

coursera

Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2025

Insights from Students and Employers



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Foreword

As the labor market changes and GenAI reshapes industries, micro-credentials help students, employers, and universities adapt quickly.

Nearly 9 in 10 students see micro-credentials as key to job success—a powerful statistic in an era when the labor market is in flux. This is especially true for generative AI (GenAI) credentials, with 96% of students favoring their inclusion in degree programs.

Meanwhile, employers highly value candidates who hold recognized micro-credentials—an encouraging sign that industry, too, is embracing this new form of workforce readiness. Globally, 96% of employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's job application. Additionally, 9 in 10 are willing to offer micro-credential holders a higher starting salary, and more would hire a less experienced candidate with a GenAI credential over someone more experienced without one.

Recognizing these trends, higher education institutions are using career credentials to strengthen students' long-term career prospects. Fifty-three percent of universities offering micro-credentials provide credit-bearing options, and 82% indicate plans to do so within the next few years.¹

While integrating new learning models requires careful coordination between academic administrators, faculty, and industry partners, we're seeing innovative institutions crack the code. At the University of Szeged in Hungary, for instance, students can fulfill their degree requirements by completing Professional Certificates that count as credits in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)—providing added value to their education.²

The *Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2025* brings together perspectives from over 2,000 students and employers across six regions, illustrating both the growing demand and the real-world impact of micro-credentials. As Chief Content Officer at Coursera, I've seen firsthand how industry-aligned, skills-focused education can transform lives and livelihoods.

Whether you're leading a university, supporting workforce development, or shaping the future of work, my hope is that these findings will inspire you to embrace the micro-credentials movement and build a future where learning truly prepares individuals for success in the modern job market.



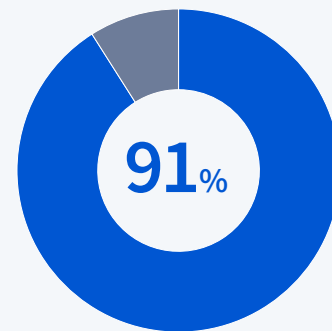
Marni Baker Stein
Chief Content Officer,
Coursera

Micro-credentials: The big picture

Students and employers see micro-credentials as critical to career success

Students and employers overwhelmingly view micro-credentials as critical to career readiness. In fact, 85% of students who have earned a micro-credential say it improves job prospects, and 91% believe it will help them succeed once employed.

Ninety percent of employers are also willing to offer higher starting salaries—often 10–15% more—for candidates with recognized or credit-bearing credentials. Plus, 96% agree that micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application, with 87% of employers having hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year.



of students with micro-credentials believe these credentials will help them succeed in their job

What is a micro-credential?

A micro-credential is a record of focused learning achievement verifying what a learner knows, understands, or can do. It includes an assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider.³

A micro-credential holds standalone value and may also contribute to a larger qualification—such as a full degree—through recognition of prior learning. Critically, accrediting agencies recognize micro-credentials that meet the quality standards they set.

On Coursera, [Professional Certificates and Specializations](#) are two types of micro-credentials that help learners develop in-demand skills for specific jobs or industries. Entry-level programs typically take 3–12 months to complete and feature skill-building in areas such as project management, data analysis, and software development. Many offer additional career support, including résumé help, interview practice, and networking opportunities, ensuring learners can demonstrate competency to employers and stay competitive in a fast-changing job market.



Insights in action

Higher education: Incorporate micro-credentials into degrees to meet rising student demand for career relevance.

Governments: Promote credentials through workforce development programs to train job seekers and address local skill gaps.

Employers: Recognize micro-credentials in hiring and L&D frameworks to find job-ready talent.

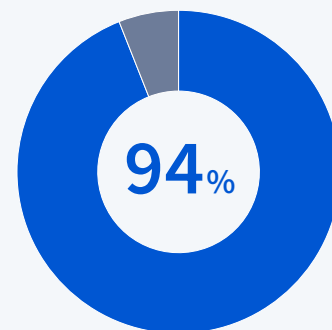
Learners: Pursue micro-credentials that align with target roles or industries, highlighting these on résumés.

Credit-bearing credentials drive student enrollment and engagement

Student interest and engagement soar when campuses offer credit-bearing micro-credentials through recognized academic partners.

Students are 2x more likely to remain engaged (from 40% to 89%) and 2.4x more likely to enroll (from 36% to 88%) if a degree program offers credit-bearing micro-credentials. Ninety-four percent of students also say they're eager to earn credentials that count as credit toward their degree—up from 55% in 2023.⁴ And 41% of those who have micro-credentials earned at least one that was credit-bearing.

Higher education leaders offering micro-credentials see them as a path to happier students, with nearly 9 in 10 agreeing they boost satisfaction and engagement. Seventy-five percent agree that students are more likely to enroll in programs that offer micro-credentials for academic credit.⁵



of students are eager to earn credit-bearing credentials

Country spotlight

Kazakhstan Ministry of Science of Higher Education

90+ universities in Kazakhstan [partner](#) with Coursera through its Ministry of Science and Higher Education, offering a range of courses and Professional Certificates in cybersecurity, project management, and generative AI (GenAI). Student success stories are abundant:

1. **Zhanbota launched a bakery**, applying insights from Coursera's Business Strategy course.
2. **Rakhat and Abat built an electronic queue system** at Zhubanov University.
3. **13 learners at Atyrau University won local start-up competitions** after completing Coursera certificates in entrepreneurship.



Insights in action

Higher education: Integrate micro-credentials backed by accrediting bodies (e.g., [ACE](#), [ECTS](#)) and qualification frameworks (e.g., [NSQF](#)) into your curriculum.

Governments: Incentivize universities to offer credit-bearing micro-credentials, expanding access to recognized, job-aligned education.

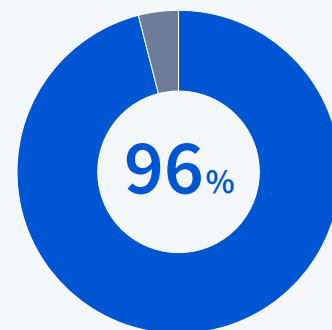
Employers: Co-design courses institutions can offer for academic credit, ensuring students graduate workforce-ready.

Learners: Use credit-bearing credentials to gain in-depth industry knowledge and stand out to employers.

GenAI micro-credentials gain momentum

GenAI dominates as the most crucial technical skill for career preparation, with 86% of students prioritizing it above other in-demand skills like Data Strategy and Software Development. Seventeen percent of students have already earned a GenAI micro-credential—and 96% believe GenAI training belongs in degree programs. Nearly 9 in 10 students who earned a GenAI micro-credential report improved AI skills for academic work.

Meanwhile, 92% of employers say they'd hire a less experienced candidate with a GenAI credential over someone more experienced without one, illustrating GenAI's impact on hiring decisions.



of students believe GenAI training belongs in degree programs

Blueprint: Equip learners with foundational GenAI skills

- 1. Develop comprehensive AI literacy programs:** These should include not only technical training but also modules on AI ethics, data privacy, and the social impact of AI, ensuring that learners are equipped to use AI responsibly and effectively.
- 2. Integrate GenAI across disciplines:** AI isn't just for computer science students; its applications span disciplines. Universities should ensure that AI literacy is a core component of all academic programs, from the humanities to the sciences.
- 3. Provide faculty development opportunities:** Offer workshops, seminars, and resources to help faculty build their confidence and competence in teaching AI concepts, particularly those related to ethics and societal impact.



Insights in action

Higher education: Embed [GenAI micro-credentials](#) into your curriculum to prepare students for the future of work.

Governments: Fund workforce training programs that promote GenAI literacy and highlight the impact of ethical development and usage.

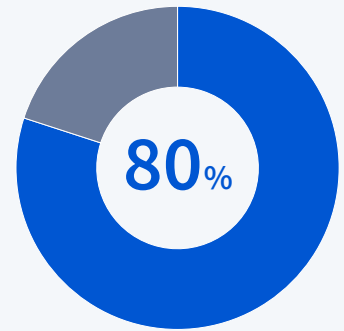
Employers: Provide GenAI training to employees, especially in roles related to data analysis, operations, and business strategy.

Learners: Prioritize [GenAI certificates and specializations](#) to differentiate yourself in a competitive labor market, as recruiters increasingly value candidates with GenAI skills.

Micro-credentials lead to real job outcomes: raises, promotions, and confidence

Eight in 10 students who earned micro-credentials reported that these certifications helped boost their confidence in their skills. One in 3 students said micro-credentials helped them secure internship opportunities.

Entry-level employees with micro-credentials report tangible career benefits, including 28% who received a pay increase and 21% who earned a promotion. Among those with GenAI micro-credentials, 70% say their productivity increased, and over 60% developed better problem-solving skills. Meanwhile, 80% of entry-level employees with micro-credentials feel they enhance their day-to-day job performance, reflecting a clear ROI for individuals and organizations alike.



of students say micro-credentials boost their skill confidence



Insights in action

Higher education: Showcase alumni who've leveraged micro-credentials for higher salaries or faster promotions to attract future learners.

Governments: Prioritize funding toward micro-credentials in fields with skill shortages (e.g., IT, cybersecurity) to strengthen local economies.

Employers: Measure the ROI of credentialed employees, tracking productivity and retention as success metrics.

Learners: Use your credentials to improve skill mastery, stand out in job interviews, and negotiate higher salaries.



My Coursera journey has improved my skills and knowledge. Each course has provided valuable insights, shaped my perspective on industry trends, and fostered continuous growth.



Afeef Nuqman Bin 'Arash

Diploma in IT Cybersecurity,
BAC Education Group



Micro-credentials help individuals and institutions navigate change

Seventy-one percent of entry-level employees are worried about rapid changes in their industry. For them, micro-credentials offer a solution: 83% say these credentials boost their confidence to adapt to these changes.

Employers also find value in micro-credentials, which can quickly fill emerging skill gaps, mitigate talent shortages, and support workers through technological disruption—especially as GenAI adoption accelerates. Plus, 94% believe they reduce first-year training costs, which can help manage industry changes more efficiently.



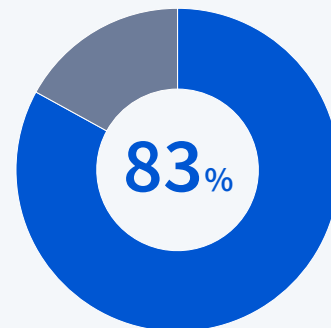
Insights in action

Higher education: Quickly adapt curriculum to offer micro-credentials that help students build emerging skills.

Governments: Partner with local businesses to address skill deficits in real time, incorporating micro-credentials into workforce development programs.

Employers: Formalize micro-credential pathways for roles undergoing rapid transformation (e.g., data analysts, product managers).

