



## Let's Explore Microcredentials! The view from Ireland



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**A TRADITION OF  
INDEPENDENT  
THINKING**

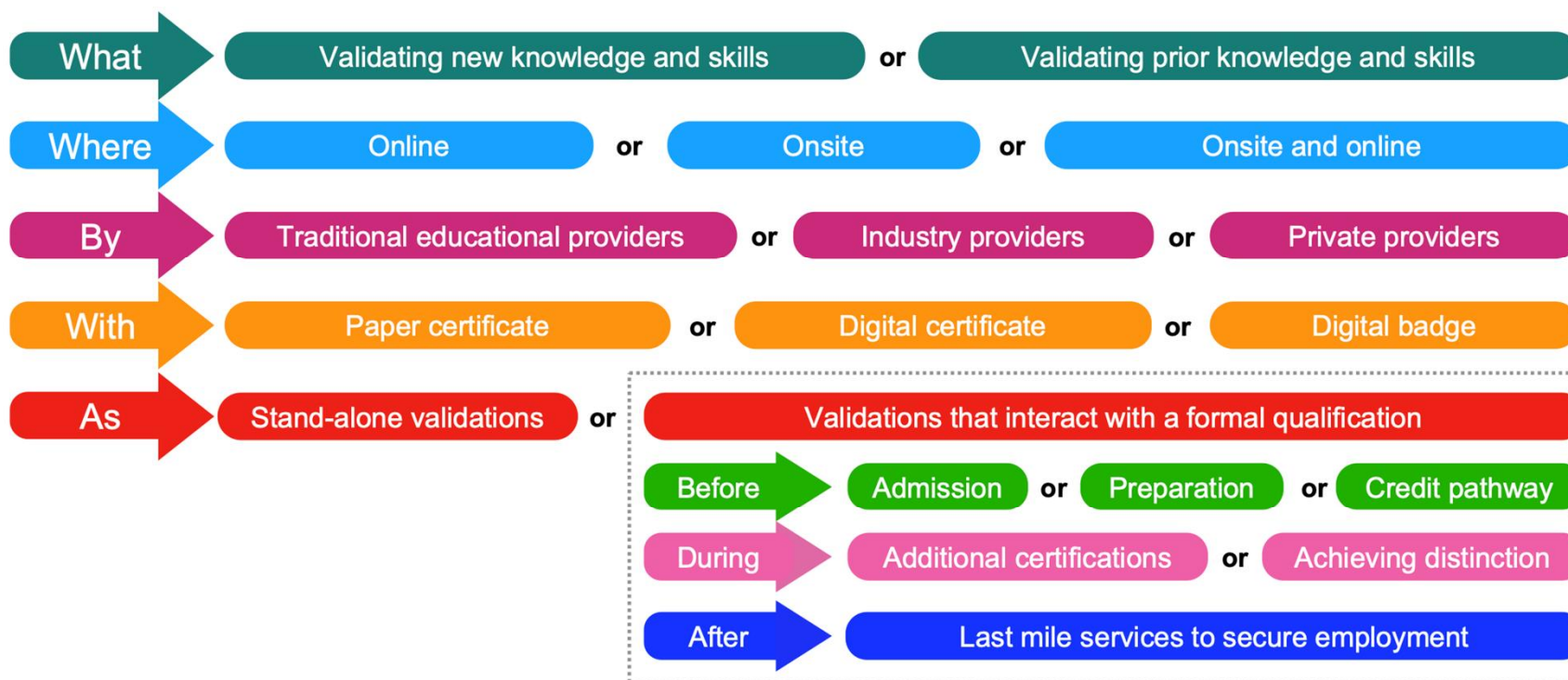


# 1. Microcredentials: An Overview



## Micro-credentials

Also known as alternative credentials, MOOCs, certifications, short courses, bootcamps, intensives, MicroMasters, masterclasses, nano degrees , Specializations...



## Microcredentials in a European Context

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.

