Quality of Micro-Credentials in Open Education

Pathways and technologies for recognition, transparency and portability

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OEPASS

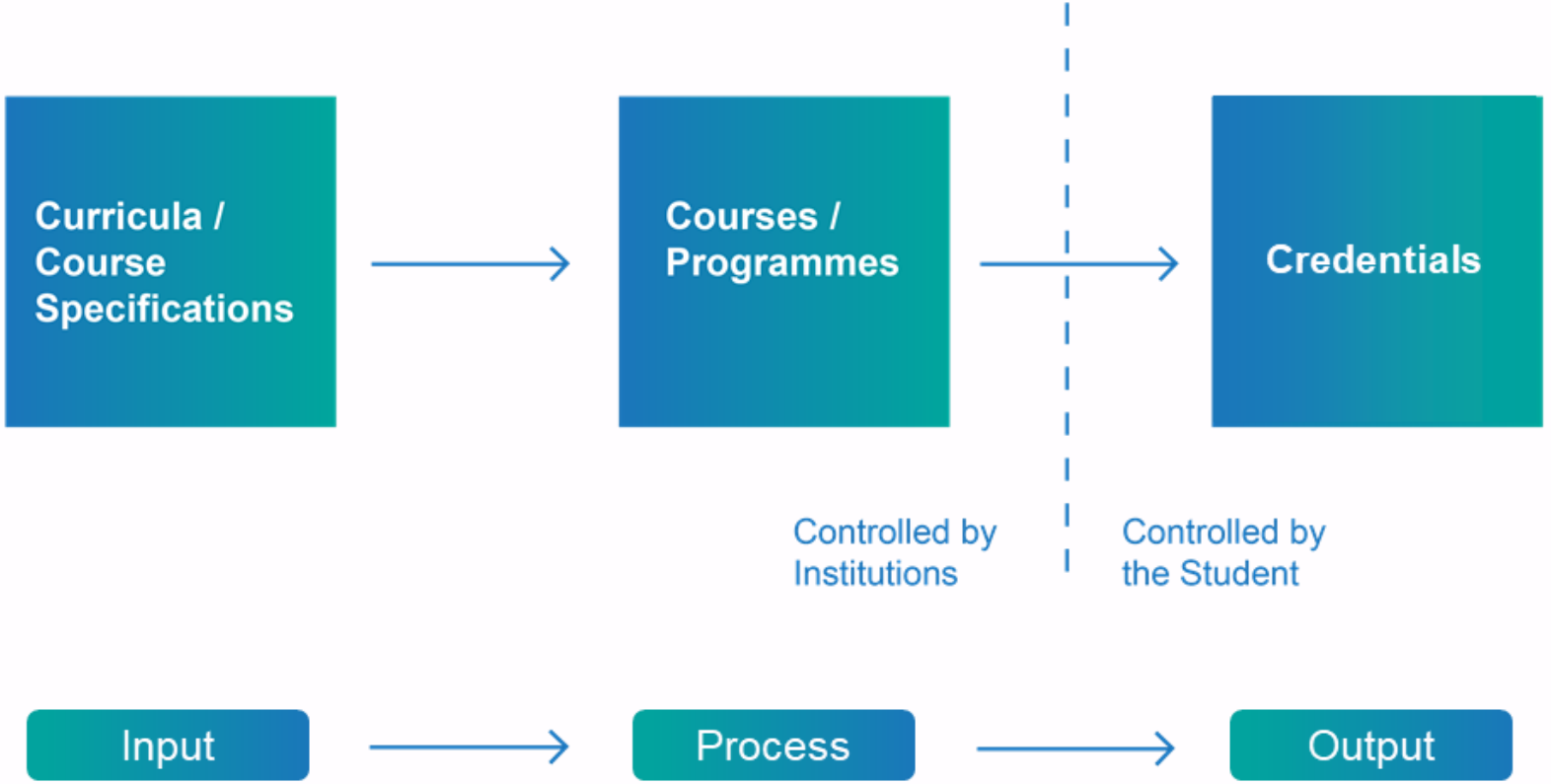
Context

The recognition and transfer of individual credits through ECTS was created for an era of physical mobility, and is optimised accordingly.

Bologna tools and EU instruments, such as the ECTS, ESG, diploma supplement and the EQF, support the **accreditation**, **award** and **recognition** of **qualifications** in the areas of formal learning, and only extremely broadly recognition procedures for non-formal and informal learning.