Learners: Continuously upskill—particularly if your field is evolving quickly—and show adaptability with recognized micro-credentials.



of employees worried about rapid changes in their industry say micro-credentials will help them adapt



Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2024

See how micro-credentials have evolved to shape today's landscape.

[Download report](#)

Insights from students and employers

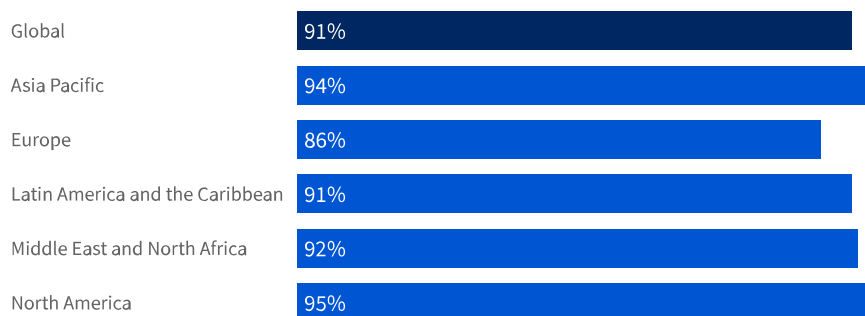
Building essential skills and job readiness

Employers around the world increasingly see micro-credentials as a powerful advantage for new hires

Nine in 10 believe entry-level candidates with micro-credentials demonstrate higher proficiency in essential competencies such as problem-solving and communication, while another 9 in 10 say these skills are immediately applicable on the job.

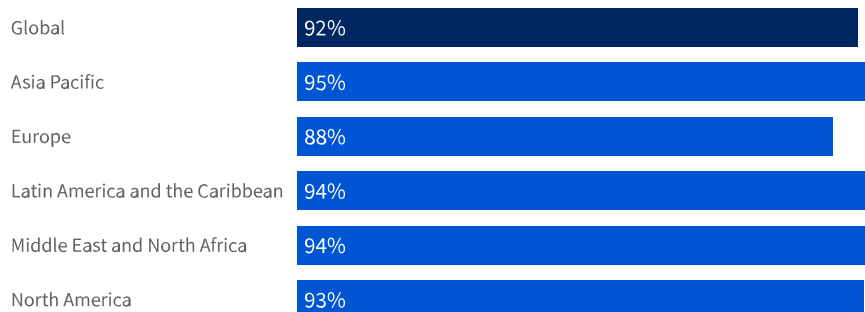
Employers say micro-credentials boost skill proficiency

Question: Employees with micro-credentials demonstrate higher proficiency in essential, industry-relevant skills. (Agree or strongly agree)



Employers say graduates with micro-credentials possess skills that are immediately applicable to job roles

Question: Graduates with micro-credentials possess skills that are immediately applicable to job roles. (Agree or strongly agree)



“

The Coursera integration equips students to tackle current and future global challenges. We're developing a curriculum that meets today's market demands and anticipates future trends to ensure our graduates remain competitive and innovative.



Jorge Bossio

Director of Digital Learning and Educational Innovation, Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas



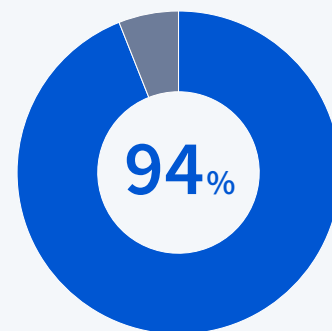
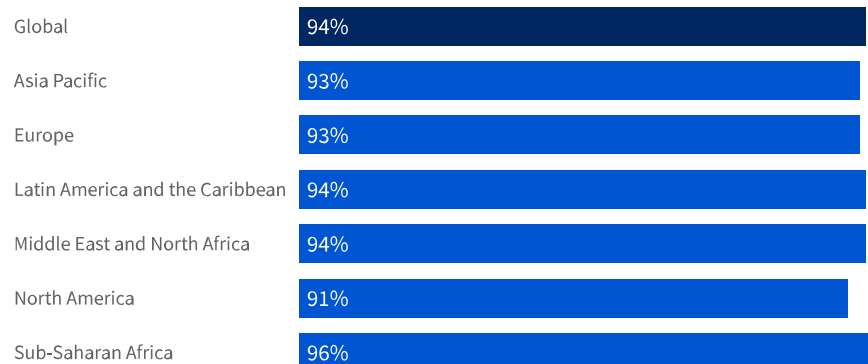
A catalyst for employability

Students use micro-credentials to stay ahead

Ninety-four percent of students say micro-credentials accelerate career-skill development, and nearly 9 in 10 believe they'll help them succeed or remain competitive in a changing work environment. As global labor markets continue to evolve, micro-credentials offer a practical, flexible way for students and employees to stay ahead—quickly bridging skill gaps and driving real-world impact.

Students believe micro-credentials help build essential career skills

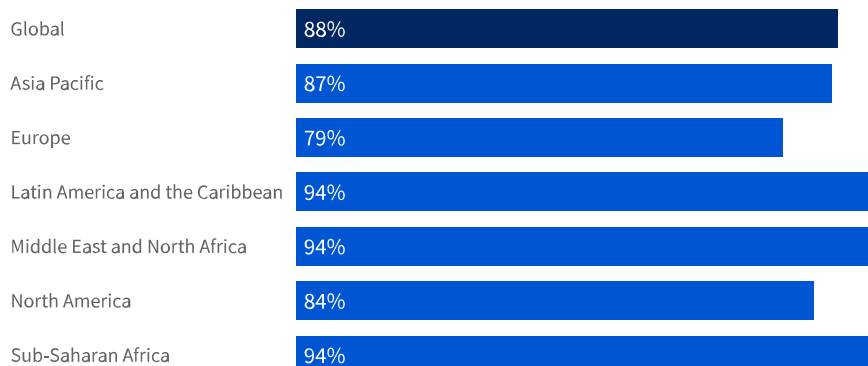
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Micro-credentials help me build essential career skills." (Agree or strongly agree)



of students agree that micro-credentials help build essential career skills

Students agree that micro-credentials will help them succeed in their job

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Once employed, earning a micro-credential will help me succeed in my job." (Agree or strongly agree)



The growing popularity of skill-based hiring

Employers strongly endorse micro-credentials as a powerful driver of career success

Nearly all (97%) are already using or actively exploring skills-based hiring—a 20-point jump since 2023—reflecting a sharp upswing in the demand for verifiable, job-ready skills.⁶ Among the few employers not currently using skills-based hiring, 93% plan to implement it in the future.

In parallel, 96% of global employers say a micro-credential strengthens a candidate's application, up from 88% two years ago.⁷ This growing confidence also shows up in hiring decisions, with 87% of employers having hired at least one candidate holding a micro-credential in the past year.

On campuses, 97% of higher ed leaders offering micro-credentials believe these programs enhance students' long-term career outcomes.⁸ Meanwhile, around 9 in 10 students believe credit-bearing and GenAI micro-credentials improve job prospects.

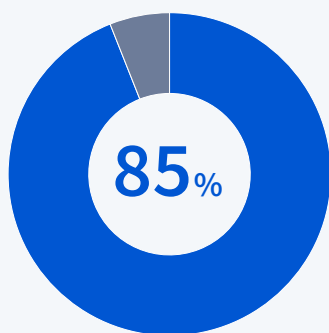
Together, these trends confirm micro-credentials' role as a key differentiator for candidates in a skills-first hiring landscape.

97%

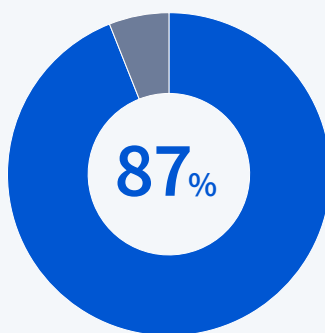
of employers are already using or actively exploring skills-based hiring

96%

agree that micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's job application



of employers are more likely to hire a candidate with a micro-credential compared to one without



of employers hired a candidate with a micro-credential in the past year

“

Employer demand for skills-based hiring requires educators to prioritize skills-based learning. We must adapt our curricula to prepare students for a job market where desired qualifications are shifting too quickly for traditional education to keep pace.



Francesca Lockhart
Professor and Cybersecurity
Clinic Program Lead
University of Texas at Austin



Driving salary premiums and employer ROI

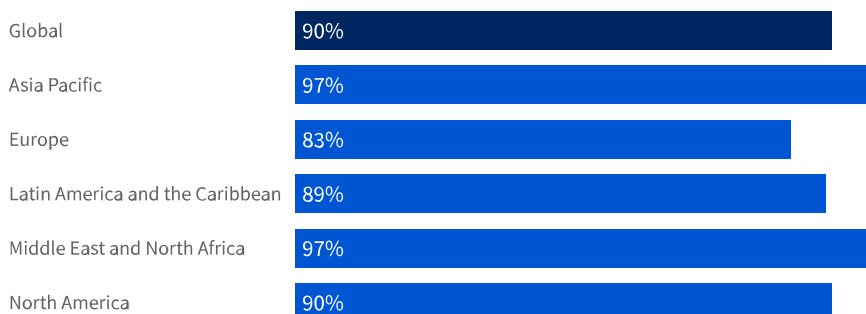
Micro-credentials deliver tangible financial benefits for both employees and employers

More than half of surveyed employers believe micro-credentials give their organization a competitive edge, citing improved productivity, innovation, and lower onboarding costs.

Globally, 9 in 10 employers say they're willing to offer candidates with micro-credentials a higher starting salary, with Asia Pacific (97%) and Middle East and North Africa (97%) leading the trend.

Employers offer higher salaries for micro-credential holders

Question: Are you willing to offer graduates with micro-credentials a higher starting salary compared to those without, recognizing the value of their specialized skills and preparedness? (Yes responses)



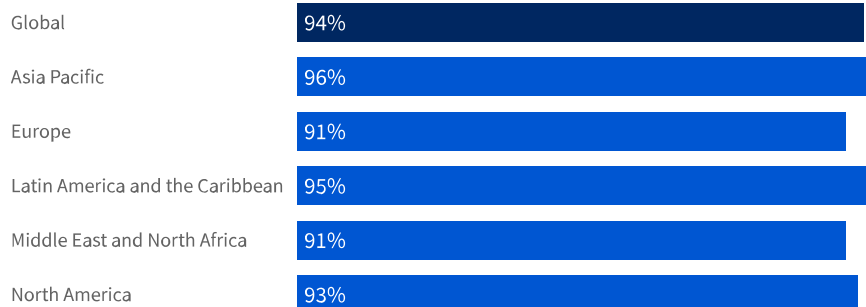
Employers look for GenAI skills

- ✓ **Seventy-four percent** report challenges sourcing GenAI talent, highlighting an urgent demand for academically endorsed GenAI programs.
- ✓ **Ninety-four percent** believe universities should equip graduates with GenAI skills for entry-level roles.
- ✓ **Seventy-five percent** say they'd prefer to hire a less experienced candidate with a GenAI credential than a more experienced candidate without.

