many others? How can learning be scaled and made accessible to all? This is possible with use of technology, flexible online and hybrid learning , and using AI and other tools. Short soft

¹[Digital learning can help us close the global education gap. This is how.](#)

skill based courses are a way forward. Digital learning should be an essential part of the universities for preparing a skill-centric workforce to bridge this gap. For this QAU has taken an initiative of launching the micro-credentials center.

What are micro-credentials?



Small learning experiences, such as short courses leading to micro-credentials, allow for a targeted acquisition of skills and competences adapted to a fast-changing society and labor market while not replacing traditional qualifications. Their objective is to be complementary. Secondly, this learning experience is inclusive, flexible and affordable.

A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO MICRO-CREDENTIALS

The Ministry of Information Technology has already launched a set of courses which are helping many and generating earning opportunities both at national and global level. But most of these courses are narrow in domain and preparing the workforce for low end products. *So far, there is no national approach which demands higher education institutions for developing micro-credentials programs which ensure quality, relevance and some minimum standards so that these micro-credentials are acceptable in other parts of the world as well.*

Microcredentials
Cetner QAU

Objectives of the center

The goal is to provide on-time quality credentials responsive to changing market realities.

Objectives of this initiative are: i) imparting quality skill-centric flexible, accessible, scalable and affordable competency

Figure 1: Micro-credentials center QAU

based education measuring skill and knowledge not time. ii) breaking learning into small chunks iii) complementary to existing credentials not a substitute and iv) developing a dialogue for having a national approach for well-thought micro-credentials initiatives at the national level.

Micro-credentials center role

Micro-credentials represent distinct knowledge and skills and demonstrate a level of pathway achievement to employers, co-workers and one's professional network. Micro-credentials offer several benefits to both individuals and organizations. Micro-credential are popular because they are - flexible and convenient, targeted and specific, cost-effective and relevant to the workplace.

This center will not only facilitate Qauid-i-Azam University and will seek some financial and technical support from relevant government and private organizations but will also provide a platform for development of a national strategy on development of skill-centric workforce which meets the needs of the society and meet some international standards.

Flexible and convenient: Micro-credentials can often be earned through online courses and other forms of remote learning, making them accessible to people regardless of their location or schedule. They can be earned in a relatively short period of time, allowing individuals to develop new skills and knowledge quickly and efficiently. Cloud computing, big data and e-commerce look set to remain focal points for big business, along with advances in digital encryption, non-humanoid robots and AI.²

Targeted and specific: Unlike traditional degrees, which often require a broad range of courses, micro-credentials focus on a specific set of skills or knowledge. This allows individuals to develop expertise in a particular area that is directly relevant to their career goals or interests. **Cost-effective:** Micro-credentials are often less expensive than traditional degrees and can be earned over a shorter period of time. This makes them

²[Global growth in online learning](#)

an attractive option for individuals who want to develop new skills or knowledge without committing to a long-term educational program. **Relevant to the workplace:** Many micro-credentials are designed to meet the needs of specific industries or professions, making them directly relevant to the workplace. This can make them particularly valuable for individuals who want to enhance their career prospects or for organizations that want to develop the skills of their employees. Overall, micro-credentials offer a flexible and cost-effective way for individuals to develop new skills and knowledge that is directly relevant to their career goals, while also providing organizations with a way to enhance the skills of their employees.

Business Model

Micro-credential or similar centers often become a burden on institutions by having some regular staff and there are hardly any incentives for making such initiatives financially viable. Whosoever takes this responsibility of this or some other similar center should have a complete business plan which is flexible and open for discussion and dialogue but free of all bottlenecks created by routine university administration with financial autonomy for a period of at least 6 months to 2 years. There should be separate account for the center to be operated jointly by the Director and treasurer but treasurer should be bound to release all funds and no body has power to utilize funds of the center for any purpose other than center development. Any myopic approach on the matter will seriously damage this national cause. Director should file PC-1 or seek some other seed money in liaison with other national/international organizations. has no power to stop any of the fund Once it gets established and clear TORs of everyone working including Directors are developed through experiential learning, checks and balances should be in place. Director performance should be monitored strictly in accordance with TORs and incentives should be directly linked to fulfilment of TORs. There should be separate board consisting of eminent market oriented professionals, leading experts from industry and other fields which should meet at least once in a quarter under the Chair , the Vice Chancellor. This board proceedings should be directly placed in the Syndicate. Experi-

ential learning over time will help to develop a course of action of considering some of these credentials for credit for regular degree.

Coat and color

The Boston Terrier is characteristically marked with white in proportion to either black, [brindle](#), seal (color of a wet seal, a very dark brown that looks black except in the bright sun), or a combination of the three. Any other color is not accepted as a Boston Terrier by the American Kennel Club, as they are usually obtained by crossbreeding with other breeds and the dog loses its characteristic “tuxedo” appearance.³ Any Boston Terrier from AKC parentage regardless of the color, or if it is a splash or has a blue eye or weak ears, can be and are registered by the AKC and participate in any AKC sporting events.

According to the American Kennel Club, the Boston Terrier’s markings are broken down into two categories: Required, which consists of a white chest, white muzzle band, and a white band between the eyes; and Desired, which includes the Required markings plus a white collar, white on the forelegs, [forelegs](#), up to the [hocks](#) on the [rear legs](#). For [conformation showing](#), symmetrical markings are preferred. Due to the Boston Terrier’s markings resembling [formal wear](#), in addition to its refined and pleasant personality, the breed is commonly referred to as “the American Gentleman.”

Temperment

Boston Terrier is a gentle breed that typically has a strong, happy-go-lucky, and friendly personality with a merry sense of humor. Boston Terriers are generally eager to please their owner and can be easily trained. They can be very protective of their owners, which may result in aggressive and territorial behavior toward other pets and strangers. The breed requires only a minimal amount of grooming.

³“Boston Terrier Dog Breed Information”. Akc.org. Retrieved 11 December 2017.



Figure 2: Prof.Dr. Niaz Akhtar,VC QAU



Figure 3: Zahid Asghar, Professor School of Economics

While originally bred for fighting as well as hunting rats in garment factories, they were later bred for companionship. They are not considered terriers by the American Kennel Club, however, but are part of the non-sporting group.

Both females and males are generally quiet and bark only when necessary. Their usually sensible attitude toward barking makes them excellent choices for apartment dwellers. They enjoy being around people, get along well with children, the elderly, other canines, and non-canine pets, if properly socialized.

Grooming

With a short, shiny, smooth coat, Boston Terriers require little grooming. Bostons produce light shedding, and weekly brushing of their fine coat is effective at removing loose hair. Brushing promotes the health of the coat because it distributes skin oils, and it also encourages new hair growth. Occasional bathing is suitable for the breed.⁴

The nails of Boston Terriers require regular trimming. Overgrown nails not only have the potential to inflict pain on the breed, but they can also make walking difficult or tear off after getting snagged on something.

Similarly to nail trimming, tooth brushing should also be done regularly to promote good oral health. The risk of the breed developing oral pain, gum infection, or bad breath can be decreased with regular tooth brushing that removes plaque buildup and other bacteria. In addition, poor dental hygiene can lead to tooth root abscesses that can lead to damage around the tissue and eventually lead to the loss of teeth.

⁴“Get to Know the Boston Terrier”, ‘The American Kennel Club’, retrieved 19 May 2014