Problematisation

Open Educational Providers are creating **parallel systems of credentials** that are not even described in terms of ECTS and ESG – leading to a situation where millions of students per year are enrolling in open courses offered by **universities** and other educational institutions which do not necessarily award valid or recognised forms of credit and **may not be covered by systems of Quality Assurance**


Curricula / Course Specifications
Courses / Programmes
Credentials
Controlled by Institutions
Controlled by the Student
Input
Process
Output

Elements of QA

QA of Content
(ESGs part 1, esp. 1.2, 1.3)

Content of a Credential Statement

	Learning Outcomes	Quality of Learning	Level of Learning	Workload of Learning	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
Credential	○ Red ○ Orange ○ Green ○ No Info	○ Red ○ Orange ○ Green ○ No Info	○ Red ○ Orange ○ Green ○ No Info	○ Red ○ Orange ○ Green ○ No Info	○ Red ○ Orange ○ Green ○ No Info

(Based on Nuffic, 2018 & Witthaus et al., 2016)

Nothing about micro-credentials changes the quality procedures which stand behind the credential statement.

Offered By

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How the Specialization Works

Take Courses

A Coursera Specialization is a series of courses that helps you master a skill. To begin, enroll in the Specialization directly, or review its courses and choose the one you'd like to start with. When you subscribe to a course that is part of a Specialization, you're automatically subscribed to the full Specialization. It's okay to complete just one course — you can pause your learning or end your subscription at any time. Visit your learner dashboard to track your course enrollments and your progress.

Hands-on Project

Every Specialization includes a hands-on project. You'll need to successfully finish the project(s) to complete the Specialization and earn your certificate. If the Specialization includes a separate course for the hands-on project, you'll need to finish each of the other courses before you can start it.

Earn a Certificate

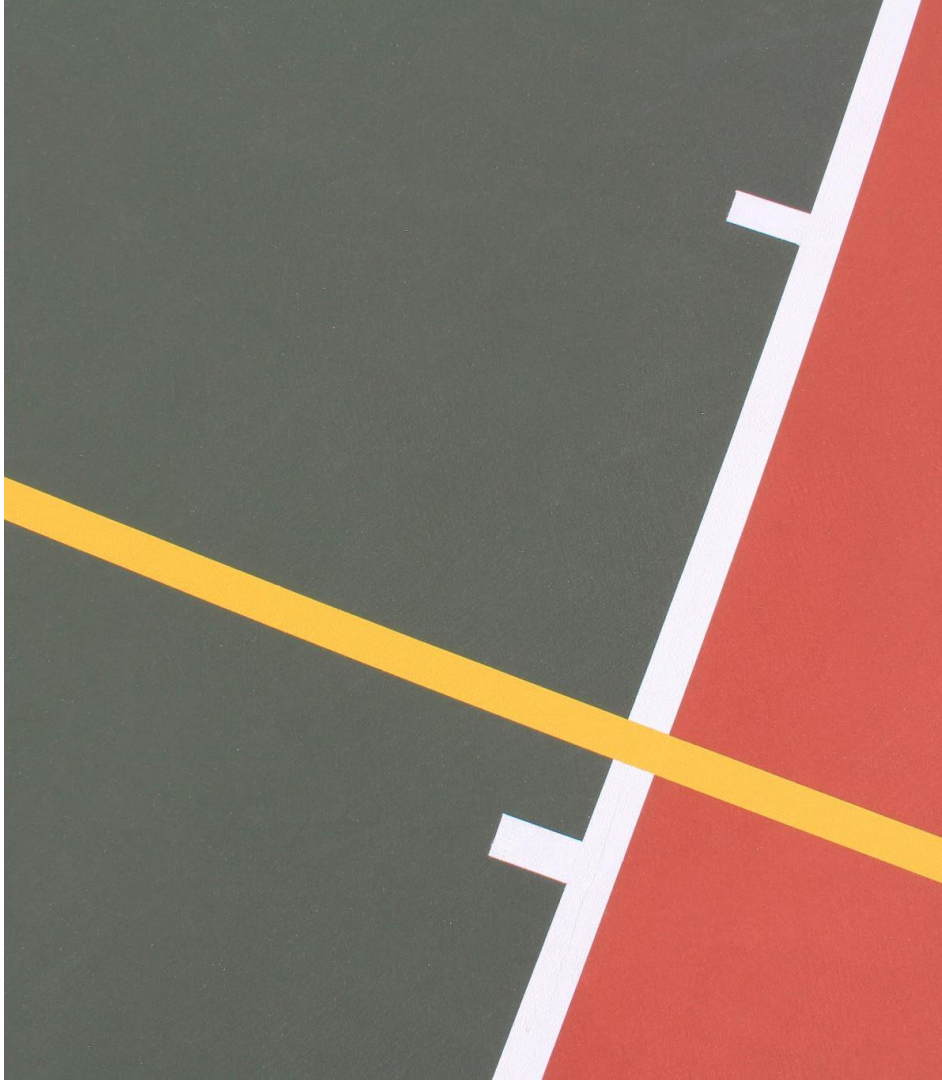
When you finish every course and complete the hands-on project, you'll earn a Certificate that you can share with prospective employers and your professional network.