European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017

Microcredential means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

European Commission, 2021



## Why we need Microcredentials



# Benefits of Microcredentials



Source: Ralston (2020;2021); Woods & Woods (2021)

# Criticisms of Microcredentials

MCs are “an outgrowth of the neoliberal economy” & represent “a betrayal of higher education’s higher purpose” (Ralston, 2021)

MCs contribute to the decline of the traditional degree

MCs do not meet the needs of lifelong learners or “liberate learners’ potentialities” (Ralston, 2021)

MCs can exacerbate class divisions

MCs “weaken relations of classification of knowledge and framing (the pacing, sequencing and evaluation) of knowledge (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021)

MCs do not educate the whole person



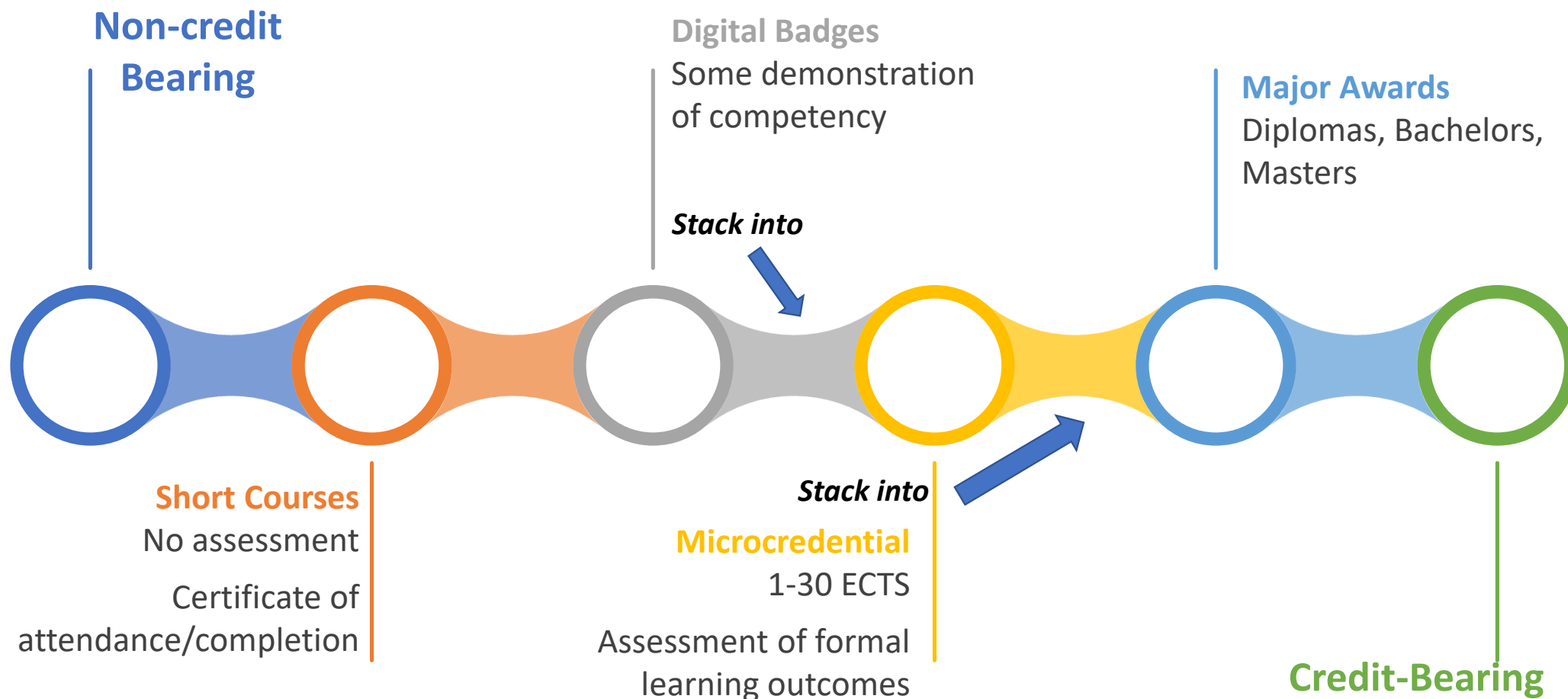
Source: Ralston (2021); Wheelahan & Moodie (2021)