Employers also cite significant gains in productivity and efficiency: 94% believe micro-credentials reduce training time and costs.

Employers say that micro-credentials reduce training time and costs

Question: Hiring entry-level candidates with micro-credentials can reduce the time and costs associated with first-year training. (Agree and strongly agree)



Eighty-nine percent of employers confirm actual cost savings—most commonly in the 10–20% range, with the exception of employers in Latin America and the Caribbean, who cited the most savings (in the 21–30% range).

Employers around the world report savings

Question: Have you observed savings in training costs for entry-level hires with micro-credentials? If yes, how much of your overall annual training costs do you anticipate saving?

Asia Pacific: Nearly half (49%) reported 10–20% savings



Europe: More than half (53%) reported 10–20% savings



Latin America and the Caribbean: Nearly half (45%) reported 21–30% savings



Middle East and North Africa: More than half (60%) reported 10–20% savings



North America: More than half (60%) reported 10–20% savings



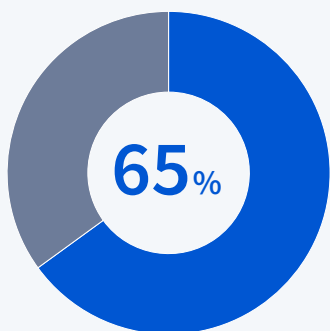
Among entry-level employees, 1 in 3 attribute a recent pay increase to earning a micro-credential, and 1 in 5 of those saw raises exceeding 15%.

Bridging soft skills gaps and improving job performance

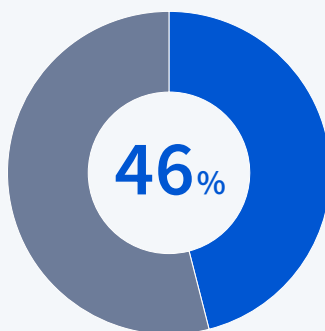
Micro-credentials bridge both soft and technical skill gaps

Soft skills remain a challenge: 7 in 10 employers say recent graduates often struggle with communication, resilience, and active listening.⁹ Yet 8 in 10 entry-level employees with micro-credentials report improved job performance—validating that short-form programs can rapidly address workplace demands.

GenAI emerges as the most sought-after technical skill for students, employees, and employers. Among students, 86% name GenAI as essential for future roles, while 92% of employers prioritize GenAI-savvy candidates. These trends confirm that micro-credentials play a critical role in bridging both soft and technical skill gaps—equipping learners with advanced GenAI capabilities that are increasingly vital for success in today's fast-evolving industries.



of employers cited soft skills as the top gap among new grads,¹⁰ followed by tech skills



of employers say micro-credentials help address both, ensuring learners gain the foundational competencies and emerging technical expertise



Job Skills Report 2025

Explore GenAI skill trends and how they intersect with micro-credentials.

[Get insights](#)

Top everyday skills

Most important to students for job preparation

Business Communication

Active Listening

Collaboration

Resilience & Adaptability

Prioritization

Most important to entry-level employees

Business Communication

Collaboration

Active Listening

Prioritization

Resilience & Adaptability

Employers prioritize in new hires with micro-credentials

Business Communication

Resilience & Adaptability

Change Management

Active Listening

Prioritization

Top technical skills

Most important to students for job preparation

Generative AI (GenAI)

Software Development

Data Strategy

Business Analytics

Cybersecurity

Most important to entry-level employees

Generative AI (GenAI)

Business Analytics

Data Strategy

Cybersecurity

Software Development

Employers prioritize in new hires with micro-credentials

Generative AI (GenAI)

Cybersecurity

Business Analytics

Digital Marketing & E-Commerce

Prioritization

Micro-credential adoption trends

The growing adoption of industry micro-credentials

Learners are opting for micro-credentials to achieve quick, measurable impact

When choosing micro-credentials, students prioritize accreditation and quality assurance (61%), hands-on training (58%), and employer reputation (57%).

Two-thirds of students and 3 in 4 entry-level employees with micro-credentials have earned at least 2, with most continuing to enroll in multiple programs over time.

Students prioritize quality and relevance in a micro-credential

Question: When evaluating a micro-credential, which factors are most important to you? (Select all that apply)

Students look for accreditation or quality assurance stamps.

61%

Students want hands-on training exercises embedded.

58%

Students prefer industry-issued credentials.

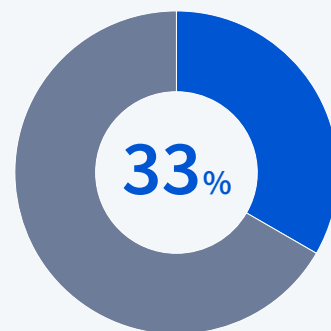
57%

Student adoption of micro-credentials

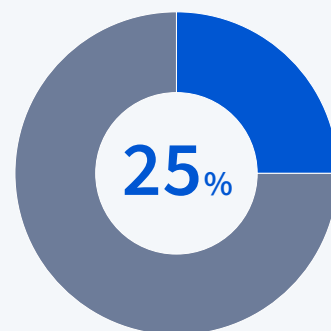
2 in 3 students who earn a micro-credential don't stop at one; they go on to earn multiple.

Employee adoption of micro-credentials

3 in 4 entry-level employees who earn a micro-credential say they've earned more than one.



1 in 3 students say they've earned a micro-credential



1 in 4 entry-level employees report having earned a micro-credential on the job

More than 8 in 10 employers globally say they're at least moderately familiar with micro-credential training. Employers report that 95% of micro-credential holders show initiative, clear skill competencies, and a stronger commitment to professional growth—leading many organizations to integrate micro-credentials into their own upskilling and hiring programs.¹¹

A similar pattern emerges on campus: More than half (51%) of higher education leaders say their institutions already offer micro-credentials, allowing students to develop applicable, job-ready skills while earning their degree. Of those, 73% expanded their offerings to offer additional micro-credentials.¹²

80+ Professional Certificates provide pathways to jobs

Software Development

 Meta Front-End Developer

 IBM Full Stack Software Developer

 Meta Back-End Developer

Data

 Google Data Analytics

 IBM Data Science

 IBM Data Analyst

Project Management

 Google Project Management

 IBM Project Manager

 IBM IT Project Manager

Cybersecurity

 Google Cybersecurity

 IBM Cybersecurity Analyst

 Microsoft Cybersecurity Analyst

Design

 Google UX Design

 Adobe Graphic Designer

 Microsoft UX Design

Payroll and Accounting


 Intuit Bookkeeping

 IBM Data Science

 IBM Data Analyst

Cloud

 AWS Cloud Technology Consultant

 Microsoft Cloud Support Associate

 AWS Cloud Support Associate

Business and Marketing

 Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce

 Meta Social Media Marketing

 Meta Marketing Analytics

Information Technology

 Google IT Support

 IBM IT Support

 Microsoft IT Support Specialist

Igniting student confidence and career breakthroughs

Micro-credentials are quickly gaining mainstream adoption, with students, employers, and higher education leaders all reporting significant benefits

Among students who earned a micro-credential, 85% cite increased confidence—a boost that translates into tangible outcomes, from landing internships (31%) to adapting more quickly to new roles (21%).



Top student outcomes

85% of students who have earned a micro-credential report greater confidence in their skills. Direct career outcomes include:

- Landing internships
- Adapting to a new job more quickly
- Securing a new job

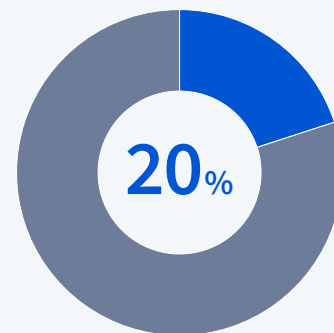


Top employee outcomes

4 in 5 entry-level employees view micro-credentials as confidence boosters in fast-changing fields. Their most commonly reported benefits include:

- Adapting to a new job faster
- Securing job interviews
- Landing a new job

Even those without micro-credentials see their potential: 92% believe these credentials will enhance their confidence on the job.



of employees attribute securing a job to the micro-credential they earned



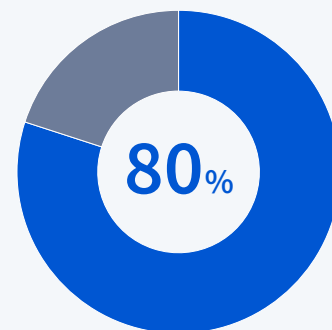
In Spain, Alfonso X El Sabio University's Skill School integrates courses on Coursera throughout its degree learning program, providing students with the opportunity to earn certificates that enhance their employment.

Credit-bearing micro-credentials increase student engagement

Adding value to degree programs

Today's students weigh job readiness as they decide on a degree program

Globally, a student's likelihood of enrolling more than doubles—from 36% to 75%—when a program includes any micro-credential.



of higher education leaders offering micro-credentials say they help with student retention

The effect is even greater for programs with specialized credentials:

Students are more likely to enroll if programs offer credit-bearing credentials through recognized academic partners

88%

Students are more likely to enroll if programs offer a GenAI micro-credential

89%

Higher education leaders validate these findings, with 72% reporting that students are more inclined to enroll in credit-bearing micro-credential programs. Additionally, 4 in 5 leaders offering micro-credentials say they help with student retention.¹³

Faced with a changing labor market, students want confidence that their degree will translate to real-world career success. By incorporating micro-credentials—particularly those offering academic credit or GenAI skills—campuses can differentiate themselves, fueling both recruitment and reputation in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Deepening engagement and satisfaction

Micro-credentials don't just attract enrollments; they also keep students motivated

Students are twice as likely to remain engaged in a degree program that offers micro-credentials, with engagement soaring to nearly 89% for credit-bearing credentials, and 91% for GenAI credentials — a threefold rise compared to programs without them.

Nine in 10 higher ed leaders who offer micro-credentials see higher satisfaction among learners—a factor often tied to lower dropout rates.¹⁶ By weaving high-value, job-aligned micro-credentials into the curriculum, institutions can sustain momentum, ensure workforce relevance, and ultimately bolster student success long after graduation.



Learners flock to GenAI globally

- ✓ GenAI course enrollments on Coursera doubled from 2024 to 2025.¹⁴
- ✓ To date, there have been over 8 million enrollments in GenAI, with 12 people per minute signing up for GenAI content in 2025.
- ✓ 54% of these enrollments are from emerging markets (India, Colombia, Mexico).¹⁵



A well-designed micro-credential empowers students with job-specific skills and provides employers with a clear signal of relevant expertise—a win-win for both sides.