Will I earn university credit for completing the Specialization?

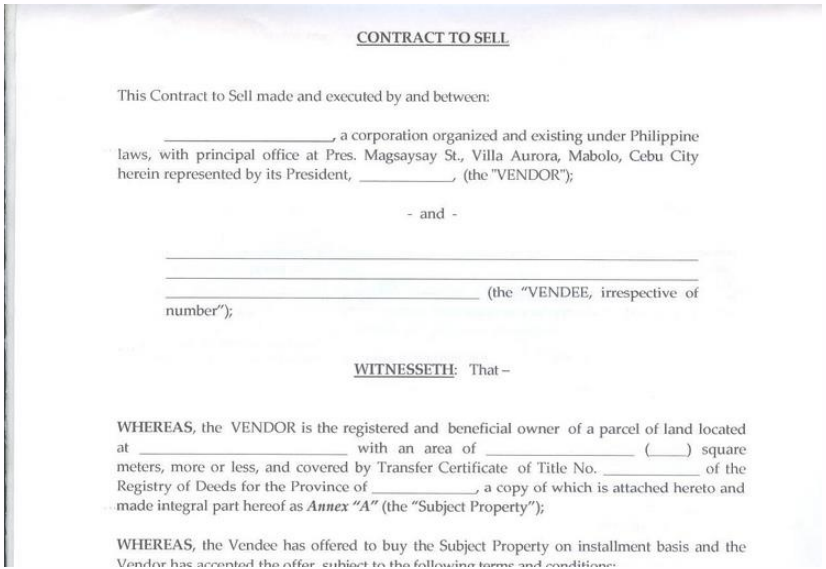
Johns Hopkins University does not offer university credit for completion of this specialization or the individual courses.

Questions

- Are the same quality procedures applied to the credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing teaching & learning?
- How and where is this made visible to students?
- **Should** a university be able to have a ‘quality-assured’ line of courses and a ‘no-guarantees’ line of courses?



A Quality Statement alone does not make for a Quality Contract



CONTRACT TO SELL

This Contract to Sell made and executed by and between:

_____, a corporation organized and existing under Philippine laws, with principal office at Pres. Magsaysay St., Villa Aurora, Mabolo, Cebu City herein represented by its President, _____, (the "VENDOR");

- and -

_____
_____
_____ (the "VENDEE, irrespective of number");

WITNESSETH: That –

WHEREAS, the VENDOR is the registered and beneficial owner of a parcel of land located at _____ with an area of _____ (____) square meters, more or less, and covered by Transfer Certificate of Title No. _____ of the Registry of Deeds for the Province of _____, a copy of which is attached hereto and made integral part hereof as ***Annex "A"*** (the "Subject Property");

WHEREAS, the Vendee has offered to buy the Subject Property on installment basis and the Vendor has accepted the offer, subject to the following terms and conditions:

Imagine the paperwork of recognising 5 micro-credentials for each student

Elements of QA

QA of Content
(ESGs part 1, esp. 1.2, 1.3)

QA of the Envelope

A Quality Envelope avoids these kind of conversations:

“Hello… this is the University of Gozo. Can you verify you issued this credential to John Smith? I can’t find information about your accreditation…can you please forward some documentation”

A Quality Envelope avoids these kind of conversations:

“Hello… I’m sorry but we do not know the institution that issued this credential. Can you please get it verified by an ENIC-NARIC centre and come back”

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A Quality Envelope avoids these kind of conversations:

“Hello… I’m sorry but we do not know the institution that issued this credential. Since the credential is essentially worthless, here is an admission/recognition exam you can do to prove what you know.”

