

Alternative credentials for lifelong learning

[Alternative credentials](#) - mini-qualifications in a given subject area or capability - are key to helping higher education reach non-traditional groups who need to up-skill or re-skill. Policy makers see them as a shorter, more targeted and flexible way to address the short-term needs of society and labour markets. For universities, alternative credentials offer a specialised and targeted way to:

- 🌱 Widen participation to different groups of students who want shorter, sharper learning experiences that deliver an immediate career outcome
- 🌱 Use new technologies to deliver these outcomes to learners in a way that suits today's busy and digital lifestyles
- 🌱 Create unique value that private incumbents cannot replicate

Strong examples include Australian RMIT's online [professional education offerings](#); FutureLearn's [microcredentials](#) which offer stackable credentials that allow learners to work towards degree qualifications; and [university branded bootcamps](#) (intensive, job outcome focused learning experiences).

The next decade will see universities contribute huge and unique value through major innovations in this space. [FourthRev](#) is an education technology start up working across Australia, the UK and the US to build collaboration between industry and universities to solve the skills crisis of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In an [October 2020 blog post for The Higher Education Policy Institute](#), FourthRev CEO [Jack Hylands](#), highlights that increasing numbers of universities are working rapidly towards delivering such offerings, building new audiences and delivering meaningful outcomes beyond the traditional degree. By adding academic excellence and rigour to the alternative credentials formula and underpinning it with the sustained value that university credentials hold with employers, institutions can hit the sweet spot of student demand and employability success.