Vikas Wadhvani
Director of Learning and
Certifications
 Meta

Rising demand for credit-bearing micro-credentials

Students with micro-credentials highly value credit-bearing options, with nearly 9 in 10 agreeing that earning one improves their job prospects

In fact, 94% want micro-credentials to count toward their degree.

Employers also acknowledge the importance of these credentials, being 1.3 times more likely to offer higher starting salaries to entry-level candidates with credit-bearing micro-credentials. For both learners and employers, these credentials unite academic rigor with career preparation—anchoring student success and supporting workforce development initiatives.

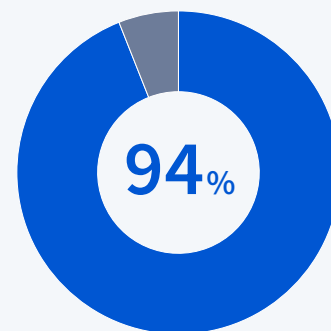
Beyond helping students and boosting employability, credit-bearing micro-credentials can drive strategic growth for campuses. More than half (53%) of higher education leaders offering micro-credentials say their institution offers credit options, and 82% indicate plans to do so within the next few years.¹⁸

Credit-bearing pathways differentiate universities in a crowded market—offering a direct bridge between practical skill-building and academic progress.

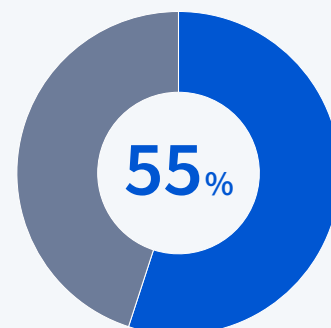


Takeaways for workforce development leaders

- ✓ **Add credit-bearing credentials to job training:** With employers offering higher salaries for credit-bearing credentials compared to general ones, consider including industry certifications with academic credit in digital training programs to help job seekers see higher earning potential.
- ✓ **Build degree pathways:** Explore partnership opportunities with universities to offer job seekers in degree programs immediate employment and long-term educational advancement support.



of students are eager to earn credentials that count as credit toward their degree—up from



in 2024—reflecting an uptick in demand for academically recognized credentials¹⁷

Project Advance Austin's credit integration with Coursera

[Project Advance Austin](#), part of the University of Texas at Austin's Texas Leadership Education and Development unit, connects students with local nonprofits to gain real-world project management experience.

By integrating Coursera's [IBM Project Manager Professional Certificate](#)—now offered for academic credit—the program has become transformative. Students complete the 8-course series during the fall semester, applying their learnings directly to nonprofit projects.

This approach has improved student retention and led to positive employment outcomes. Students frequently update their LinkedIn profiles with new certifications, significantly enhancing their job prospects. One student even started their own nonprofit organization.

The program's goal is to equip students for modern project management careers, demonstrating the value of flexible and integrated educational models. This strategy aligns with the university's broader goals of academic and professional readiness.

“

Remarkably, the program has seen zero attrition this year among its 75 participants. Offering Coursera modules for academic credit has significantly boosted student engagement and persistence. With modules integrated into their academic journey, students view them as essential to their development. The hands-on projects in Coursera's courses resonate deeply with them, providing valuable opportunities to explore and apply new tools.



Marc Pereira

Assistant Director, Texas Leadership Education and Development
University of Texas at Austin



GenAI micro-credentials boost productivity

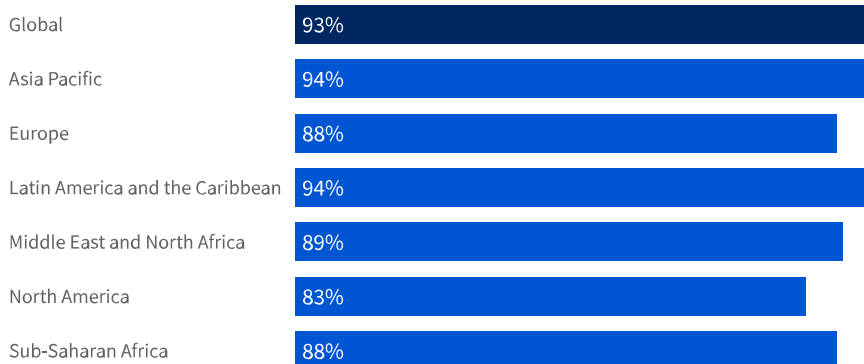
Drive student efficiency with GenAI

GenAI-focused micro-credentials have seen early but rapid adoption

Despite only 17% of students having earned one, 87% of those students report improved GenAI skills for academic work. And 93% of all students believe GenAI training belongs in degree programs.

Students want campuses to prioritize GenAI training

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “GenAI skills training should be part of degree programs.” (Agree or strongly agree)



As micro-credentials gain momentum, ensuring access to GenAI skills remains a key challenge. New research, in particular, shows that fewer women are enrolling in GenAI courses, highlighting the need for targeted strategies to close this gender gap.



Closing the Gender Gap in GenAI Skills

Learn how institutions can boost women's participation in GenAI training.

[Download playbook](#)

Bridging the employer support gap

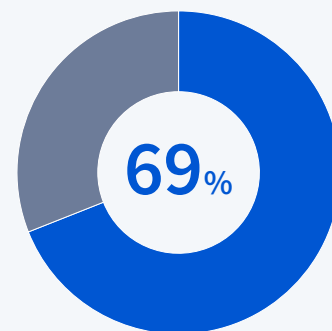
GenAI micro-credentials rapidly boost employee efficiency, yet employer support lags behind demand

Among entry-level employees, 24% already hold a GenAI micro-credential—citing higher productivity (70%) and better problem-solving (63%) as key benefits. Those without credentials also see potential value in acquiring them: 77% predict a productivity boost, while nearly half anticipate gaining new responsibilities.



How GenAI training benefits entry-level employees

- ✓ Productivity increase
- ✓ Better problem-solving capabilities
- ✓ More job responsibilities

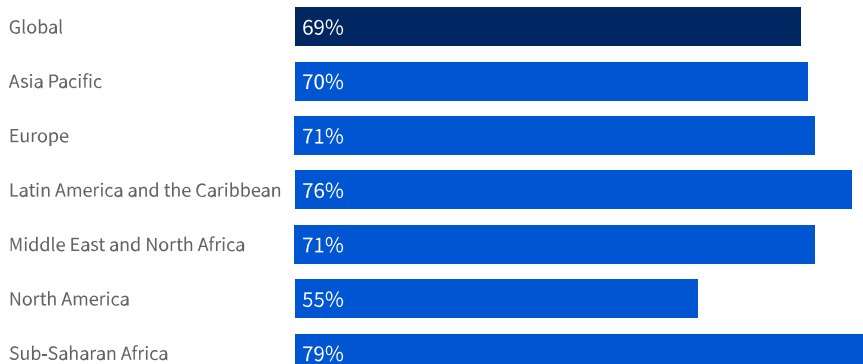


Globally, only 33% of entry-level employees receive GenAI training from their employers, yet 69% want it.

Globally, only 33% of entry-level employees receive GenAI training from their employers, yet 69% want it. And while 96% of employers are willing to train their workforce in GenAI skills, 94% believe universities should shoulder the responsibility. This gap creates opportunities for campus-industry collaboration on GenAI upskilling.

The majority of entry-level employees want GenAI training support

Question: Would you like your employer to support you with GenAI training? (If not offered; Yes responses)



Navigating change

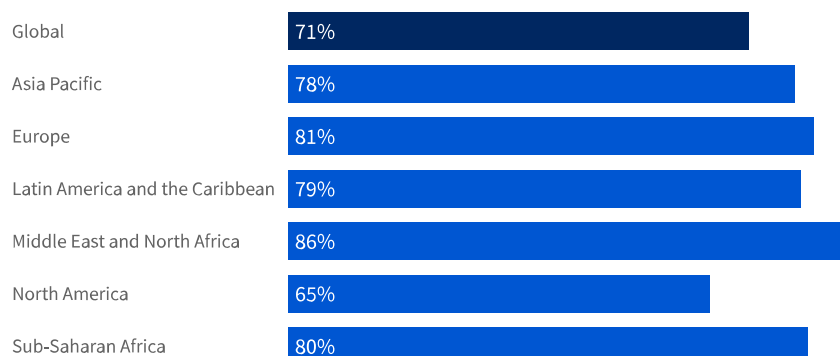
Empowering individuals and institutions to adapt

Amid industry changes, educators and employees turn to micro-credentials to adapt

Seventy-one percent of entry-level employees are concerned about the rate of change in their industry. Among them, 4 in 5 believe micro-credentials give them the confidence to navigate these shifts and adapt to evolving roles.

Entry-level employees are concerned about rapid change

Question: How concerned are you about the speed of change in your industry?
(Concerned and very concerned)



83%

of employees say micro-credentials give them the confidence to navigate these shifts and adapt to evolving roles

On campus, nearly 9 in 10 leaders not offering micro-credentials yet recognize their potential to position their universities as innovators. There's growing consensus that institutions must adapt their curricula to keep pace with the emerging labor market.¹⁹

“

All students have different career and study goals, so we wanted to offer Professional Certificates as a choice to those eager to learn by way of cutting-edge, internationally recognized qualifications. For us, Professional Certificates are a differentiator and another way to add value to our students' education. The way Coursera approaches the future of education is incredibly helpful for us to keep up with the trends and augment our curriculum.



Péter Szakál
Director of Academic Affairs
University of Szeged



Country spotlights

Country spotlight

Brazil

Employers in Brazil are increasingly considering hiring candidates with micro-credentials, citing productivity gains, reduced onboarding costs, and validated skills as top benefits.

All (100%) employers are already using or exploring skills-based hiring, with many highlighting the need for robust accreditation frameworks to ensure consistent quality.

By offering credit-bearing and GenAI micro-credentials in partnership with industry, Brazilian institutions can directly address employers' needs, stand out in a fast-evolving market, and amplify learner outcomes.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

95%

of Brazilian employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

97%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

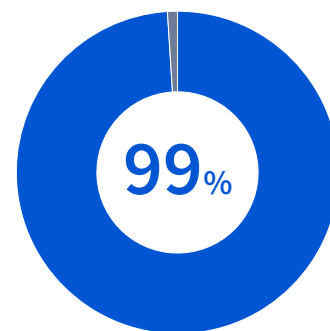
94%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with even higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

98%

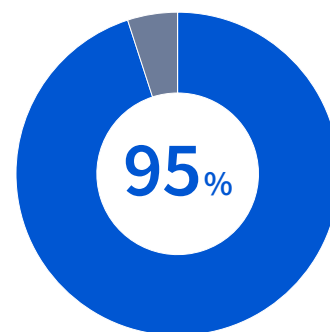
of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

GenAI emphasis



of Brazilian employers believe universities should teach these skills—marking the highest rate across spotlighted countries

Credit emphasis



of Brazilian employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without



In Brazil, UX Design emerged as a high-demand skill—just behind GenAI and Cybersecurity.

