

CERTIFICATION

Project Number: 25/036
Education Institution: Coursera Inc.
Courses: Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate,
Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate,
Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate,
Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate
Professional Certificate.

To whom it may concern

All information in this report was provided by Coursera and assessed by the FIBAA expert panel. However, some of the information had to be redacted for one of the following reasons

- Material/information prohibited from disclosing as a public company under U.S. securities laws
- Proprietary information about internal processes not publicly known
- Level of detail that Coursera generally does not share with the public (e.g. expressly naming internal tools to support compliance processes). Please see <https://www.coursera.org/about/privacy> for relevant public information
- Confidential personal information

For information about redactions, please contact: PR@coursera.org

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



20th Meeting on November 26, 2025

CERTIFICATION

Project Number:	25/036
Higher Education Institution:	Coursera Inc.
Continuing Education Courses:	Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate, Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate, Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate, Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate.
Type of certification:	initial certification

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decision:

According to § 7 (6) in conjunction with § 9 (1) (in conjunction with § 10 (2) *if a provisional accreditation is included*) of the FIBAA General Terms and Conditions within the framework of procedures for the award of the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes from January 1, 2021, the Continuing Education Courses are certified with one condition.

Condition:

Coursera and Microsoft provide Certificate supplements for each course that document at least: the learning outcomes of the respective course, the country of the issuer, the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits), the EQF-level of the learning experience leading to the certificate, the type of assessment required to obtain the certificate and the mode of study in a transparent and coherent manner.

➤ Proof of meeting this condition is requested until August 25, 2026

Period of Certification: November 26, 2025 – November 25, 2030

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.

Assessment Report

Institution:

Coursera Inc.
Content partner: Microsoft

Continuing Education Courses:

- Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate
- Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate
- Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate
- Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate

**Intended Level According to European
Qualification Framework (EQF):**

Depending on the respective certificates from EQF 5
to EQF 6

Brief description of the continuing education courses:

Coursera Inc.¹ hosts a portfolio of “Professional Certificates” from Microsoft, Google, IBM, Intuit, Meta, Salesforce, and other industry leaders as MOOCs (Massive open online courses). The Professional Certificates are issued after completing the respective online course which are designed to help develop the skills needed to land entry-level jobs in business, IT, data science, and design.

Microsoft Entry-Level Professional Certificate courses belong to this portfolio of Professional Certificates and are offered to individuals worldwide who seek to reskill to move into emerging digital careers.

The Microsoft Professional Certificate courses of this certification comprise a workload of approximately 130 hours (Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate) to 420 hours (Microsoft Full Stack Developer), thus also representing “micro-credentials”² as small learning entities. With FIBAA certification, Coursera proposes ECTS crediting recommendation following the “Recognition of prior learning” as outlined in the ECTS Users’ Guide 2015.

All Microsoft Professional Certificate courses are based on a methodological approach provided by Coursera and content conceived, produced, and instructed by Microsoft.

Opening date of the procedure:

March 21, 2025

Date of filing the self-assessment report:

June 4, 2025

Date of online assessment conference:

August 26-28, 2025

Type of certification:

Initial certification

Mode of study:

Online, Part time

Initial start of the courses:

- Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
- Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
- Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
- Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]

Start of course cycle: continuous

¹ Referred to as “Coursera” in this report (except for summary chapter)

² “A micro-credential is a proof 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.” (European Commission: A European Approach to Micro-Credentials (December 2020))

Capacity load: not limited

Learner intake (as of April 2025):

- Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
 - Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
 - Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
 - Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate: [REDACTED]
-

No. of ECTS credits assigned to the course:

- Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate: equivalent of 16 ECTS credits
 - Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate: equivalent of 12 ECTS credits
 - Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate: equivalent of 8 ECTS credits
 - Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate: equivalent of 5 ECTS credits
-

Hours (workload) per ECTS credit equivalent:

25

Intended level according to European Qualification Framework (EQF)

- Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate: level 6
 - Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate: level 6
 - Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate: level 5-6
 - Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate: level 6
-

FIBAA Project Manager:

Christiane Butler

Panel Members:³

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³ In alphabetical order

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Summary

The panels' assessment takes into account the self-assessment and the results of the online assessment conference as well as the statement of Coursera Inc. to the assessment report dated October 24, 2025.

The Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate, Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate, Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate, and the Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate of Coursera Inc. fulfil (with one exception) the FIBAA quality requirements for certified continuing education courses and can be certified by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) under one condition. They may be recognized as modules within further educational programs and provide an ECTS credit recommendation.

The panel members identify need for action regarding the following aspect Certificate and Certificate Supplement (see chapter 3.1). Therefore, they recommend the certification on condition of meeting the following requirement:

- Coursera and Microsoft provide Certificate supplements for each course that document at least: the learning outcomes of the respective course, the country of the issuer, the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits), the EQF-level of the learning experience leading to the certificate, the type of assessment required to obtain the certificate and the mode of study in a transparent and coherent manner (see chapter 3.1.).

Proof of meeting this condition is to be documented by August 25, 2026.

The further not fulfilled quality requirement External evaluation by alumni, employers and/or third parties (see chapter 5) is not an Asterisk Criterion, so that a further condition is not necessary and the measures the course provider takes to solve the identified problem are to be considered in the context of the re-certification.

The panel members identify further potential for development for the courses regarding the following:

- Microsoft formulates the consequences for learners in case of reported and verified misconduct and transparently communicates them to the learners (see chapter 3.1).
- For the **Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate** course, integrating a variety of case studies that take cultural diversity into account and giving learners templates for press releases for using them in their professional fields (see chapter 3.3).
- For the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-end, and Front-End developer** courses, integrating some interactive tools for providing at least some human contact (see chapter 3.3).
- Communicating current Learner Outcome Reports on the website (see chapter 5).
- Developing ideas to generate valuable course-specific data from alumni and employers to be able to assign results to corresponding courses (see chapter 5).

The measures the course provider eventually takes in order to implement the recommendations of the panel members are to be considered in the context of the re-certification.

Furthermore, for all four courses, a set of criteria exist which exceed the quality requirements:

- Positioning of the course on the job market (see chapter 1.2).
- Pedagogical qualification of teaching staff (see chapter 4.1).
- Professional experience of teaching staff (see chapter 4.1).
- Internal cooperation (see chapter 4.1).
- Technical unit (for online courses) (see chapter 4.4).

In addition, for the **Microsoft Full Stack Developer**, the **Microsoft Back-End Developer**, and the **Microsoft Front-End Developer** Professional Certificates:

- Positioning of the course within the institution's overall strategy (see chapter 1.2).
- Logic and plausibility of teaching and learning methodology (see chapter 3.3).

In addition, for the **Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate** Professional Certificate:

- Professional ethics and/or societal issues (see chapter 3.2).

Further positive aspects the panel would like to highlight although they do not lead to a formal “exceed” or “exceptional” rating within the respective chapter:

- The fruitful cooperation with Microsoft as a key differentiator and uniqueness of the courses (see chapter 1.2).
- The very structured and logical modularization of the courses makes the transfer of knowledge within Coursera courses (“stackability”) easily possible (see chapter 3.1).
- The well-thought-out content of the course **Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate** (see chapter 3.2).
- The structural design and scaffolding of the **Microsoft Full Stack Developer**, the **Microsoft Back-End Developer**, and the **Microsoft Front-End Developer** courses’ methodology (see chapter 3.3).
- Coursera’s various measures and policies in support of learners in special circumstances (see chapter 4.2).