Quality Assurance
procedures deal
with establishing
trust **at scale**

Elements of the Envelope

Information about the body guaranteeing quality of the delivery

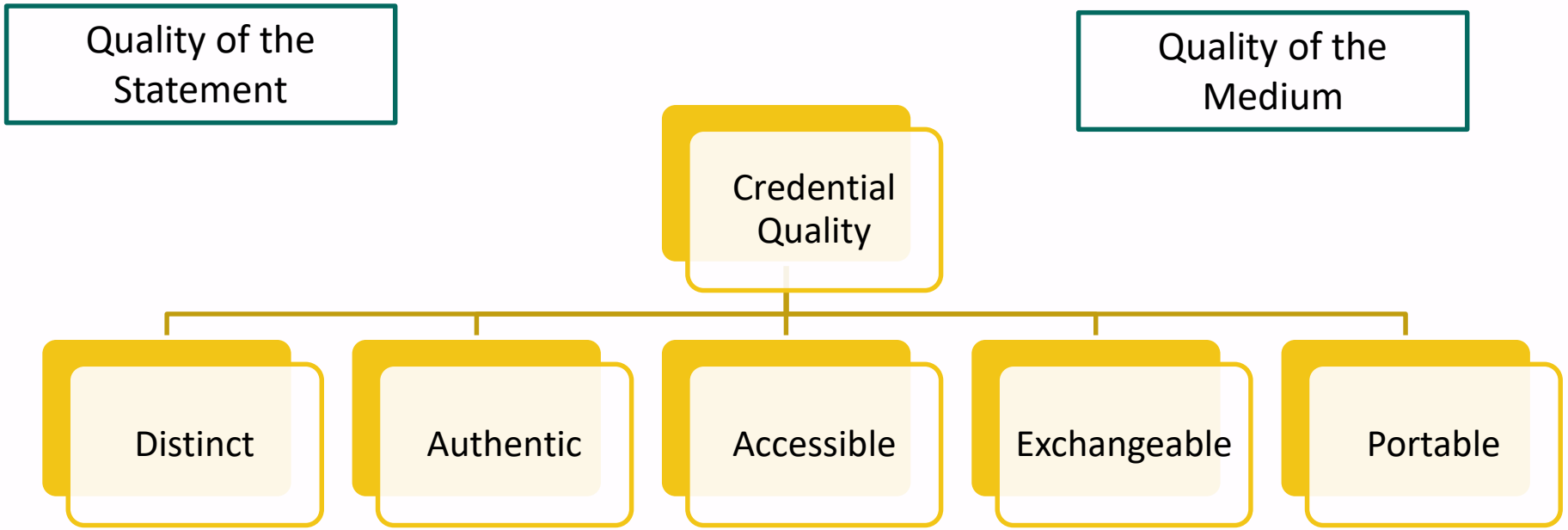
Information about the Issuer

Information about the Receive

Traceable Information about the envelope. Links back to:
- information to audit the sender
- information to audit the credential

Secure Packaging

Quality Principles for Digital Credentials



	Quality of the Statement The statement should:	Quality of the Medium The medium should:
Distinct	• represent a specific and identifiable and measurable experience, skill or fact • be attributable to a single, identifiable person	• allow for the storage and display of the statement, as well as any and all associated metadata