Regional trends

Learners across Latin America and the Caribbean (LATAM) embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ 1 in 3 LATAM students earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ LATAM students are 3.7x more likely (from 24% to as high as 88%) to enroll in a degree program when credit-bearing or GenAI-focused micro-credentials are offered.
- ✓ 94% of students believe earning a micro-credential will help them succeed on the job.

In LATAM, 92% of students want credentials that count toward a degree. Student demand highlights that learners are prioritizing tangible workforce outcomes alongside academic advancement.

This enthusiasm creates new opportunities for higher education institutions: When Brazilian universities integrate industry-endorsed micro-credentials into degree pathways—particularly in fields like GenAI, data strategy, and UX—they meet learner demand for job readiness while maintaining rigorous academic standards.



Takeaways for institutions

- ✓ Signal quality and rigor through recognized accreditation and trusted standards.
- ✓ Align curriculum directly with urgent skill needs such as GenAI, Data Strategy, UX Design, and Business Communication.
- ✓ Accelerate enrollment, retention, and learner satisfaction by offering flexible, stackable credentials that clearly map to career outcomes.



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI
2. Data Strategy
3. Digital Marketing & E-Commerce



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience & Adaptability



Recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce Professional Certificate](#)
2. [IBM Data Engineering Professional Certificate](#)
3. [DeepLearning.AI Generative AI for Software Development Skill Certificate](#)

France

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

86%

of French employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

66%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

78%

are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

71%

of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

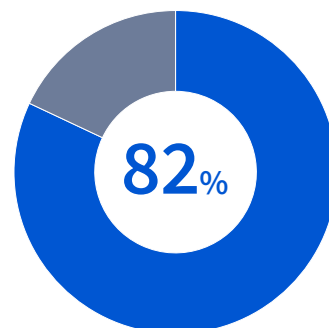
Despite these positive indicators, under half (47%) of employers remain unfamiliar with micro-credentials. Many see potential for greater productivity and lower onboarding costs, but limited awareness underscores the opportunity for deeper industry-academia collaboration.

By expanding GenAI and credit-bearing micro-credentials in partnership with industry, French universities can directly address employer concerns and align with Europe's dynamic labor market.

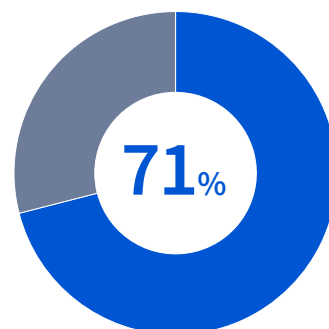


In France, Resilience & Adaptability ranks as a top everyday work skill for new hires with micro-credentials—reflecting an economy that values agile, future-ready talent.

GenAI emphasis

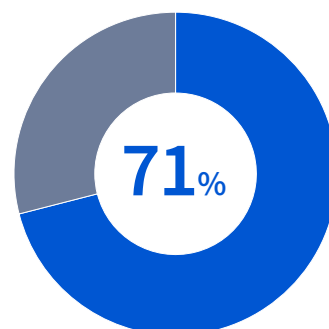


of French employers are likely to hire candidates with GenAI credentials over those without



of French employers say they'd prefer a less experienced GenAI-certified candidate over a more experienced one lacking GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of French employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Regional trends

Students across Europe embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ 2 in 5 (40%) European students have already earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ The likelihood of enrolling in a degree program jumps from 31% to as high as 83% when micro-credentials are offered, especially if credit-bearing or GenAI-focused.
- ✓ 79% believe earning a micro-credential helps them succeed in their job.

In Europe, over 72% of students say credit-bearing credentials help them improve their job prospects, reinforcing the blended value of academic rigor and industry relevance. This is an opportunity for French institutions to bridge skill-focused education with recognized, employer-backed micro-credential pathways.

With high demand for verifiable skills but relatively low employer awareness about micro-credential pathways, France can close the gap by transforming higher education institutions. By increasing engagement with employers and aligning educational offerings with industry needs, campuses can offer GenAI and credit-bearing credentials to equip graduates for rapidly changing job demands. This approach will reinforce France's influence as a hub for career-focused education in Europe.



Ensuring academic recognition with ECTS

In September 2023, a growing list of Coursera-hosted Professional Certificates earned ECTS credit recommendations—the de facto standard across 49 countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). By meeting the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) rigorous certification criteria, these programs hold recognized value for French institutions looking to integrate micro-credentials into formal degree pathways. [Learn more about ECTS credit-recommended courses on Coursera.](#)



Top technical skills

1. Business Analytics
2. Generative AI (GenAI)
3. Data Strategy



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience & Adaptability



ECTS credit-recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Advanced Data Analytics Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Microsoft Power BI Data Analyst Professional Certificate](#)
3. [Meta iOS Developer Professional Certificate](#)

Country spotlight

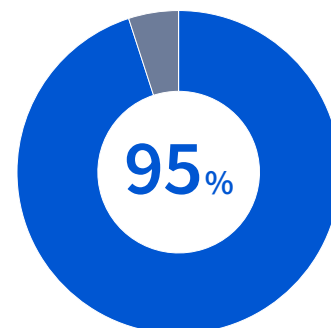
India

India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies with more than 40 million university students,²⁰ shows strong enthusiasm for micro-credentials: Almost all (99%) Indian employers have adopted or are considering skills-based hiring, signaling a clear shift toward validated competencies.

Around 9 in 10 see a clear link between micro-credentials and stronger employability, and many report improved productivity and faster onboarding as key benefits.

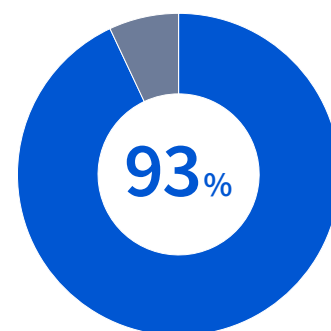
Indian employers emphasize consistent quality standards while seeking specialized, future-ready talent. Many also highlight the country's booming tech sector and start-up culture as prime areas for advanced micro-credentials in fields like GenAI.

GenAI emphasis



of Indian employers say they're likely to hire candidates with GenAI micro-credentials over those without—reflecting India's rapidly growing AI sector

Credit emphasis



of Indian employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

98%

of Indian employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

94%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

97%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with even higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

98%

of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

By offering credit-bearing and GenAI micro-credentials in partnership with industry, Indian institutions can meet urgent workforce demands, bolster digital transformation, and reinforce India's leadership in career-focused education.



Indian employers prioritize Business Communication among everyday skills for micro-credentialed hires—mirroring the country’s global services economy, where clear communication is key.

Growing student adoption and evolving enrollment patterns

- ✓ **1 in 3 Indian students** have earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ The likelihood of **enrolling in a degree program** surges from 38% (no micro-credential) to as high as 91% when micro-credentials are offered—especially if credit-bearing or GenAI-focused.
- ✓ **86%** believe earning a micro-credential will help them succeed on the job.

Ninety-six percent of Indian students want credentials that count toward degree credit, highlighting the strong appeal of academically recognized pathways. When institutions integrate industry-endorsed micro-credentials into degree programs, they equip graduates with the specialized skills needed for India’s rapidly evolving labor market.



Quality assurance through NSQF alignment

In August 2024, 10 Professional Certificates from Google and IBM achieved [National Skills Qualification Framework](#) (NSQF) alignment on Coursera. This milestone allows universities and employers to recognize credit for these programs, creating new pathways for learners to access skills-based career opportunities in India—further strengthening the country’s digitally skilled workforce.

[Learn more](#)



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Software Development
3. Data Strategy



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Active Listening
3. Collaboration



NSQF credit-recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Google UX Design Professional Certificate](#)
3. [IBM DevOps and Software Engineering Professional Certificate](#)

Indonesia

With nearly all of employers embracing skills-based hiring and 97% already hiring micro-credential holders, Indonesia leads Southeast Asia in connecting education to employment.

Many cite productivity gains and reduced onboarding costs but emphasize the need for trusted, high-quality credentials. In line with Indonesia's government policy, Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka ([MBKM](#)), campuses are also driving this shift toward multidisciplinary learning.

By offering GenAI and credit-bearing micro-credentials, universities can align with urgent skill needs and give graduates a competitive edge in Indonesia's rapidly evolving job market.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

97%

of Indonesian employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

97%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

96%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

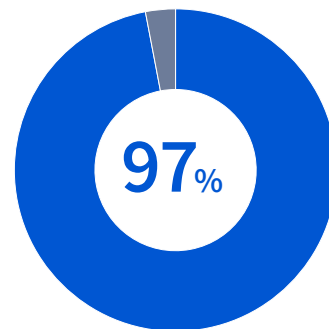
93%

of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

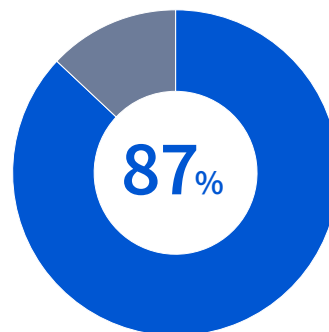


In Asia Pacific, Software Documentation and Cybersecurity rank highly alongside GenAI.

GenAI emphasis

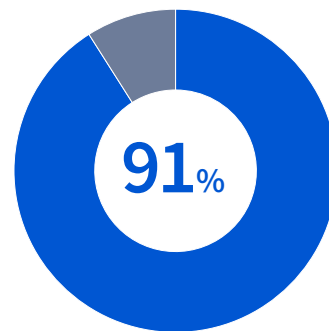


of Indonesian employers say they're likely to hire candidates with GenAI credentials over those without



of Indonesian employers say they'd prefer a less experienced GenAI-certified candidate over a more experienced one lacking GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of Indonesian employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Regional trends

Learners across Asia Pacific (APAC) embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ 1 in 3 APAC students have earned at least one micro-credential.
- ✓ The likelihood of enrolling in a degree program jumps from 38% to as high as 90% when micro-credentials are offered, especially if credit-bearing or GenAI-focused.
- ✓ 87% believe a micro-credential helps them succeed in their job.

In APAC, around 96% of students want these credentials recognized for degree credit, demonstrating a blend of academic and industry priorities. This enthusiasm creates an ideal opportunity for universities to scale micro-credentials aligned with market demands.

This is a strategic moment for Indonesia to leverage micro-credentials and address urgent workforce needs. By partnering with leading local and global firms, campuses can produce graduates ready for Indonesia's rapidly modernizing economy. Strengthening standards and showcasing tangible ROI can also help position Indonesia as a regional leader in career-focused education.