For the overall assessment please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

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Information

0.1 Institution/Course provider

Launched in 2012 by two Stanford professors, Andrew Ng, and Daphne Koller, Coursera's mission is to provide universal access to world-class learning. Coursera is now one of the largest online learning platforms, with 118 million registered learners, partnering with over 300 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. Institutions worldwide use Coursera to upskill and reskill their employees, citizens, and students in data science, technology, and business. Coursera became a B Corp⁴ in February 2021.

Coursera operates in five essential business units within two models:

- 1) Coursera for Individual learners
 - a. Degrees
 - b. Open Content (Professional Certificates, Specializations & Courses by university and Industry Partners)
- 2) Business to Business (Coursera for Enterprise)
 - a. Coursera for Business
 - b. Coursera for Campus
 - c. Coursera for Government

Learners coming to Coursera are presented with a broad range of learning offerings, from a two-hour Guided Project on how to build a website to full study programs. As technology automates more repetitive, predictable, lower-skilled job tasks, individuals worldwide seek to reskill with Professional Certificates and college degrees to move into emerging digital careers. Coursera offers a portfolio of entry-level Professional Certificates from Microsoft, Google, IBM, Intuit, Meta, Salesforce, and other industry leaders that help develop the skills needed to land entry-level digital jobs in business, IT, cybersecurity, data science, marketing, sales, design, and finance without requiring a college degree or any experience in the field. For Coursera's Professional Certificates in this cluster, Coursera has been able to win Microsoft as a content partner (see chapter 4.4). Coursera also has online degrees in data science, computer science, engineering, business, social science, and public health. The full Coursera catalog includes:⁵

- 1,614 Guided Projects: Gain a job-relevant skill in less than two hours
- 11,444 Courses: Learn something new in four to six weeks
- 1,426 Specializations: Gain a job-relevant skill in three to six months
- 193 Certificates
 - 45+ Entry-level Professional Certificates:⁶ Earn a certification of job readiness for an in-demand career in three to nine months

⁴ <https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/> (certification for sustainability), last access on September 1, 2025

⁵ As of April 2025

⁶ In this report referred to as "courses", for terminology see glossary at the end of this report.

- 13+ MasterTrack Certificates: In three to twelve months, earn a university-issued certificate from a module of a university degree and credit that can be applied to that degree in the future
- 50+ Degrees: Earn a bachelor's or master's degree or earn a postgraduate diploma.

The Coursera platform is designed to enable learners to discover the right content and credentials by domain (e.g., Business, Technology, Health), by skills (e.g., Python, Statistics, Data Visualization), and by job role (e.g., Data Analyst, Marketer, Engineer). Once learners enroll in a course, the unified technology platform is designed to enable them to learn effectively to advance their careers and earn credentials to signal their learning to prospective employers.

As part of Coursera's strategy and focus on supporting individuals with job readiness certificates in their career planning, certificate offerings have increasing importance in Coursera's product catalog. After the first positive experiences with this training offer, Coursera has been able to expand the number of available Entry-Level certificates to over 45. Coursera systematically derives the needs from a thorough analysis of data as well as the latest conference and research results. Coursera partners with companies to integrate subject matter expertise from professional practice and to train the skills that are needed on the job for the respective tasks. A separate corporate division has dedicated itself to this topic of industry partnerships.

For Coursera's Professional Certificates in the areas of business intelligence and cybersecurity, Coursera has been able to win Microsoft as a content partner (see chapter 4.3).



An increasing number of universities worldwide recognize Professional Certificates towards their degrees, thus making these learning units stackable into full-degree programs. To ease recognition in Europe and in accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide's intention of Recognition of Prior Learning,⁷ Coursera also aims at ECTS credit recommendation with FIBAA certification. On the other hand, in many cases, entry-level certificates lead to career pathways for the learners. Coursera has a network of more than 150 partners who are continuously searching for talents to hire. Completing a set of certificates creates more chances for learners to start their careers in various new job opportunities.

Further development of the courses, statistical data and evaluation results

Although this is the first time the courses in this bundle will be certified according to the ESG, ECTS, and EQF standards, many learners have already completed the courses. The Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate has also been

⁷ [ECTS Users' guide 2015](#), page 46, last access on July 1, 2024

assessed by the American Council on Education with a positive credit recommendation. In addition to these external quality assurance measures, Coursera continuously and systematically collects, processes, and makes available data [REDACTED] [REDACTED] dashboards that are analyzed at least once a year in a detailed feedback and evaluation meeting between all parties. In this meeting, areas for improvement are identified, measures derived, and implementation timetables recorded. It is also reviewed whether changes or updates to the learning content are necessary (see also chapter 5).

0.2 Statistical Data and evaluation results; development of the courses

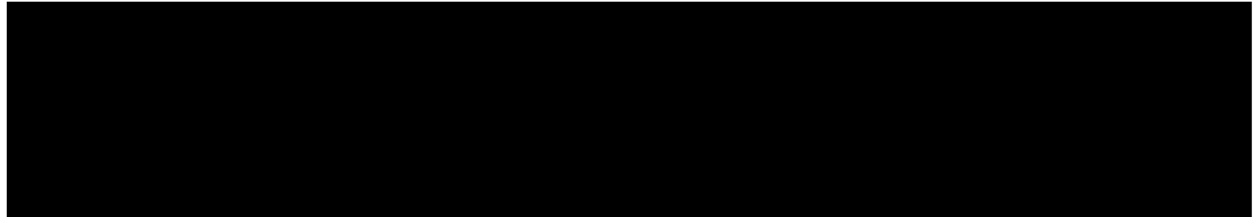


Figure 1: Course data for the Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate

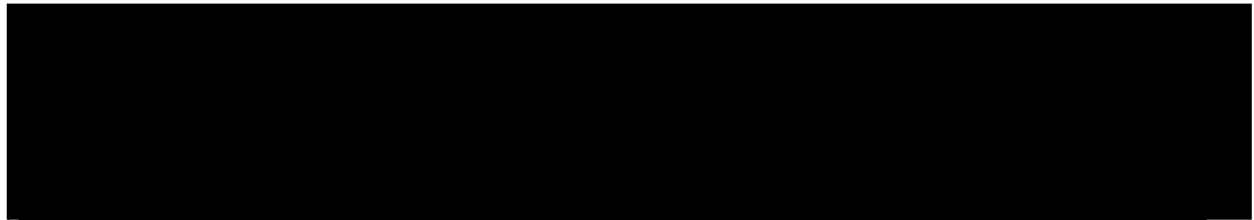


Figure 2: Course data for the Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate

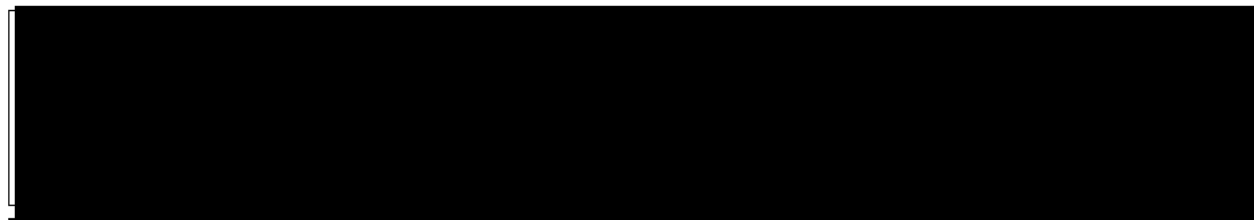


Figure 3: Course data for the Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate