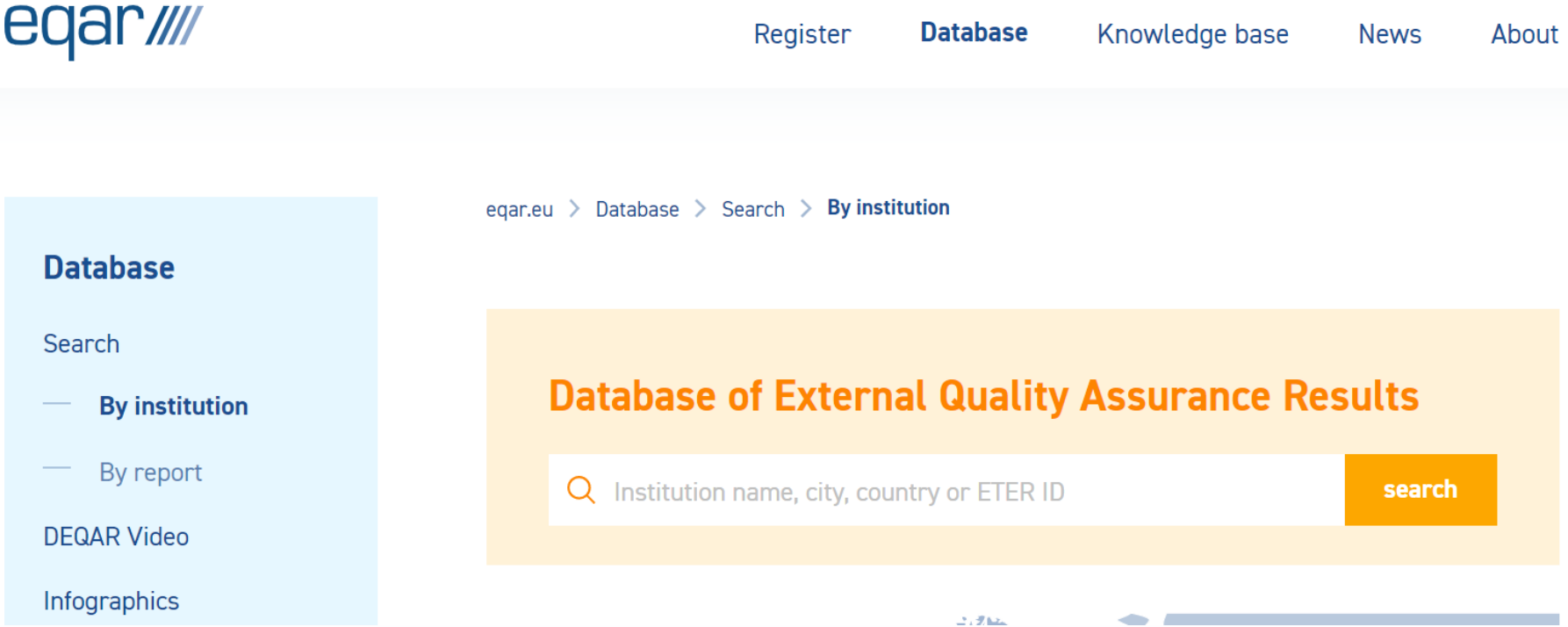
Authentic	• contain enough information to:
	  • verify when, where and by whom it was issued
	  • trace and reproduce the conditions under which it was issued
	  • be able to be issued for a limited period and be revocable
		• only allow an issuer to create a certificate;
		• not allow for any kind of tampering or editing
		• be able to store or link to the information required to verify
		• display its validity status

Accessible	• be issued in a widely-spoken language or in a easy to read graphical format	• be issued in a widely-used and/or open format
Exchangeable	• be modular, allowing for the credential to be subdivided into smaller credentials or stacked into larger credentials • be convertible into other types of credentials	• allow for relational links to be created between credentials • allow for credentials to be created out of other credentials
Portable	• be owned by the learner	• allow for the user to physically possess the credential in a place of their choosing • easily shareable by the user

Who decides on the reputation of an issuer?