Takeaways for institutions

- ✓ Position your institution as an APAC leader by creating flagship GenAI and cybersecurity micro-credential programs.
- ✓ Strategically integrate micro-credentials with Indonesia's key national priorities, especially digital economy initiatives and tech-driven sectors.
- ✓ Highlight clear, data-backed links between micro-credentials, graduate employment outcomes, and employer satisfaction.



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Software Documentation
3. Cybersecurity



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience & Adaptability



Recommended micro-credentials

1. [Amazon Junior Software Developer Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Microsoft Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate](#)
3. [IBM AI Product Manager Professional Certificate](#)

Country spotlight

Mexico

In one of Latin America's largest and fastest-growing economies, 92% of employers are exploring or actively using skills-based hiring to find verifiable, job-aligned competencies.

Many cite productivity gains and faster onboarding but stress the need for clear credential quality. Strengthening credit-bearing and GenAI offerings can help Mexican universities meet employer expectations and validate essential skill sets.

By emphasizing GenAI and credit-bearing micro-credentials, campuses can prepare students for Mexico's innovation-driven economy and reinforce the country's leadership in agile, career-focused education.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

96%

of Mexican employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

84%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

84%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

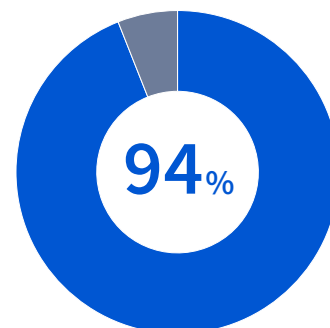
90%

of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

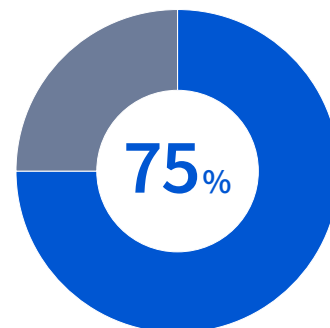


When evaluating candidates, hiring leaders in Mexico consider whether a student has earned university credit for the micro-credential as the most important factor.

GenAI emphasis

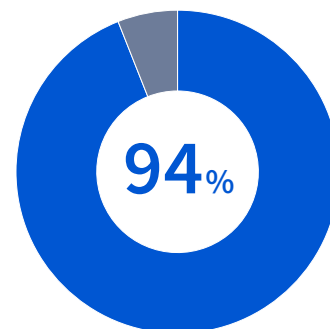


of Mexican employers are likely to hire candidates with GenAI credentials over those without—spotlighting GenAI's crucial role in the local talent market



of Mexican employers say they'd prefer a less experienced GenAI-certified candidate over a more experienced one lacking GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of Mexican employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing micro-credentials over those without

Regional trends

Learners across Latin America and the Caribbean (LATAM) embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ 1 in 3 LATAM students have earned at least one micro-credential.
- ✓ Likelihood of enrolling in a **degree program jumps from 24% to as high as 88%, especially for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials.**
- ✓ 94% believe a micro-credential will help them succeed in their job.

In Mexico, student demand creates an ideal opportunity to embed micro-credentials into the education-to-employment ecosystem.

Mexico stands at a pivotal moment to align academic programs with evolving workforce demands through micro-credentials. By integrating micro-credentials, institutions can equip graduates to excel in Mexico's dynamic labor market—cementing the nation's leadership as LATAM's hub for agile, career-focused education.



Takeaways for institutions

- ✓ Position institutions as regional frontrunners by offering GenAI and digital micro-credentials tailored to the LATAM economy.
- ✓ Design credential pathways that enable rapid adaptation to evolving job market needs, particularly in fast-growing digital sectors.
- ✓ Ensure credentials visibly align with clearly defined career tracks, reinforcing the link between education and employment outcomes.



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Data Strategy
3. Digital Marketing & E-Commerce



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience & Adaptability



Recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce Professional Certificate](#)
2. [IBM Data Engineering Professional Certificate](#)
3. [DeepLearning.AI Generative AI for Software Development Skill Certificate](#)

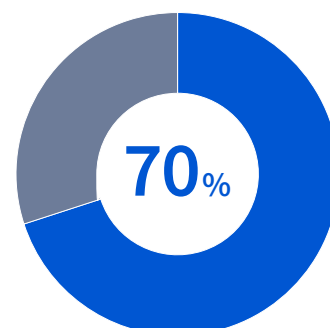
Saudi Arabia

As Saudi Arabia diversifies its economy for Vision 2030,²¹ 98% of employers are already using or exploring skills-based hiring to create a future-ready workforce.

Many see cost savings and faster onboarding but emphasize quality assurance in alternative credentials. Expanding credit-bearing and GenAI programs can help align with Saudi employers' high standards.

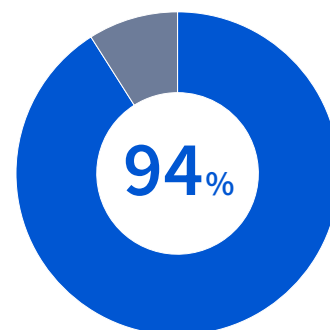
By offering GenAI and credit-bearing pathways, universities can equip learners for the kingdom's rapidly transforming economy and reinforce Saudi Arabia's leadership in skills-based education.

GenAI emphasis



of Saudi Arabian employers say they're more likely to hire entry-level candidates with GenAI credentials over those without

Credit emphasis



of Saudi Arabian employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

96%

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91%

of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%



In Saudi Arabia, Resilience & Adaptability tops the everyday skills that employers value in new hires with micro-credentials, mirroring the region's pivot toward continuous, agile learning.

Regional trends

Learners across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ **More than 2 in 5 students in MENA** have earned at least one micro-credential—among the highest globally.
- ✓ Likelihood of **enrolling in a degree program jumps from 53% to as high as 94% when micro-credentials are offered**—especially credit-bearing or GenAI.
- ✓ **94% of students** believe a micro-credential will help them succeed in their job.

This focus on verified skills supports Vision 2030's aim to build a knowledge economy. As the region's largest economy, Saudi Arabia leads MENA's transition to education that aligns academia and industry demands.

Saudi Arabia is well-positioned to capitalize on micro-credentials as it cultivates a highly skilled, competitive workforce. By delivering rigorous credit-bearing and GenAI-focused pathways, universities can bolster student success, satisfy employer needs, and champion the kingdom's leadership in skills-based education.



Takeaways for institutions

- ✓ Tailor credential programs specifically to the economic diversification goals outlined in Vision 2030.
- ✓ Provide robust data linking micro-credentials to concrete employment and economic outcomes within priority industries.
- ✓ Deepen collaboration with industry and governmental bodies to ensure credential programs address the exact skill gaps identified by employers and policymakers.



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Cybersecurity
3. Software Development



Top everyday skills

1. Resilience & Adaptability
2. Collaboration
3. Business Communication



Recommended micro-credentials

1. [IBM Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Microsoft Full-Stack Developer Professional Certificate](#)
3. [IBM AI Product Manager Professional Certificate](#)

Country spotlight

Thailand

Thailand's transformation into a digital service economy creates unique demands for micro-credentials that blend hospitality expertise with GenAI capabilities.

Many employers cite productivity gains and cost savings, yet emphasize the need for credible, employer-endorsed programs.

By offering GenAI and credit-bearing pathways, Thai universities can help graduates excel in a rapidly modernizing job market—particularly in tourism, tech, and manufacturing.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

98%

of Thai employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

95%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

97%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

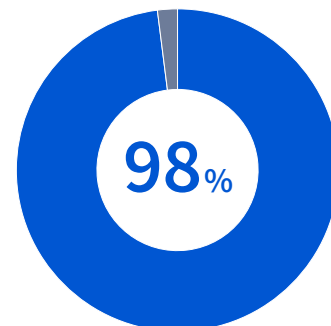
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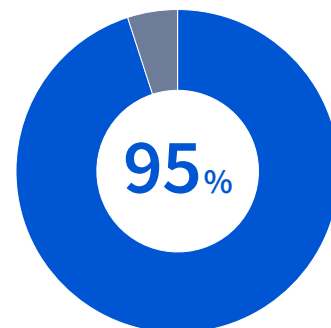


Thailand's employers highly value Business Communication in new hires, reflecting a service- and tourism-driven economy where clear communication meets digital innovation.

GenAI emphasis

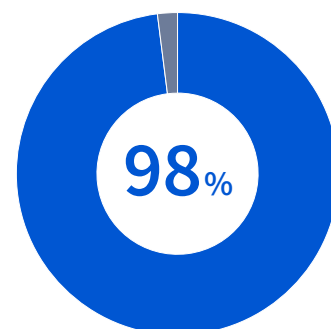


of Thai employers say they're likely to hire candidates with GenAI credentials over those without—one of the highest AI-centric demands in Asia Pacific



of Thai employers say they'd prefer a less experienced GenAI-certified candidate over a more experienced one lacking GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of Thai employers say they're more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Regional trends

Learners across Asia Pacific (APAC) embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ 1 in 3 APAC students have earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ The likelihood of enrolling in a degree jumps from 38% to as high as 90% when micro-credentials are offered—especially if credit-bearing or GenAI-focused.
- ✓ 87% believe a micro-credential helps them succeed in their job.

In APAC, around 96% of students want these credentials recognized for degree credit. Campuses can leverage this demand to scale short-form learning in a fast-evolving job market.

Thailand's shift toward a digital and service-oriented economy creates unique opportunities to leverage micro-credentials for workforce readiness. By aligning GenAI and credit-bearing pathways with Thailand's distinct industry needs—particularly in hospitality, technology, and manufacturing—universities can ensure students gain relevant, in-demand skills that employers prioritize.

“

At Chulalongkorn University, we offer industry-recognized content for credit, including the Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate as a three-credit general education course, available to all disciplines. This equips students with essential skills and a recognized credential.



Professor Atiwong Suchato
Chulalongkorn University



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Software Documentation
3. Cybersecurity



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience & Adaptability



Recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Cloud Cybersecurity Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Amazon Junior Software Developer Professional Certificate](#)
3. [IBM AI Product Manager Professional Certificate](#)

Country spotlight

Turkey

Bridging European and Asian markets, Turkey exhibits exceptionally high employer adoption of micro-credentials.

Many employers cite productivity gains and cost-efficiency, but also seek clear standards for quality assurance. Universities can strengthen competitiveness by offering industry-aligned GenAI and credit-bearing programs that reflect Turkey's dynamic labor market.