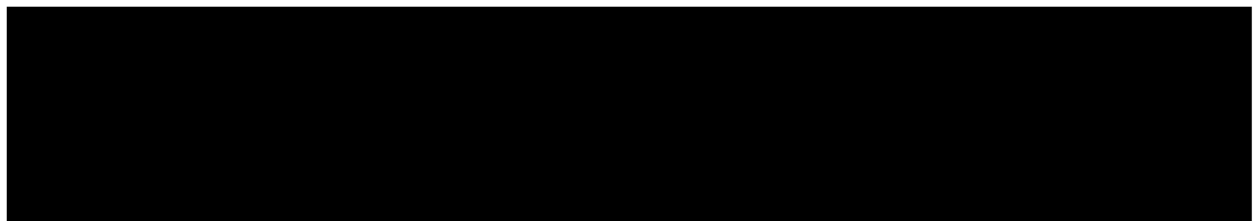


Figure 4: Course data for the Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate

Appraisal:

The four Professional Certificates of Coursera and Microsoft have been recently introduced onto the market. Nevertheless, the number of learners exhibits that they are well-received. The star rating of the courses is very good; three of the courses received 4.7 and one a 4.6 out of 5 stars. This fits Coursera's benchmark of at least 4.5 stars for the courses.

Completion rates are what is to be expected considering that they are massive open online courses with a one-week free trial period. [REDACTED]

The average passing score and the average time to completion are not particularly relevant benchmarks for Coursera. The minimum passing score for the courses is set to 80% (see Mastery learning, see chapter 3.3). That means reaching the 80% is the benchmark although learners might reach even higher scores.

Coursera did not set a benchmark for the average time of completion as this is very individual for the learners. Some might go through the entire course in a week; some might take four months to complete a course juggling other responsibilities on the side. This leads to huge differences in completion times and makes tracking an average number insignificant. Moreover, in this case, longer "study times" give no indication that the content or the quality of the course needs to be adjusted. Coursera has set different warning signs and KPIs to track the quality of its courses (see chapter 5).

As three of the courses are running for less than a year and one (**Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate**) for about one year, and learners have not flagged bigger issues within the contents, no significant improvements have followed since the initial launch of the courses. (For evaluation and feedback see chapter 5.)

Description and appraisal in Detail

1 STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Logic and transparency of course objectives (Asterisk Criterion)

Coursera's general objectives for "Professional Certificates" offer an accessible learning experience from top companies and universities. Learners can get started immediately, study at their own pace, anytime and anywhere. They can create work samples through the course to demonstrate their skills and earn a career credential.

"Entry-level Professional Certificates" are designed to provide a comprehensive and high-quality approach to preparing learners for an in-demand career. They are offered to learners with little prerequisites and no or little previous knowledge. Learners gain practical skills and knowledge through hands-on projects and, upon completion, can demonstrate job readiness to potential employers with a Professional Certificate credential.

The Microsoft Professional Certificates are designed to provide learners with a holistic qualification concept that aims to impart subject-specific, methodological, and social competencies. Across the various Microsoft Professional Certificates, the application orientation is represented in the practical implementation of projects and application of new tools in the respective method courses and labs. Theoretical foundations and explanations always accompany the expertise of practitioners and subject matter experts.

The Professional Certificates adhere to the best practices and standards developed by the Teaching and Learning team at Coursera. They utilize Bloom's Taxonomy to plan, create, and articulate the learning objectives for each course, module, and learning week. Furthermore, it can be seen from the descriptions of the individual certificate and their respective courses in the course syllabus that the specifications from the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) have been taken into account in the design of the learning objectives of the modules and courses.

The EQF definition primarily includes the assumption of responsibility and autonomy. Skills are defined as "the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to carry out tasks and solve problems." In the EQF, skills are also described as "cognitive skills (logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical skills (dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools, and instruments)" (see below). The corresponding descriptors representing the different levels were applied to the modules and courses. These are broadly the following levels:

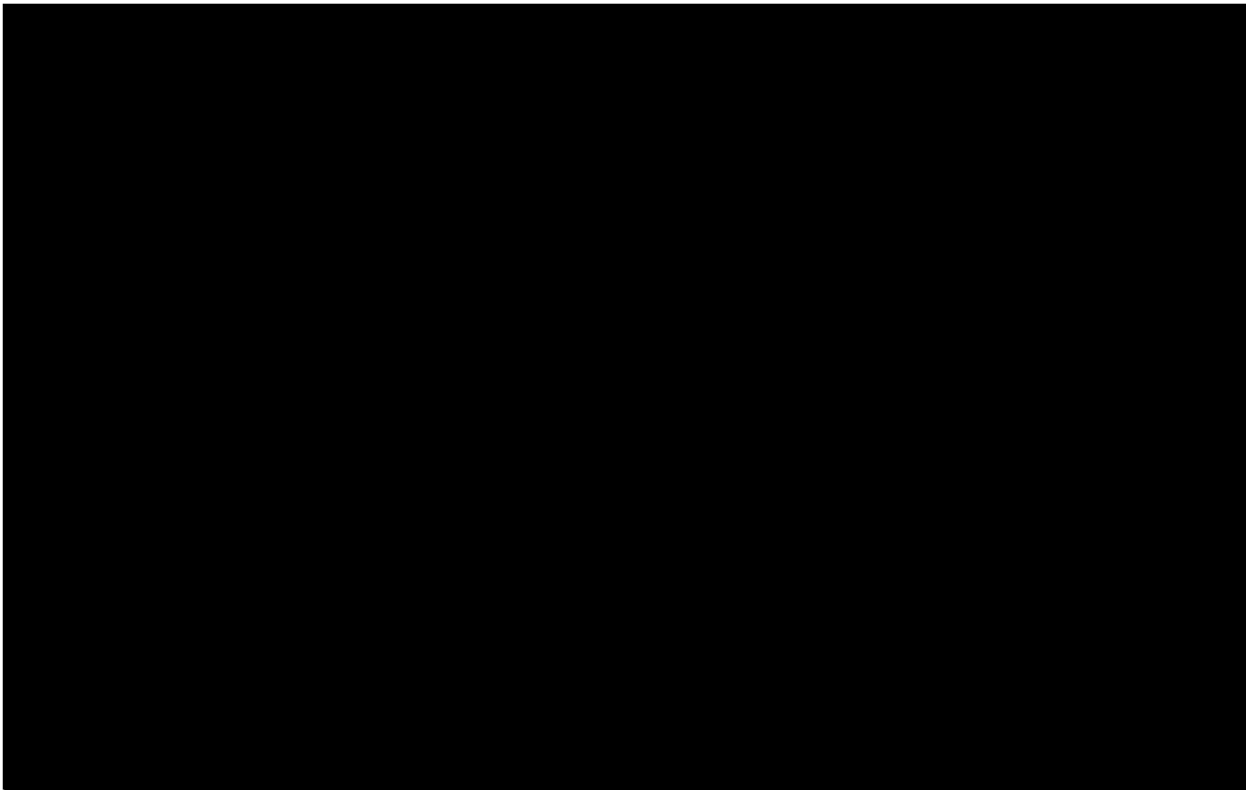


Figure 5: EQF level descriptor relevant to the Professional Certificates

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⁸ Copilot Platforms Inc referred to as “Copilot” in this report

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Appraisal:

The qualification objectives of the courses are convincingly defined and correspond with the intended level of the European Qualification Framework. The qualification objectives are presented in relation to the target group and the target group members' professional development (see also chapter 2).