## 2. Irish Approach to Microcredentials



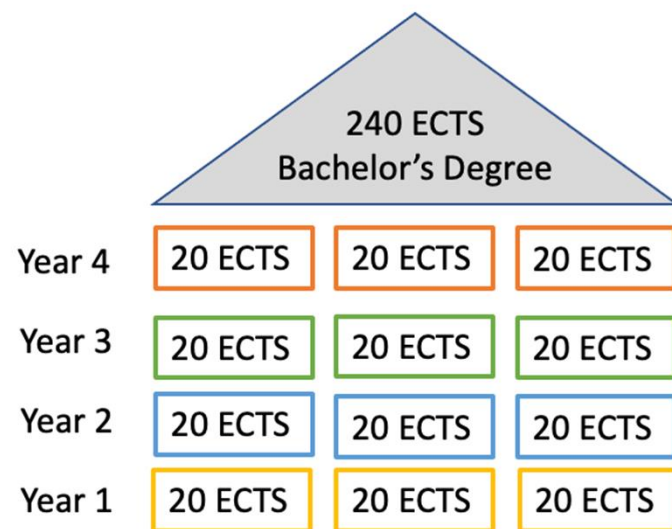


# Microcredential Ecosystem in Irish Context

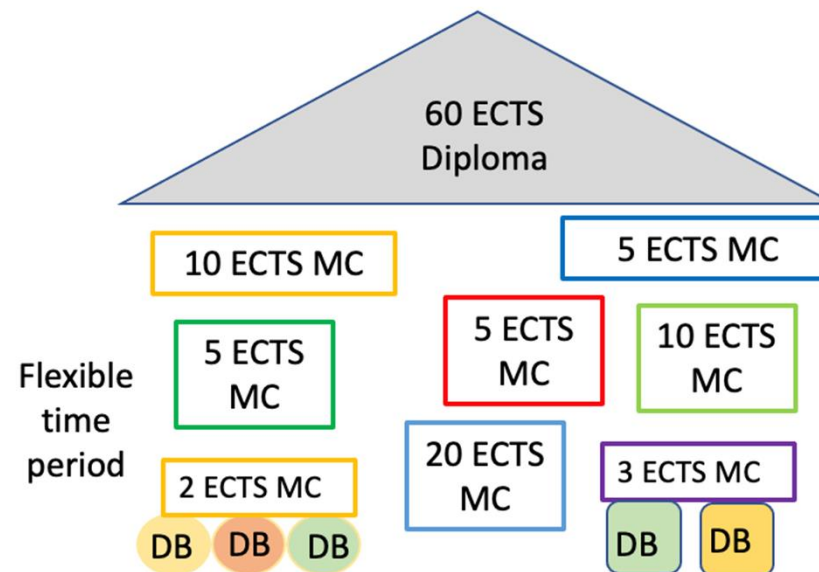


# Learner Pathways

## Traditional Learner Pathway



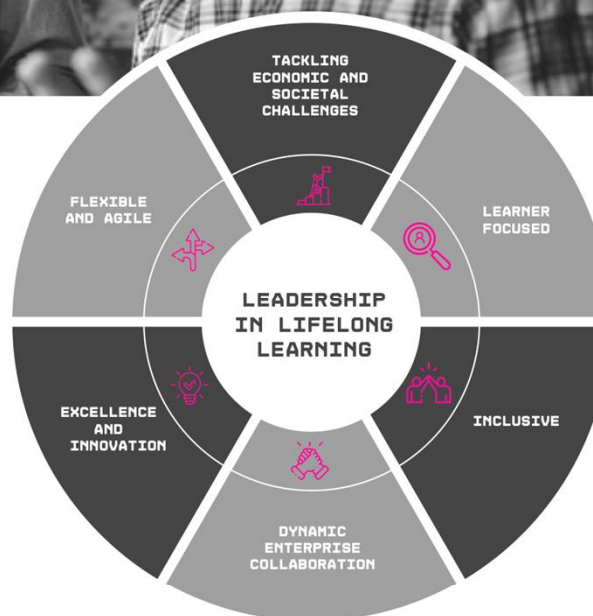
## Flexible Learner Pathway





## WHAT IS THE MICROCREDS PROJECT?

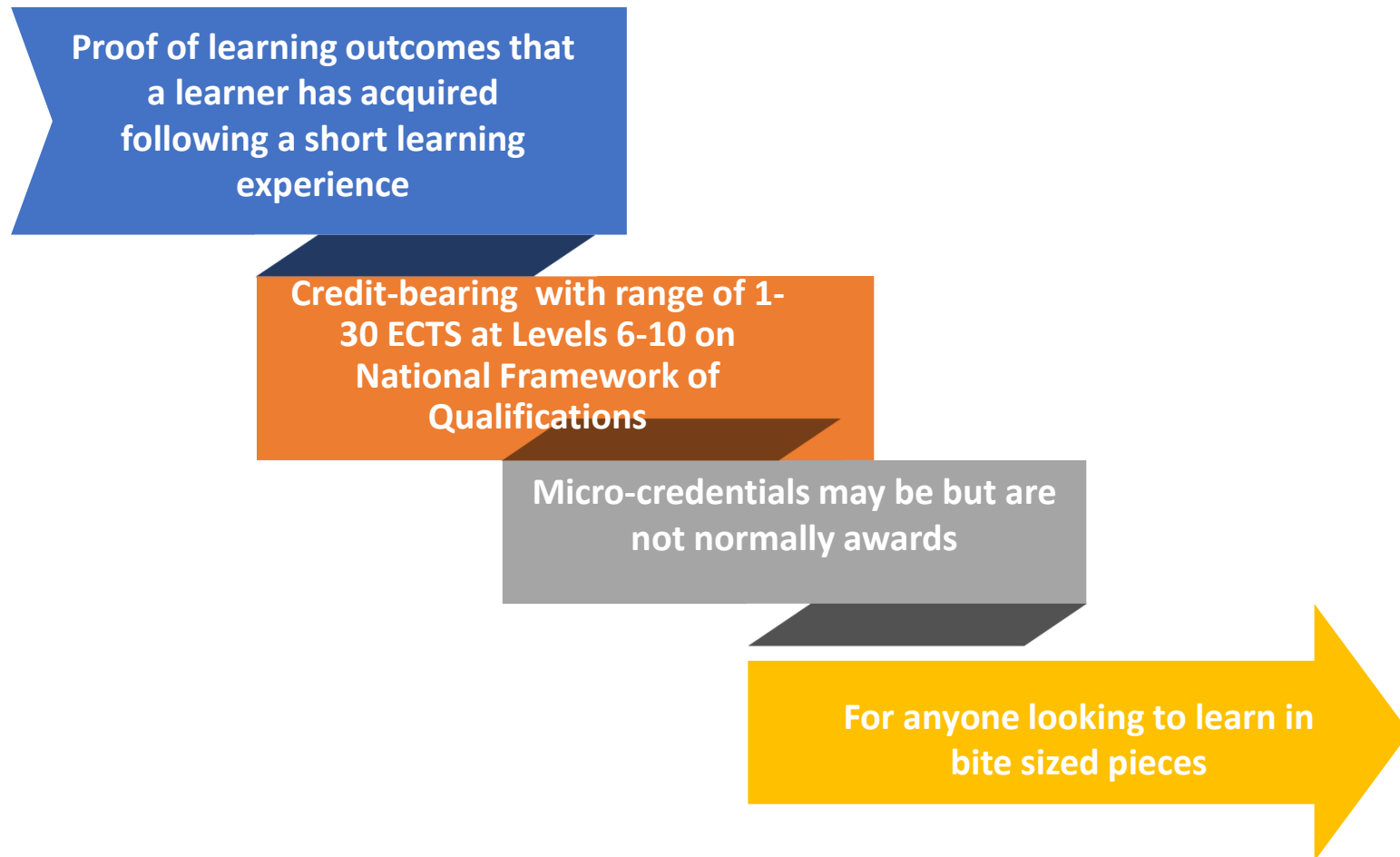
- Ireland will be the first country to establish a coherent National Framework for quality assured and accredited micro-credentials in Europe.
- IUA partner universities are collaborating to develop, pilot and evaluate the building blocks required for micro-credentials.
- We are developing an agile suite of flexibly delivered micro-credentials aligned to the National Framework of Qualifications.
- This ambitious project furthers IUA universities' commitment to work in partnership with enterprise to transform lifelong learning in Ireland.