By expanding GenAI and credit-bearing pathways, Turkish institutions can equip learners for an economy in flux—reinforcing Turkey's strategic role in bridging global labor markets and delivering future-ready education.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

99%

of Turkish employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application—the highest across spotlight countries

97%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

95%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

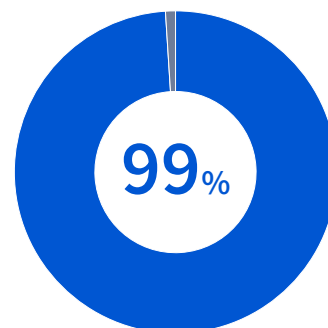
97%

of employers have saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%



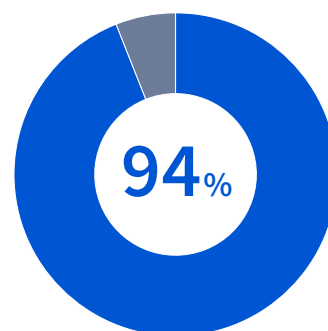
In Turkey, GenAI is not the only sought-after skill—Data Strategy and Business Communication also rank highly, reflecting the country's diverse economic base.

GenAI emphasis



of Turkish employers say they're more likely to hire GenAI-credentialed candidates over nonholders, signifying a universal push for advanced GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of Turkish employers say they're more likely to hire a candidate with a credit-bearing micro-credential over a candidate without one

Regional trends

Learners across Europe embrace micro-credentials

- ✓ 2 in 5 European students have earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ Likelihood of enrolling in a degree program jumps from 31% to as high as 83% with micro-credentials, especially if credit-bearing or GenAI-focused.
- ✓ 79% believe earning a micro-credential helps them succeed in their job.

In Europe, nearly 78% of micro-credential earners pursue more than one credential, signaling strong learner enthusiasm for career-focused education. As a cross-continental hub, Turkey can harness this energy to spur innovative, skill-based learning solutions.

With nearly universal employer demand for GenAI and credit-bearing credentials, universities can lead by developing targeted programs that equip students for employers' most sought-after technical skills—particularly in GenAI, Data Strategy, and Software Development.



Takeaways for institutions

- ✓ Build direct partnerships with industry leaders to align micro-credential content with real-time market demands.
- ✓ Create flexible credential pathways that integrate Business Analytics, Data Strategy, and User-Centric Digital competencies to meet diverse economic needs.
- ✓ Adopt internationally recognized accreditation frameworks, reinforcing Turkey's unique position as a hub connecting Europe and Asia through high-quality, skills-based education.



Top technical skills

1. Business Analytics
2. Generative AI (GenAI)
3. Data Strategy



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience & Adaptability



Recommended micro-credentials

1. [IBM Business Intelligence \(BI\) Analyst Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate](#)
3. [IBM AI Product Manager Professional Certificate](#)

United States

Employers in the United States (US) are gravitating toward hiring candidates with micro-credentials, citing cost savings, enhanced productivity, and validated skills as top benefits. Many emphasize the need for robust accreditation frameworks to ensure consistent quality.

By offering credit-bearing and GenAI-focused pathways in partnership with the industry, US institutions can directly address employer needs, amplify learning outcomes, and stand out in a crowded market.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

96%

of American employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

86%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

90%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with even higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

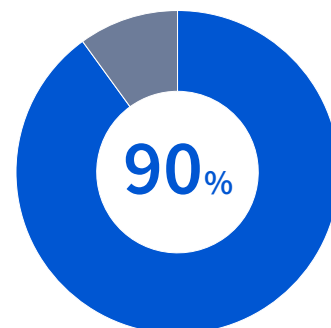
89%

of employers say they've saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

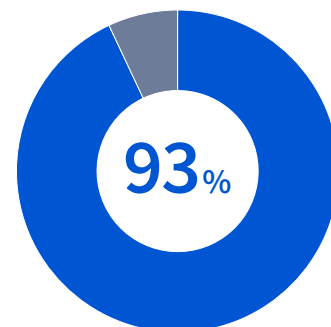


In the US, Business Communication remains the #1 everyday skill employers value in hires—reflecting the importance of clear, effective collaboration in a globally connected economy.

GenAI emphasis

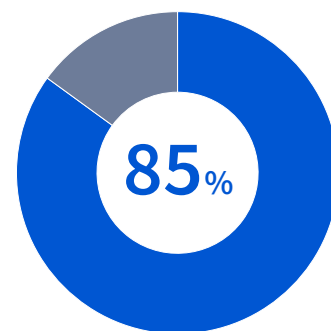


of US employers agree they're more likely to hire candidates with GenAI micro-credentials over those without



of employers believe universities should teach GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of employers are more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Growing student adoption and evolving enrollment patterns

- ✓ Nearly 1 in 3 US students have already earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ US students are 3.5x more likely (from 25% to as high as 88%) to enroll in a degree program when credit-bearing or Gen-AI micro-credentials are offered.
- ✓ 80% believe earning a micro-credential will help them succeed on the job.

Nearly all (98%) US students want micro-credentials offered for academic credit, proving how students increasingly value industry-aligned learning alongside traditional academic achievements. When institutions integrate industry-endorsed micro-credentials into degree paths, they meet learner demand for job readiness while upholding academic rigor.



Strengthen your curriculum with ACE credit recommendations

Higher education leaders in the US recognize the importance of credit recommendations. Nearly half (47%) believe external support from organizations like the American Council on Education (ACE) can significantly promote internal buy-in and accelerate the adoption of credit-bearing micro-credentials. On platforms like Coursera, leading accrediting organizations like ACE already recommend select courses for credit—a [strong validation](#) of the quality, rigor, and integrity of the online learning experience underpins every assessment, course, and credential.

[Learn more](#)



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Data Strategy
3. Cybersecurity



Top everyday skills

1. Business Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Active Listening



ACE credit-recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate](#)
2. [Microsoft Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate](#)
3. [IBM Full Stack Software Developer Professional Certificate](#)

United Kingdom

UK employers increasingly recognize micro-credentials as credible indicators of specific, validated competencies, particularly appreciating their impact on productivity and streamlined onboarding.

However, consistent quality and clear accreditation remain key concerns—highlighting the need for strong institutional partnerships and robust credential frameworks.

By embedding credit-bearing and GenAI micro-credentials into degree programs, UK institutions can enhance student employability, meet immediate industry needs, and distinguish themselves within a competitive higher education sector.

Strong employer demand for micro-credentials

94%

of UK employers say micro-credentials strengthen a candidate's application

73%

of employers hired at least one micro-credential holder in the past year

75%

of employers are willing to offer higher starting salaries for micro-credential holders, with even higher premiums for credit-bearing or GenAI credentials

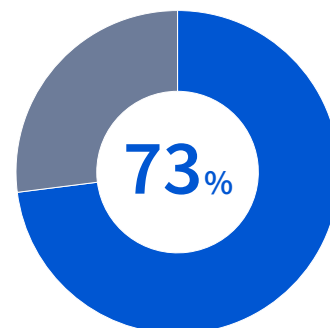
69%

of employers say they've saved on training costs for entry-level hires with relevant micro-credentials, with most reporting savings of up to 20%

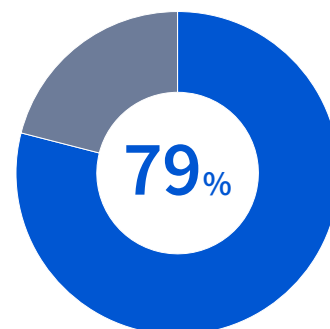


In the UK, Resilience & Adaptability ranks highest among everyday skills employers seek—reflecting the demand for flexible, agile professionals in a fast-evolving job market.

GenAI emphasis

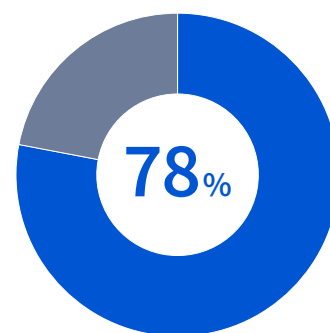


of UK employers agree they're more likely to hire candidates with GenAI micro-credentials over those without



of UK employers believe universities should teach GenAI skills

Credit emphasis



of UK employers are more likely to hire candidates with credit-bearing credentials over those without

Regional trends

Growing student adoption and evolving enrollment patterns

- ✓ 2 in 5 European students have earned a micro-credential.
- ✓ Likelihood of enrolling in a degree program jumps from 31% to as high as 83% with micro-credentials, especially if credit-bearing or GenAI-focused.
- ✓ 79% believe earning a micro-credential helps them succeed in their job.

With 93% of European students recognizing the career benefits of micro-credentials, UK institutions have a clear opportunity to integrate industry-endorsed credentials, particularly in high-demand areas like GenAI and cybersecurity. Aligning academic programs with employer-driven credentials strengthens student outcomes and institutional appeal.

With the UK labor market increasingly shaped by technology and innovation, micro-credentials enable institutions to directly respond to skill shortages, improve employability, and visibly align curricula with industry demand.



Takeaways for institutions:

- ✓ Co-develop micro-credentials directly with employers to maintain curriculum relevance.
- ✓ Prioritize GenAI and credit-bearing pathways to meet urgent skill requirements.
- ✓ Clearly showcase graduate career outcomes tied to micro-credentials, emphasizing institutional responsiveness and value.