The qualification objectives embrace appropriate training of knowledge, skills and competences with a focus on skills.

The qualification objectives are based on subject-specific and generic learning outcomes and the level of the qualification to be awarded upon completion.

When refining the qualification objectives, the institution also takes into account the findings of alumni-tracking studies. (Further occupational development of course graduates: see also chapter 5)

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.	Strategy and Objectives					
1.1*	Logic and transparency of course objectives			X		

1.2 Positioning of the course

Over the past four years, online learning provided educators, businesses, and governments with the means to respond to a global crisis that fundamentally changed how people learn and work. The combined forces of online learning and remote work assist the vision of a world, where anyone, anywhere, has access to education. By working directly with universities and enterprises and powering institutional collaboration across the platform, Coursera provides access to global and affordable education while paving the way for talent to rise from anywhere with remote, digital jobs.

With the rise of online learning and the increasing demand for skills and qualifications, online Professional Certificates have become increasingly popular. They offer a way for individuals to gain new skills, qualifications, and credentials without attending traditional classrooms.

According to Coursera, Professional Certificates hosted on Coursera's platform are industry-recognized and can provide a competitive edge on the job market. In addition, they are becoming a much sought-after asset for both candidates (job seekers and employees) and employers, as they demonstrate that an individual has the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in a certain field. They provide individuals with a convenient and accessible way to gain the necessary skills and qualifications to pursue a career. As employers and educational institutions become more rigorous in their requirements, Professional Certificates become an asset in helping individuals meet their career goals and objectives.⁹

The development of the Professional Certificates was strongly oriented toward the specifications and recommendations of business and industry representatives to prepare completers appropriately for labor market requirements. Concerning the range of

⁹ See self-report p. 14

qualifications, care was taken to include the facets and characteristics of the intended occupational fields and to anchor them in the syllabus (see description [REDACTED] in chapter 3.2).

Coursera is aware of other platforms that support the delivery of similar online educational content. One of the nuanced aspects about evaluating Coursera is that it is a multi-sided market – formed by learners, content partners, and enterprises. It is not just universities who come on the platform as educators, there are leading companies joining the platform to train and skill people around the world. The Coursera platform enables content production, delivery, learning experience, and analytics to serve a global audience, across a range of needs and contexts. Coursera has a transparent co-branding approach with content providing partners, whereby the Coursera brand and role is readily known by learners.

[REDACTED]

Coursera considers lifelong and lifecycle learning in positioning courses on the Coursera platform. It aims to reach learners early in their careers and offer them affordable, job-relevant content, skills learning, and credentials to help them start or advance their careers. Coursera’s lifelong learning ecosystem (see figure 6) shows the three pillars of the company’s strategy: the connections made between learners and educators, industry, or university partners, the one between learners and institutions, and the one between educators and institutions.

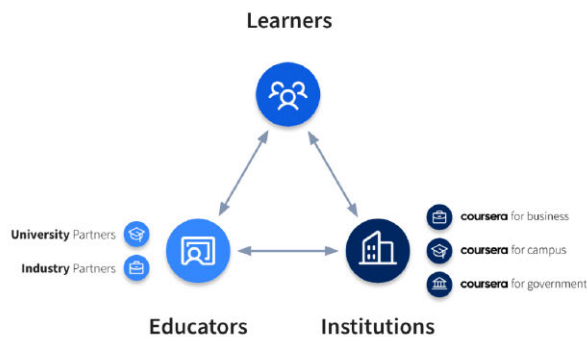
In this context, Coursera’s partnership with Microsoft connects learners and educators to solve a particular learner problem: learning new skills to either land their first professional job or switch to different roles.

According to Coursera, extensive research has been conducted to define the best way to position content to learners to ensure a best-fit with what individual learners are seeking, and what the content may provide, while considering in-demand skills from the job market. Through consideration of relevant metrics, Microsoft was identified as a thought leader and expert in areas that may provide learners with an opportunity for job placement, as subject matter areas generally correlate with high job growth.¹⁰

[REDACTED]

¹⁰ See self-report p. 16

Coursera's lifelong learning ecosystem



Q4 2024 Investor Presentation Source: Coursera data as of December 31, 2024



Appraisal:

The reasons given for the positioning of the courses on the educational and the job market are based on a strategic analysis and plausibly linked to the described qualification objectives and the respective course graduates' profiles.

In addition, the course provider has thoroughly examined the job market and used the results in establishing a competitive profile of the respective courses. The position in the job market is reviewed at appropriate intervals, and the courses' competitiveness documented.

The panel highlights Coursera's USPs including the flexible online learning model, offering affordable and accessible education, the thorough labor market analysis (see job role alignment exercise/task analysis in chapter 3.2), the immediate benefit of landing a new job while also having "credits" for future long-term goals in education (see chapter 3.1 on ECTS credit recommendation), and the fruitful partnering with relevant enterprises in the industry (in this case Microsoft and the use of Microsoft technologies).

The **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate Professional Certificate** course is convincingly integrated into the course provider's overall strategy relating to the other offers of the institution (e.g., focusing on practice in cooperation with enterprises, further and higher education competency etc.). The course's qualification objectives are in line with the course provider's mission and strategic planning.

In addition, the **Microsoft Full Stack Developer, the Microsoft Back-End Developer, and the Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificates'** course's qualification objectives constitute the core of the institution's strategy and are clearly, measurably and sustainably implemented, monitored and adjusted. The panel highlights the fruitful cooperation with Microsoft as a key differentiator and uniqueness of the courses. They acknowledge that there are many similar courses from other companies, but with different profiles. The Microsoft Professional Certificates are complementary and fit well within Coursera's strategic concept.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1. Strategy and Objectives					
1.3 Positioning of the course					
1.3.1 Positioning of the course on the educational market			X		
1.3.2 Positioning of the course on the job market		X			
1.3.3 Positioning of the course within the institution's overall strategy		Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End	PR		

2 ADMISSION

Focus on the target group

Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate

This Professional Certificate is designed for individuals aiming to build a comprehensive career in software development, particularly as full stack developers. It is ideal for aspiring developers and professionals seeking to transition into tech roles that require proficiency across both front-end and back-end development.

The program offers foundational to intermediate knowledge in programming, databases, APIs, and cloud services using Microsoft technologies. Learners gain hands-on experience with tools such as Visual Studio Code, GitHub, and Azure, developing projects that simulate real-world applications using C#, a core programming language in the Microsoft ecosystem. This certificate prepares participants for versatile roles in tech by equipping them with the ability to design, build, and maintain end-to-end applications.

Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate

This Professional Certificate is intended for individuals pursuing a career in back-end development, including those with some programming experience and professionals transitioning from other technical domains. It is designed to build expertise in server-side logic, database management, and API development using Microsoft-backed technologies like .NET and Azure. Learners explore critical back-end concepts such as RESTful services, data security, and cloud integration through hands-on exercises and real-world projects. This certificate prepares participants for roles such as back-end developer or server-side engineer by strengthening their ability to create scalable and secure web applications.

Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate

This Professional Certificate targets individuals interested in launching or advancing a career in front-end web development. It is especially suited for beginners, career changers, and those with basic coding knowledge who want to specialize in creating interactive and visually engaging web applications. The program focuses on core technologies such as C#, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and frameworks like Blazor. Through guided projects and interactive lessons, learners acquire skills in UI/UX design principles, responsive web design, and web performance optimization. The certificate is ideal for those who want to master the client-facing side of web development and build a professional portfolio to showcase their skills.

Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate

This Professional Certificate is designed for individuals seeking careers in public relations and strategic communication. It is tailored for professionals looking to switch into PR roles, and early-career marketers aiming to deepen their communication expertise. The program provides a strong foundation in media relations, corporate messaging, crisis communication, and digital PR strategy, all within the context of Microsoft’s tools and platforms. Learners gain practical experience in crafting press releases, managing media interactions, and developing integrated communication plans. The certificate is ideal for those aiming to work in corporate PR, agency roles, or communications departments across various industries.

Admission conditions

Entry-Level Professional Certificates are targeted at beginner-level learners who want to develop job-ready skills, tools, and a portfolio for entry-level positions. These programs do not require any prior experience. There are no formal admission requirements or prerequisites to enroll.

To participate in each of the Microsoft Professional Certificates, learners must subscribe to the Coursera platform and enroll in their preferred course from the course description page on the Coursera website. To enroll, learners must 1) open the page for the course they want to enroll in, 2) click enroll and 3) choose the preferred payment option. After enrolling, learners must agree that they will be required to provide a government-issued ID to earn a certificate for completing learning content, after which learners can navigate to the beginning of the course through the platform and begin learning asynchronously. Learners must have access to a computer or mobile device and internet connection. According to Coursera learners who enroll in the courses should be proficient in English. Although translations and video subtitles are available, Coursera points out at the starting page of each course that the course is taught in English, and the interpretations, provided by a machine-aided translation service, may contain mistakes.

For the courses, an “item sharing” system automatically detects if contents overlap so that learners do not have to repeat content. For example, learners of the Front-End developer course can share items when continuing or changing to the full stack developer course. The “stacking” of content enables learners to enroll in a course at the level that they are. According to Coursera, after having checked learners’ skills, the system allows for mapping an individual learning path and recommends where to start with a course.

Legal Relationship between Coursera and Microsoft

[REDACTED]

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Legal relationship between Coursera and Learners

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

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Coursera and Teaching staff (Instructors)

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

¹¹ [Redacted footnote text]

¹² <https://www.coursera.org/about/terms>, last access on September 1, 2025

Appraisal:

The courses aim at a specific target group, which is defined on the basis of previous knowledge, experience, and educational level. The choice of the specific target group is based on the strategic objectives of the course.

Admission conditions have been defined, are coherent, and accessible for interested parties. They take into account the specific characteristics of the target group. The panel especially highlights the transfer of knowledge within Coursera courses (“stackability”). Learners that have completed content that is repeated in further courses, get automatic “credit” and can continue with a course at the appropriate level for them.

However, the panel would also like to suggest that Coursera thinks about including analytical and reasoning capabilities into recommended prior knowledge for the courses to fit well within the anticipated EQF level 6. Especially for the more technical courses, besides relevant work experience, analytical skills are very beneficial to support the timely achievement of the courses’ objectives to “become a Front-End developer”.

The contract between Coursera and the learners, as well as between Coursera and the teaching staff is set down and documented. Rights and obligations of both parties have been established and are known to all relevant parties. Transparency and legal certainty exist.¹³

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
2. Admission					
2.1* Focus on the target group			X		
2.2* Admission conditions			X		
2.3* Legal relationship			X		

¹³ It should be noted that no comprehensive legal review can be carried out as part of the certification process.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Structure and Content

Structure of the courses

Each Microsoft Professional Certificate program contains “courses”, which contain weekly “modules”¹⁴ (four to six lessons) that progressively build on concepts taught previously. Each module contains weekly learning objectives. By completing the weekly content for each module in order, learners can achieve the learning outcomes required to progress to the subsequent module.

The Microsoft Entry-Level Professional Certificates require no degree or experience in the area to take the program or obtain a specified entry-level job role. Coursera claims that a learner with a high school diploma and no degree or work experience can take an Entry-Level Professional Certificate and be considered for related roles upon completion.¹⁵ Like all content on Coursera, Professional Certificates include Coursera’s Pedagogy Principles (see chapter 3.3).

Entry-Level Professional Certificates on Coursera:

- Include a minimum of four courses designed to be completed in less than twelve months.
- Include career-relevant, hands-on projects to showcase to potential employers on the learner’s resume and in interviews.
- Include a partner-branded Professional Certificate, which Coursera issues and the partner delivers, from the partner dashboard to learners who successfully complete the program.
- Provide career-readiness resources, so the learner knows how to prepare for the job role.

Application of the “European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System” (ECTS) and modularization

Coursera employs several critical strategies to enable the transferability of courses between and within education and training sectors, on the labor market and across countries:

- **Adhering to International Standards:** Implementation of certification and accreditation processes that adhere to internationally recognized standards such as the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). This ensures the courses are comparable and transferable across different educational systems and countries.
- **Clear Definition of Learning Outcomes:** Define transparent and clearly articulated learning outcomes based on international standards. This includes subject-specific,

¹⁴ “Course” in Coursera terminology is a learning unit within the certificate program covering a certain content topic. A course (topic) is split into “modules” (in Coursera terminology) which is a weekly learning unit, thus “module” being Coursera’s terminology for the smallest learning unit within the “course” and the “program” (as a whole), see glossary.

¹⁵ See self-report p. 8

methodological, and social competencies. The detailed description of the qualifications helps institutions and employers to understand and recognize the value of the coursework.

- **Modularization and Stackable Credits:** Design courses that allow modular learning and stackable credits. Micro-credentials, for example, should be structured to not exceed one or two modules of a full academic program, allowing for easier integration into larger degree programs. This makes it convenient for learners to accumulate credits over time that can be applied towards a larger qualification.
- **Partnering with Academic and Professional Bodies:** Build partnerships with universities, industry leaders, and professional organizations globally. This can include cooperation agreements that facilitate mutual recognition of credits and qualifications, thereby aiding in the transferability of courses.
- **Quality Assurance Mechanisms:** Put in place robust quality assurance processes, including regular evaluation and feedback loops involving graduates, academic institutions, and employers. Certifications like those provided by FIBAA and endorsements from organizations like the American Council on Education assure stakeholders of the course quality.
- **Transparent Certification Process:** Maintain a transparent certification process using high-quality standards approved by international agencies. This process should assess courses based on criteria such as teaching methodologies, course content, integration of practical skills, and employability outcomes.
- **Global Employability Focus:** Design courses with a focus on employability by training relevant skills needed in the global labor market. This includes practical projects, interdisciplinary skills, and soft skills development. Partnering with hiring consortia helps position graduates for global job opportunities.
- **Ongoing Evaluation and Adaptation:** Continuously review and adapt course offerings based on market changes, learner feedback, and stakeholder recommendations to remain aligned with global education and employment trends.