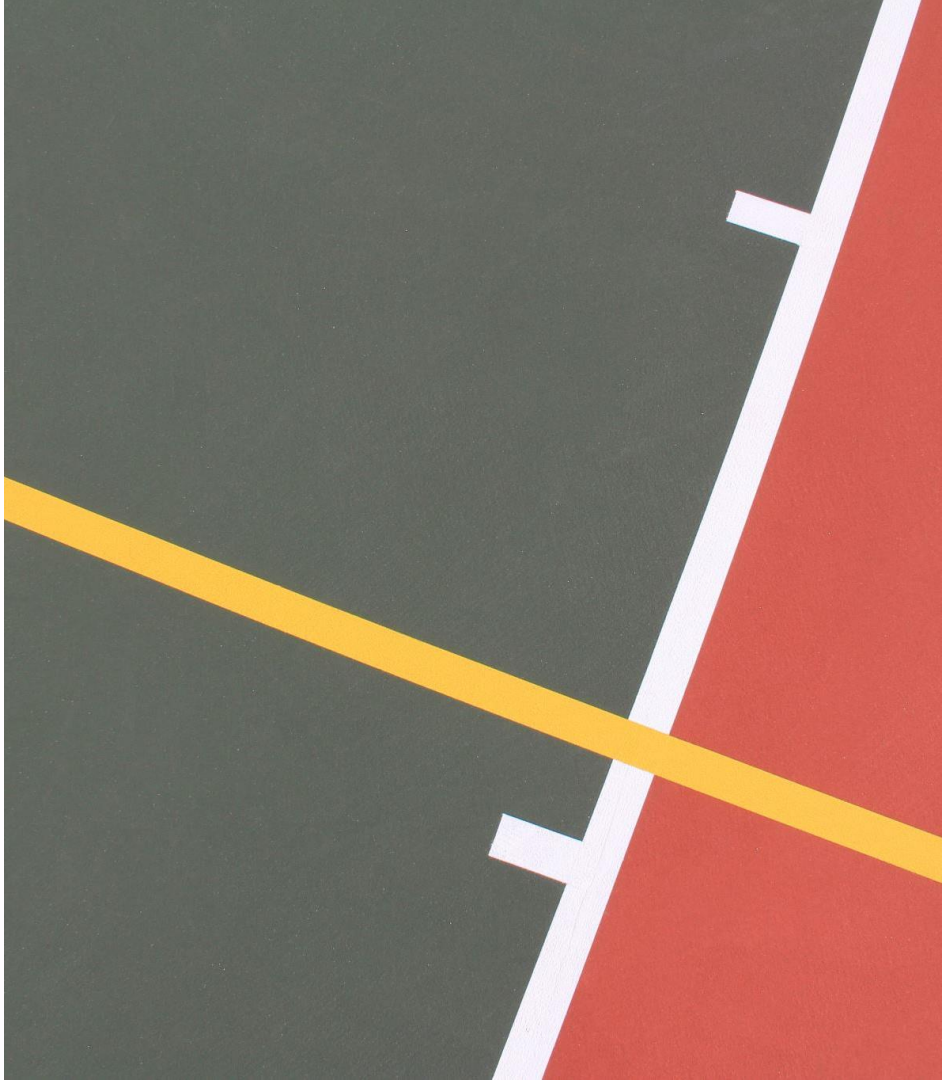
- An accreditation agency?
- The learning platform?
- The learning community, e.g. through endorsement?

The start of a register of trusted issuers?



Questions

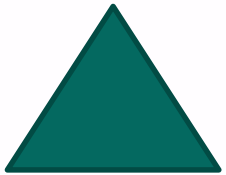
- How do we link back credentials to the quality systems they were issued under?
- How do we make these steps auditable?
- How do we acknowledge quality systems outside European HE without doing a case by case analysis?



Quality is often defined as

Fitness for Purpose

A Basic Assumption



Recognition & Portability of credentials

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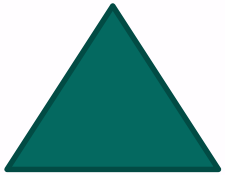

Overall Quality of credentials

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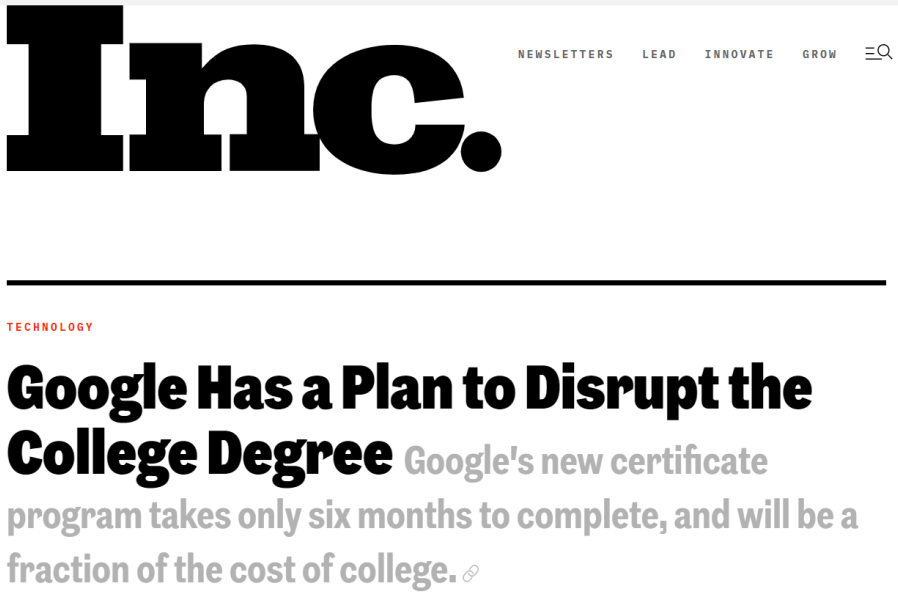
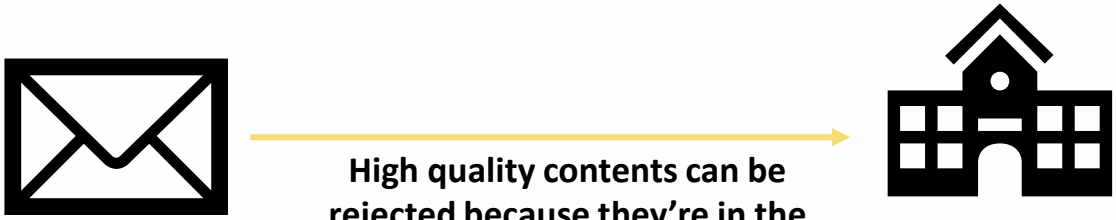