## OUR CORE VALUES

# MICRO CREDS

# Microcredentials Overview: Irish Context



#### 4. Microcredentials in Action: A Case Study from ACE, University College Cork, Ireland





# ACE Microcredentials Pilot 2020-2022



**600+ students**

completed 15 part-time microcredentials

**Students from  
13 countries**



**Levels 7-9 on  
Irish National  
Framework of  
Qualifications**

**10-20 ECTS**

**Classroom,  
online &  
blended  
delivery**

**8-16 weeks**

**velopi**

 **NOVARTIS**

 **Regional Skills  
SOUTH WEST**  
Partnerships for Skills

 **Bio  
Pharma  
Chem**  
 **Skillnet**

 **VIATRIS™**

 **AONTAS**  
The Voice of  
Adult Learning

 **ASIA-EUROPE  
FOUNDATION**

 **Pfizer**

 **SOAR**  
Inter Institutional Collaboration on Access

 **AILG**  
Association of Irish Local Government  
Aontas Rialtas Aitiúil na hÉireann

 **TABOR  
GROUP**

# ACE Microcredentials Pilot 2020-2022



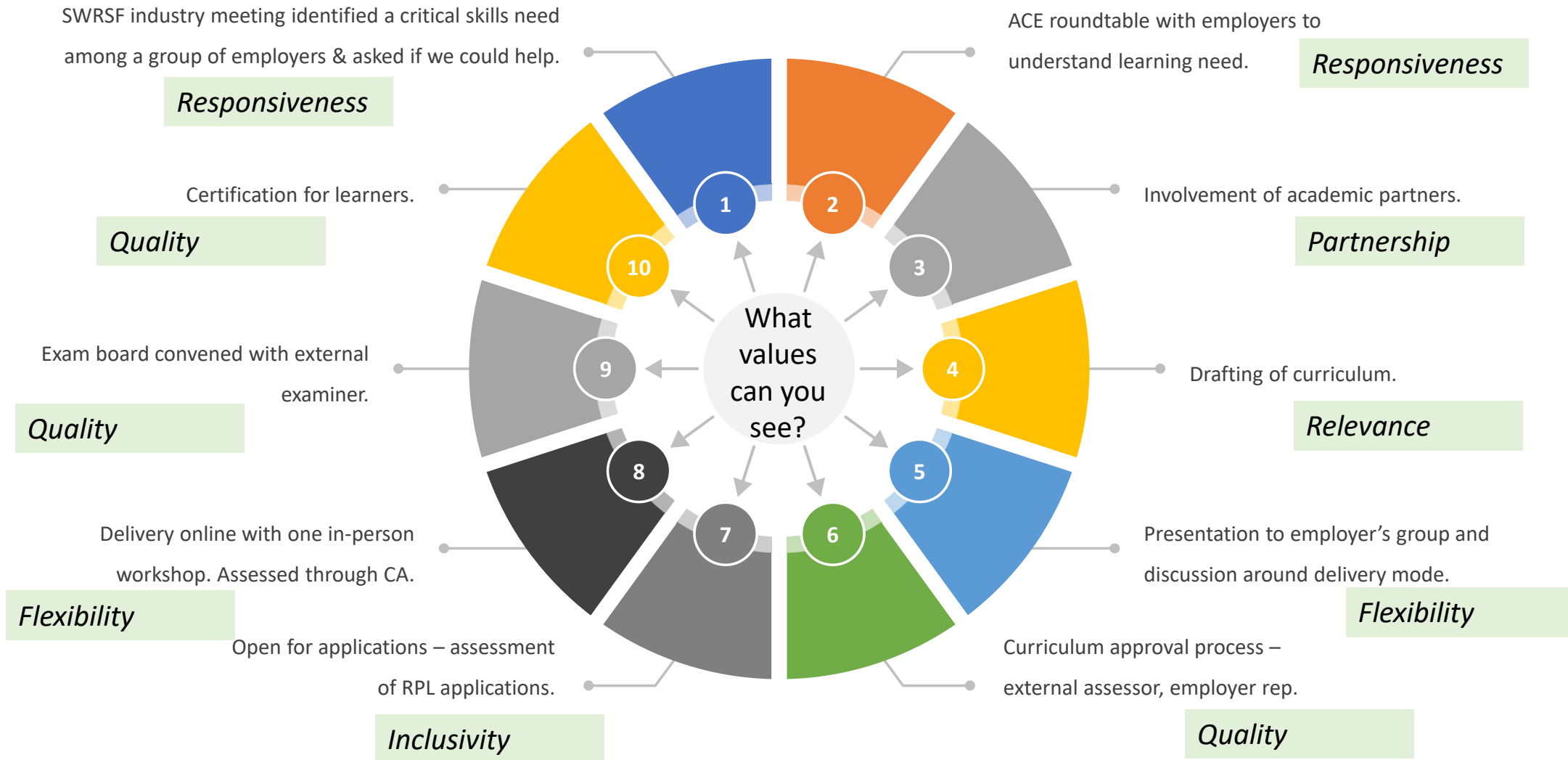
# Key Principles of ACE Approach



# ACE Approach to Design of Microcredentials



# Microcredential – Building Workplace Resilience







Thank You!

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