The following elements of the “European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System” (ECTS) have been implemented:

- **Learning Outcomes:** Derived from the job role alignment exercise (see below, Logic and conceptual coherence of the curriculum), a basic idea of the learning objectives has been developed by Coursera’s instructional designers and a team of subject matter experts. Each Professional Certificate has therefore defined learning objectives to be achieved at the top level, whereby both the EQF recommendations on competence acquisition have been applied, and the descriptions of the respective learning objectives have been formulated based on the recommendations of Bloom’s taxonomy.

In addition, the overarching learning objectives for the respective certificate are broken down further toward individual learning outcomes for each “course” and for each weekly “module”. The quizzes and assessments are aligned with the learning objectives at the weekly “module”, “course”, and certificate levels.

- **Workload:** To determine the workload, each sub-element is analyzed within the pre-structured weekly learning plans, and the length (e.g., videos or reading) is determined. The learning and processing times determined in this way are finally summarized at

the level of the Professional Certificate. In this way, learners know the total workload in the respective certificate and the weekly learning times for each element. It is possible to set individual learning time targets and days on which Coursera reminds the user of their learning goals in the app or the browser, thus continuously motivating learners to participate. The workload at all levels is documented and systematically displayed before and during learning.

- Recommendations for ECTS credit allocation: Referencing the methodology and principles from the ECTS User's Guide 2015 and utilizing the application of the workload calculation, Coursera and Microsoft aim to show a defined ECTS credit recommendation that corresponds appropriately to the workload and learning objectives for the individual certificates. One ECTS credit should correspond to 25-30 hours of workload. The individual workload per module may vary depending on the task and exceed the initially determined reference time. The workload analyses provide a regular check, but in case of doubt, a slightly higher effort for a task should be assumed rather than less learning time. Coursera and Microsoft assign 25 hours per ECTS credit point and a corresponding ECTS credit recommendation value for each course.
- Non-Allocation for single educational components (on module/course level): Although the Professional Certificate comprises smaller units, the respective "courses" and "modules", Coursera and Microsoft refrain from distributing ECTS credits at this level. This approach follows the application in higher education institutions. For example, a module in the field of tertiary education, similar to an entire certificate, extends over four to six months. The ECTS credit allocation assigned to one module at higher education institutions should, according to many national recommendations,¹⁶ not be less than five ECTS credits as a rule. A different allocation than full ECTS credits should be avoided unless the general program design can compensate for the sensible full ECTS credits per semester. In addition, the corresponding course unit should conclude with an examination performance, which justifies the acquisition of the ECTS credits. In the case of the Professional Certificate, this is the Final Project or "Capstone Project". For the Specialization that is the successful completion of the graded assessment at the end of each module.
- 60 ECTS credits allocation per year: The Professional Certificates and Specializations are part-time continuing education programs intended to enable the acquisition of competencies and skills part-time. The weekly learning performance is geared towards this circumstance, with a maximum workload of approximately ten hours per week for six months.
- ECTS credit documentation: The use of ECTS credits is facilitated and quality enhanced by supporting documents like the course catalog and the certificate supplement via Credly. Via Credly learners can permanently store their achieved digital credits in a secure place. In addition, Credly provides prospective employers with the ability to verify that the individual earned the Professional Certificate, thus enabling a certificate authenticity check. In addition to badges, Credly provides learners with a transcript that Registration Offices a HEIs can utilize.
- Certificate supplements: A Certificate supplement documents the courses and the associated qualifications. The acquired skills, the earning criteria for the certificate, the learner, the content, the issuer, the course description, and the certificate details (when

¹⁶ As an example, they refer to the recommendations for action of the University Rectors' Conference in Germany (HRK), such as the recommendation on "Designing modularization" from February 2016.

and where obtained) are documented transparently and through Credly in a safe space that still allows for authenticity checks for external parties.



Figure 7: Example of a Certificate Supplement for the Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate

Logic and conceptual coherence of the curriculum

The conceptual coherence and logic of the curriculum can be evidenced through the alignment of the qualification objectives and the structure of the course:

- **Qualification Objectives and Learning Outcomes:** Each Professional Certificate on Coursera is designed based on job role alignment exercises conducted by Coursera and teams of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). This involves defining overarching learning objectives for each certificate and further breaking them down for each module. Detailed descriptions of the qualifications include subject-specific, methodological, and social competencies that align with academic principles (where applicable) and the desired level of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The job role alignment precedes the Job Task Analysis (see Chapter 3.2).
- **Module Structure:** The courses typically consist of multiple modules or smaller educational components. Each module has clearly defined individual learning objectives that align with the overall qualification objectives of the course. For example, the quizzes and assessments within the modules are aligned to ensure the best

possible achievement of the learning outcomes, which helps to maintain the coherence and logic of the curriculum.

- **Course Design and Continuous Review:** Courses are intended to be up-to-date with the requirements of a dynamic job market. This involves regular and proactive reviews, including feedback from relevant stakeholders and an analysis of subject-specific research and knowledge developments. This systematic approach ensures that the curriculum remains relevant and effectively helps learners achieve their qualification and competency objectives.

The curriculum for the Microsoft Full Stack Developer is as follows:

Module Number	Module Title	Learning Hours
1	Foundations of Coding Full-Stack	39
2	Introduction to Programming With C#	30
3	Introduction to Web Development	39
4	Blazor for Front-End Development	35
5	Back-End Development with .NET	43
6	Database Integration and Management	27
7	Full-Stack Integration	34
8	Security and Authentication	39
9	Performance Optimization and Scalability	47
10	Data Structures and Algorithms	47
11	Deployment and DevOps	37
12	Full-Stack Developer Capstone Project	5
Total		422

The curriculum for the Microsoft Back-End Developer is as follows:

Module Number	Module Title	Learning Hours
1	Foundations of Coding Back-End	39
2	Introduction to Programming With C#	30
3	Back-End Development with .NET	43
4	Database Integration and Management	27
5	Security and Authentication	39
6	Performance Optimization and Scalability	47
7	Data Structures and Algorithms	47
8	Deployment and DevOps	37
Total		309

The curriculum for the Microsoft Front-End Developer is as follows:

Module Number	Module Title	Learning Hours
1	Foundations of Coding Front-End	42
2	Introduction to Programming With C#	30
3	Introduction to Web Development	39
4	Blazor for Front-End Development	35
5	UI/UX Design Principles	29
6	Web Application Security	37
Total		212

The curriculum for the Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate is as follows:

Module Number	Module Title	Learning Hours
1	Introduction to Public Relations	26
2	Content Development and Management	32
3	Media Relations and Crisis Management	28
4	Marketing, Communication, and PR	28
5	Stakeholder Relations and Reporting	22
Total		136

Regulations for participation and assessment

After enrolment, learners must agree that they will be required to provide a government-issued ID to earn a certificate for completing learning content, after which learners can navigate to the beginning of the course through the platform and begin learning asynchronously.