From a

labour market perspective > high quality

academic perspective > nearly worthless

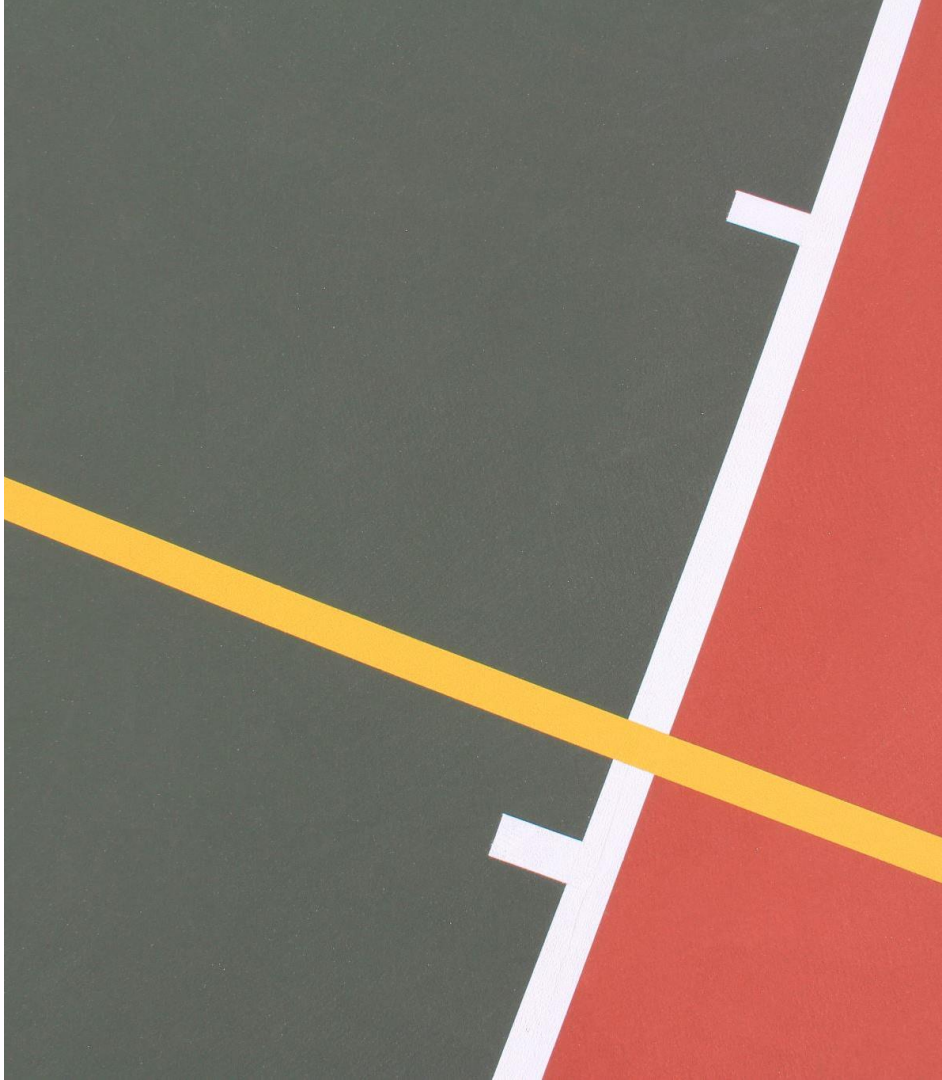
Quality of the Recognition Process



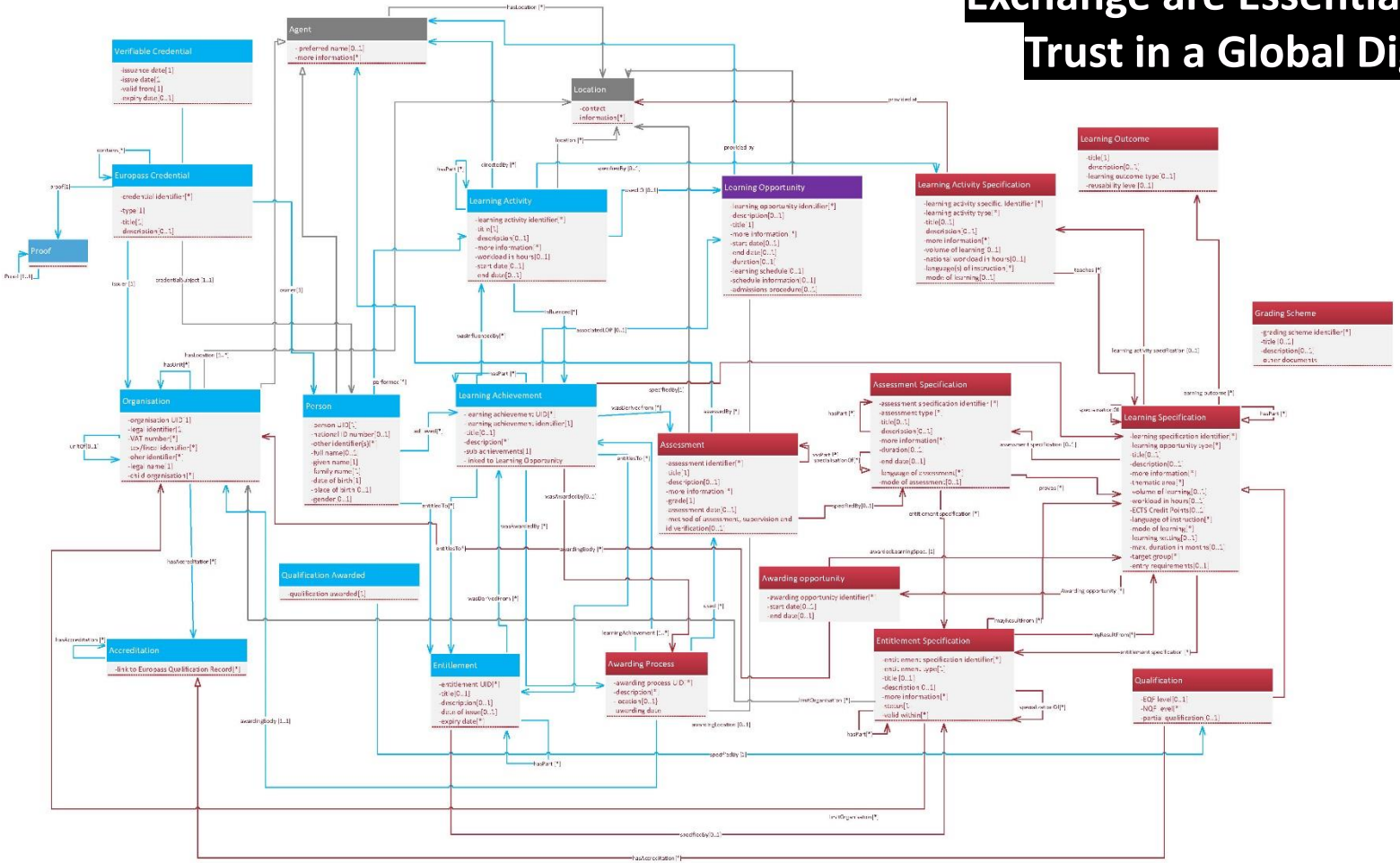
High quality contents can be rejected because they're in the wrong format or from the wrong system

Questions

- How can quality systems make the potential uses of credentials more transparent?
- At admissions is there a role to enhance quality in terms of ‘openness of access’ from different pathways?
- Is there an enhanced role for endorsements?



Standards for Quality-Data Exchange are Essential for Building Trust in a Global Digital First Era



www.oepass.eu

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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