Top technical skills

1. Generative AI (GenAI)
2. Data Strategy
3. Cybersecurity



Top everyday skills

1. Resilience & Adaptability
2. Collaboration
3. Active Listening



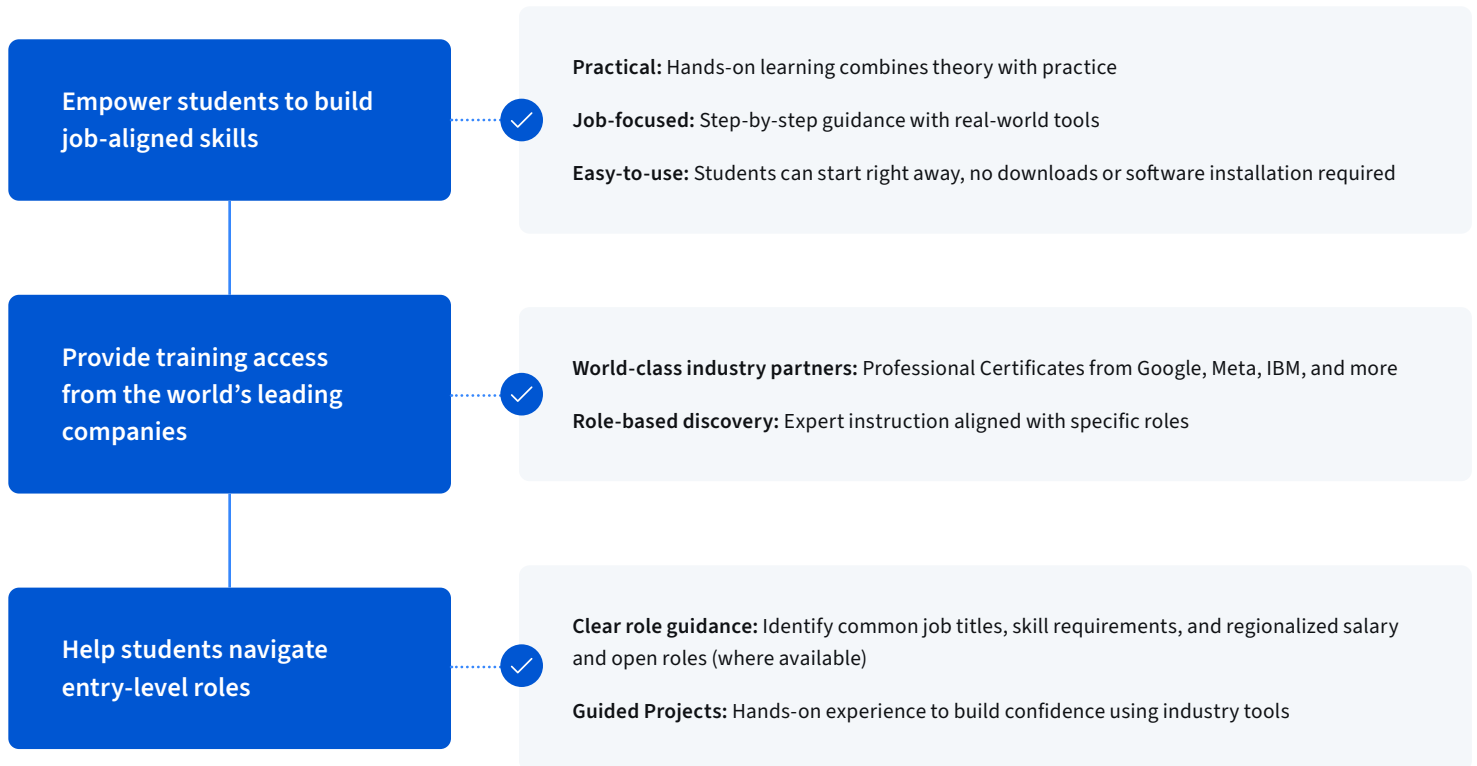
Recommended micro-credentials

1. [Google Cybersecurity Professional Certificate](#)
2. [IBM Data Science Professional Certificate](#)
3. [Meta Social Media Marketing Professional Certificate](#)

Appendix

Career Academy

Career Academy prepares students for in-demand jobs



“

Embracing micro-credentials allows institutions to showcase their commitment to innovation and relevance in the 21st century. It positions them as leaders in preparing students for a future driven by agility and lifelong learning, enhancing their brand and reputation as a forward-thinking and valuable partner in education.



Rav Ahuja
CCO & Global Program Director,
IBM Skills Network



Learn how to complement your curriculum by offering industry micro-credentials to prepare your students for in-demand jobs.

[Request a consultation](#)

ACE-recommended courses on Coursera

Course	Effective dates	Recommended credits
<u>Google Cloud Cybersecurity Professional Certificate</u>	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2027	9
<u>Google Cloud Data Analytics Professional Certificate</u>	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2027	10
<u>Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	12
<u>Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce Professional Certificate</u>	December 1, 2022 – November 30, 2025	9
<u>Google IT Support Professional Certificate</u>	February 1, 2023 – January 31, 2026	15
<u>Google Project Management Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	9
<u>Google UX Design Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	10
<u>IBM Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	15
<u>IBM Data Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	12
<u>IBM Data Engineering Professional Certificate</u>	May 1, 2022 – September 30, 2027	15
<u>IBM Data Science Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	12
<u>IBM Full Stack Software Developer Professional Certificate</u>	May 1, 2022 – September 30, 2027	18

Course	Effective dates	Recommended credits
<u>Microsoft Azure Security Engineer Associate (AZ-500) Professional Certificate</u>	December 1, 2024 – November 30, 2027	12
<u>Microsoft Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2027	9
<u>Microsoft Power BI Data Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2027	5
<u>Microsoft UX Design Professional Certificate</u>	December 1, 2024 – November 30, 2027	10
<u>Salesforce Sales Operations Professional Certificate</u>	June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2025	1
<u>Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate</u>	November 1, 2022 – October 31, 2025	3

ECTS-recommended courses on Coursera

Program	Effective dates*	Recommended credits
<u>Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	7
<u>Google Cloud Data Analytics Professional Certificate</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	7
<u>Google IT Automation with Python Professional Certificat</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	5
<u>Google IT Support Professional Certificate</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	5
<u>Google Project Management Professional Certificate</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	6
<u>Google UX Design Professional Certificate</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	9
<u>IBM Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	September 20, 2023 – September 19, 2028	4
<u>IBM Data Analyst with Excel and R Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	4
<u>IBM Full Stack Software Developer Professional Certificate</u>	October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2027	6

*Effective dates represent the time period during which you must complete the associated learning program to earn ECTS credit recommendations. After earning ECTS credit recommendations, they don't expire, but may be evaluated differently by each accredited academic institution.

NSQF-aligned courses on Coursera

Learning content	Recommended Nos NSQF credits	Recommended NSQF levels	Certificate of course alignment
<u>Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate</u>	6.2	4.5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>Google Digital Marketing & E-commerce Professional Certificate</u>	5.5	4.5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>Google Project Management: Professional Certificate</u>	5	4.5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>Google UX Design Professional Certificate</u>	7.8	4.5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>IBM Data Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	5	4.5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>IBM Data Engineering Professional Certificate</u>	7.2	5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>IBM Data Science Professional Certificate</u>	5.5	5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>IBM DevOps and Software Engineering Professional Certificate</u>	7.3	5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>IBM Cybersecurity Analyst Professional Certificate</u>	4	5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>
<u>IBM Full Stack Software Developer Professional Certificate</u>	4.7	5	<u>NASSCOM certificate</u>

GenAI-enhanced Professional Certificates





GenAI skills now define workplace success: 75% of faculty agree graduates must master these tools, while 66% of business leaders won’t hire candidates lacking GenAI capabilities.²²

This alignment between education and industry creates clear priorities for curriculum design.


To equip students for the future of work, Coursera offers:

- ✓ Professional Certificates enhanced with cutting-edge GenAI content
- ✓ New GenAI-focused certificates from industry leaders IBM and Meta
- ✓ Comprehensive learning pathways that combine technical skills with responsible AI use

Here are our recommended courses:

Professional Certificate		New courses added
 Data Science	→	 Generative AI: Elevate Your Data Science Career
 Full Stack Software Developer	→	 Generative AI: Elevate Your Software Development Career
 Data Analyst	→	 Generative AI: Enhance Your Data Analytics Career
 Data Engineering	→	 Generative AI: Elevate Your Data Engineering Career

New Professional Certificate

 IBM AI Product Manager Professional Certificate



Advancing Academic Integrity in Online Learning

GenAI presents challenges and opportunities for academic integrity online. Empower institutional excellence with AI-enhanced tools.

Get report

Methodology

In early 2025, Coursera completed two global surveys to gain a deeper understanding of how micro-credentials are shaping career outcomes and workforce readiness.

These surveys captured insights from both learners and employers, covering topics such as micro-credential adoption, career impact, and hiring trends.

Between December 2024 and January 2025, Coursera surveyed 1,000+ employers in 10 key markets: the US, UK, Brazil, France, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Turkey. The online survey targeted professionals involved in hiring, training, and talent strategy. Employer questions focused on hiring preferences related to micro-credentials, perceived return on investment, readiness to pay salary premiums for credentialed candidates, and anticipated skills gaps in the near future.

During the same period, Coursera also surveyed 1,200+ learners around the world. This online survey explored various facets of micro-credentials from a learner's perspective, including motivations for enrollment, perceived impact on employability, and preferences for credit-bearing versus standalone certificates. Fifty percent of participants identified themselves as college or university students, and 50% as employees.

Our global sample sizes enabled us to obtain results **with an industry-standard range of error at a 95% confidence level.**

We examined data points from both learners and employers to draw a multifaceted picture of how micro-credentials affect individual employability, institutional strategies, and workforce development. By comparing learner aspirations with employer needs, this year's analysis illuminates how micro-credentials are bridging the gap between academia and industry. Where useful, we compared findings from learners and employers [with the perspectives of higher education leaders](#).

Both surveys were voluntary and conducted online, which may influence response patterns and introduce self-selection bias. While this survey provides critical insights into global higher education perspectives on micro-credentials, it does not include a comprehensive review of policy landscapes in individual countries. The results are indicative of the viewpoints and experiences of participating respondents and institutions, and not as a complete portrayal of the higher education landscape worldwide.

About Coursera

Coursera was launched in 2012 by two Stanford Computer Science professors, Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller, with a mission to provide universal access to world-class learning. It's now one of the largest online learning platforms in the world, with over 170 million registered learners.²³

Coursera partners with over 350 leading university and industry partners to offer a broad catalog of content and credentials, including courses, Specializations, Professional Certificates, Guided Projects, and bachelor's and master's degrees.²⁴ Institutions around the world use Coursera to upskill and reskill their employees, citizens, and students in fields such as data science, technology, and business. Coursera became a Delaware public benefit corporation and a B-Corp in February 2021.

350+ university and industry partners collaborate on Coursera



Integrate credit-eligible micro-credentials into your curriculum.

Get your students job-ready

Endnotes

- 1 [Micro-Credentials Impact Report](#) (Coursera, 2024)
- 2 [The Professional Certificates Playbook](#) (Coursera, 2023)
- 3 [Advancing Higher Education with Industry Micro-Credentials](#) (Coursera, 2023)
- 4 [Micro-Credentials Impact Report](#) (Coursera, 2024)
- 5 [Towards a common definition of micro-credentials](#) (UNESCO, 2022)
- 6 [Advancing Higher Education with Industry Micro-Credentials](#) (Coursera, 2023)
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 [Micro-Credentials Impact Report](#) (Coursera, 2024)
- 9 [Advancing Higher Education with Industry Micro-Credentials](#) (Coursera, 2023)
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 [The Effect of Employer Understanding and Engagement on Non-Degree Credentials](#) (Collegis and UPCEA, 2024)
- 12 [Micro-Credentials Impact Report](#) (Coursera, 2024)
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Coursera research (Coursera, 2025)
- 15 [The Future of Jobs Report 2025](#) (World Economic Forum, 2025)
- 16 [Micro-Credentials Impact Report](#) (Coursera, 2024)
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 [India releases updated higher education statistics](#) (British Council, 2024)
- 21 [Coursera Partners with Saudi Arabia's MCIT to Launch Programs Supporting Vision 2030 and Developing Future-Ready Digital Talent](#) (Coursera, 2024)
- 22 [GenAI in Higher Education](#) (Tyton Partners, 2023)
- 23 As of Mar 31, 2025
- 24 As of Mar 31, 2025

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