Learners attend the course by viewing lectures, completing readings and quizzes, responding to discussion prompts, and completing hands-on labs and programming assignments. (see below “Types of assessment”) Each Microsoft Professional certificate has a minimum passing score of 80% that learners must meet in order to pass graded quizzes and complete the qualification for the Professional Certificate. All learners must adhere to the Coursera Code of Conduct, Honor Code, and Terms of Use which also include the use of AI. Detailed conditions of participation and assessment regulations, such as quiz attempt rates, passing grades, and identity verification, are described to learners within each program at the start of each assignment as they navigate throughout the course content. In addition, learners are informed where they can go in case of doubt about discrepancies and how the grading appeal procedure would look like in these cases.

Types of assessment

Examinations are designed to adhere to best practices using frameworks such as Bloom's Taxonomy for creating, planning, and articulating learning objectives. The requirements and methods differ significantly based on the type of learning program, but they all aim to ensure learners master required skills and knowledge effectively, demonstrated through systematic assessments. The following types of assessments and examinations are included in the courses to assess learning outcomes:

- Auto-graded quizzes (summative): Auto-graded quizzes are used to monitor educational outcomes. They answer the question: Has this learner demonstrated that he or she can complete this task? Weeks always end with an auto-graded quiz.
 - Each module-level auto-graded quiz consists of ten core questions, with two variations per question, from which learners receive a randomized set on each attempt. Learners are allowed up to three attempts every 24 hours to support mastery through practice. If a learner selects an incorrect response, they are automatically redirected to the relevant course content for review. This reinforces understanding and supports continued learning.
 - Question formats are varied to assess knowledge from multiple angles and include:
 - Single-option selection
 - Scenario-based questions
- Peer-review (formative): The peer review activities allow learners to put the course concepts they are learning into practice by doing an activity or solving a problem. In a peer review, learners complete an artifact, review, grade each other's work, and receive qualitative and quantitative feedback from other learners. Peer review is a two-sided process: In a peer review all learners receive feedback from three other learners and are obliged to give feedback to at least three peers. The quality of the feedback received from others is also evaluated by the learners.
- Self-Review (formative): The self-review activities allow learners to put the course concepts they are learning into practice by doing an activity or solving a problem. Learners can check their own work using an Exemplar (an expert-created version of

the activity introduced in the self-review); this helps learners develop insights and check their own understanding.

- Practice Quizzes (formative) (in the **Public Relations and Communications Associate** program): Ungraded quizzes, or practice quizzes, are used to help learners monitor their own learning. They answer the question: Is this learner successfully learning what he or she is expected to learn? When a new concept is introduced, it is typically tested in an ungraded quiz. Most lessons include an ungraded quiz.
- In-video Quizzes (IVQ, formative): In-video quizzes are ungraded quiz questions that appear while learners watch a video. IVQs reinforce key concepts, serve as a check-in with the learner, and review video content with a question that is not difficult or surprising. IVQs typically appear close to the content they reference and are not grouped at the end of a video.
- Plugins (formative): Plugins are interactive, hands-on activities that encourage learners to practice specific tasks and help them apply knowledge they have gained in the course. There are five main types of plugin activities: drag & drop, multiple choice, infographic, matching, and flip card.

There are no assessments that are manually reviewed or graded by course staff or subject matter experts (SMEs). All assessments are either auto-graded by the platform or peer-reviewed assignments. Learners can flag items to report to Coursera errors in the AI-grading or claim misconduct for peer-reviews.

Learners are given transparent information about established plagiarism standards and regulations regarding the conduct of digital assessments on the Coursera platform (Coursera Honor Code). Before handing in an assignment, learners are required to check the box to have read the Honor Code.

Appraisal:

The courses consist of smaller educational components that Coursera calls modules.¹⁷ However, because of the scope of these modules, credits are only assigned per course and on the basis of the necessary learners' workload. As mentioned in chapter 2, completed items/modules can be stacked within other Coursera courses via the "item sharing" system (see chapter 2). The panel highlights the very structured and logical modularization of the courses that make the item sharing and "stacking" of content very easily possible.

The courses' structure theoretically allows for finishing the course within the estimated workload hours. However, it needs to be said that a timely completion of the courses is not a particular benchmark at Coursera. The idea is that the learners can go through the content at their own pace. Durations for completions are not monitored, because they vary tremendously and cannot accurately reflect an "average". At the end of a course, Coursera checks via learner evaluations how learners perceived the workload (see chapter 5).

The "module" descriptions provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes and the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide (in its current version). The panel highlights that Coursera meticulously detailed "module"-level learning outcomes. However, they also noticed that these item-level learning outcomes appear only when the learner gets to the

¹⁷ See glossary

specific item on the platform. They suggest that a diagram with an overview of all item/module-level learning outcomes would give learners an even better overview of their course to plan ahead and see which of the course learning objectives will be accomplished at which stage of the course.

The course's structural elements are convincingly described and activated. The course structure serves to promote the objectives and the learner's acquisition of knowledge and skills in line with the given objectives.

A certificate documents the respective course and the associated qualifications in a transparent and coherent manner. However, some information is missing to comply with the ECTS standards: Most importantly, the learning outcomes of the respective course, the country of the issuer, the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits), the EQF-level of the learning experience leading to the certificate, the type of assessment required to obtain the certificate and the mode of study (e.g. full time, part time, online).

Therefore, the panel recommends the following **condition**:

Coursera and Microsoft provide “Certificate Supplements” for each course that document at least: the learning outcomes of the respective course, the country of the issuer, the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in ECTS credits), the EQF-level of the learning experience leading to the certificate, the type of assessment required to obtain the certificate and the mode of study in a transparent and coherent manner.

The panel would like to clarify that Coursera and Microsoft may hand in a Certificate supplement as an annex to the Certificate that was already handed in to comply with this condition.

The curricula adequately reflect the qualification objectives of the courses. The contents of the modules are well-balanced, valid, up to date, and logically connected.

For the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End developer** courses, the panel noticed that the “module” objectives are evolving around the application of Copilot. However, the overall course learning objectives as well as the contents of the courses are focused on teaching developer skills in general. During the assessment conference representatives of [REDACTED] also confirmed that learners are supposed to gain basic developer skills that they can apply to different tools and software. Therefore, the panel suggests adjusting the “module” learning outcomes to better mirror the contents of the courses.

For the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course, the panel highlights the content of the course as well thought-out. It gives learners a solid foundation for pursuing or enhancing their professional careers in the field. As a conclusion from discussions with representatives of [REDACTED] and with learners during the assessment conference, the panel would only like to make some suggestions for further refining the course in terms of practical application, e.g., adding content like how to prepare a press release, organize a press conference, seminar or party for media, and facilitate a visit to an organization. In addition, adding more content on how to handle crisis situations including how to prepare an appropriate strategy for handling/interacting with the press.

There are legally binding regulations for participation and assessment. Contractual regulations clearly define the conditions for how to conduct the course successfully and receive the certificate. Coursera has established plagiarism rules and regulations regarding

the conduct of assessments including the use of AI. Learners are given transparent information about these regulations.

However, the panel notes that such codes of conduct are rather reactive than precautionary, e.g., answers in text form are not being checked for plagiarism or use of AI, but cases of misconduct can be reported to Coursera. In case of misconduct the partner Microsoft decides on the consequences for the learner. As there is no kind of assignment in the four courses that requires learners to create longer texts like articles, reports, or theses, the panel deems this procedure as appropriate. However, the panel members object to the fact that the consequences of reported misconduct are not clearly and transparently set forth. Therefore, they **recommend** that Microsoft formulates the consequences for learners in case of reported and verified misconduct and transparently communicates them to the learners.

The panel views Coursera’s measure to ensure the identity of the examinees as appropriate considering the scope of the courses.

All assessments, as they are defined for the modules and at the end of the course, are suited in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the intended qualification level (EQF, see chapter 1.1) and follow the course’s characteristic structural features. The panel understood that all assessments are either AI-graded or peer-reviewed upon request. As discussed on-site, learners can flag items to report if they disagree with grading. The panel further suggests closely monitoring and proactively improving AI-grading also taking into account current research findings on the weaknesses of AI and the associated risks of AI grading applications according to the EU AI Act.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.	Implementation					
3.1	Structure and content					
3.1.1*	Structure of the course, application of the „European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)“ and modularization			X		
3.1.2*	Certificate and Certificate Supplement				Condition	
3.1.3*	Logic and conceptual coherence of the curriculum			X		
3.1.4*	Regulations for participation and assessment			X		
3.1.5*	Types of assessment			X		

3.2 Training of Competences and Skills

Methodological competence and academic work (academic work if applicable)

The professional certificates are designed to equip participants with critical knowledge and skills necessary for exemplary performance in their respective fields. This preparation includes

mastery of relevant software, programming languages, tools, and systems, coupled with a deep understanding of prevailing industry trends. Through engaging, hands-on exercises, learners in these programs are guided to develop their methodological competence, gaining practical experience with various business tools and adhering to industry best practices.

The instructional design of the certificate courses adopts a structured methodological approach, facilitating the acquisition of practical skills through targeted exercises and project-based learning. This structure ensures that participants can apply their skills in practical scenarios, crucial for those entering the workforce with Professional Certificates. The programs also focus on developing the ability to efficiently gather, structure, evaluate, reuse, and present information, interpret processing results accurately, and present them effectively.

Additionally, the professional certificates cover guidelines for collecting, presenting, analyzing, and interpreting data using appropriate methods, which is essential for those preparing for entry-level positions in the workforce through Professional Certificates. The in-depth methods will build on the basic knowledge acquired in earlier modules and enable the planning and use of complex methods for evaluation and assessment. Learners will deepen their knowledge through projects and practical exercises, including the final capstone projects.

Academic work is not applicable. The Professional Certificates are designed to deliver practical, job-ready skills tailored for immediate application in professional contexts. While the curriculum reflects current industry trends and incorporates insights from scientific developments, the certificates are not academic programs and do not aim to develop formal academic work skills such as conducting independent research or scholarly writing.

Due to the concise format and applied focus of these certificates, embedding extensive training in academic methodologies would exceed the scope and time constraints of the programs. However, elements such as critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and structured argumentation are naturally woven into the learning activities and can enhance learners' broader competencies, even if not explicitly framed as academic work.

Integration of theory and practice

Microsoft's Professional Certificates adhere to Coursera's best practice guidelines for Quality in Online Learning and other manuals on online teaching pedagogy and course structures. Each week is comprised of individual content units that incorporate both theoretical and practical components. The theoretical components include readings and videos, while the practical elements are always aligned with the previously covered knowledge. This approach enables learners to assess their progress not only through small quizzes throughout the learning process but also through practical exercises that allow them to apply what they have learned. For example, learners in the Public Relations program will gain a comprehensive understanding of public relations by exploring its foundational principles, strategic planning components, and organizational importance. They will learn to craft effective PR strategies, develop media relations plans, and use generative AI to support various PR functions such as content creation, editing, and content management. The program also equips learners with the skills needed to build integrated campaigns, develop stakeholder communication plans, and navigate crisis communication scenarios using both traditional and AI-enhanced approaches. Through practical activities and real-world simulations, learners will apply best practices in media engagement, storytelling, stakeholder analysis, and performance evaluation, demonstrating proficiency across the full spectrum of PR responsibilities.

Interdisciplinary skills/Transdisciplinary skills

Professional Certificates are specifically designed to provide highly focused, skills-based training within a clearly defined professional niche. Each certificate program targets precise competencies that are immediately applicable in the learner's specific field of practice.

Coursera emphasizes the value of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary qualifications, particularly in broader academic or cross-sectoral education. While the nature of the Professional Certificates inherently limits such outcomes the following applies to all Certificates:¹⁸

- **Narrow Specialization with a Defined Scope:** The primary aim of the programs is to impart targeted expertise within a specific domain over a relatively short period. Given this precise focus, expanding the curriculum to include interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary competencies would dilute the core purpose and extend beyond the intended scope of the learning outcomes.
- **Integration of Practical and Theoretical Content:** Although the courses do not explicitly set interdisciplinary skills as learning objectives, the methodological design is inherently mindful of diverse learner backgrounds. The instructional materials encourage learners to apply new skills across varied real-world contexts, which offers a broad applicability of the acquired expertise, without venturing into formal interdisciplinary training.
- **Built-In Diversity of Perspectives:** The programs are developed with the understanding that participants bring varied professional and educational experiences. While not explicitly labeled as interdisciplinary, the practical examples, case studies, and problem-solving exercises expose learners to different sectoral challenges, ensuring the training is flexible and broadly relevant.
- **Efficiency and Focus on Micro-Credentials:** Micro-credentials are short, focused programs aimed at developing specific competencies. According to Coursera, it is pedagogically sound to prioritize depth over breadth. The programs are designed to maximize impact within limited timeframes, making the deliberate choice not to incorporate broader interdisciplinary skill sets.¹⁹

International and intercultural contents

According to Coursera, the Professional Certificates are systematically designed to provide focused, practice-oriented training with clearly defined learning outcomes. These outcomes aim to build core professional competencies that are broadly applicable across various settings, but they do not specifically target an international or intercultural perspective.

Although individual sessions may occasionally highlight differences across jurisdictions – for instance, regarding data protection or consumer rights – this is intended to support understanding of the subject matter rather than to develop formal international or intercultural competencies. Given the compact nature and applied focus of the certificates, placing

¹⁸ See self-report p. 30

¹⁹ Ibid.

emphasis on international content is not considered relevant for achieving the primary qualification objectives.²⁰

Employability/Acquisition of future and/or soft skills

Microsoft Professional Certificates have been developed from the ground up to ensure employability for a specific target occupation and to build skills, abilities, and competencies to be job-ready.

To ensure course instruction aligns with job market demands and promotes course completers' employability in the professional field, Coursera and Microsoft align on job role requirements to create learning outcomes in a subject area that leverages Microsoft's areas of expertise as an organization. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

For Professional Certificates, Coursera adopts a strategic, job-focused approach to their development, ensuring alignment with specific career paths and industry requirements. These programs are designed to equip learners with practical, job-ready skills that meet current market demands across various global sectors. While maintaining flexibility to address emerging workforce needs, Professional Certificates are typically developed in close collaboration with industry leaders and employers. This ensures that content remains relevant and actionable, often driven by insights from Coursera's Content Strategy team, which identifies high-demand skills and partners with the most appropriate organizations or experts to deliver impactful, career-oriented learning experiences. The Microsoft Full Stack Developer is a certificate that is aligned with global job market needs, as assessed by detailed labor market research and data. A detailed summary of this data was part of the documentation received from Coursera.

The nature of online learning also promotes the individual development of several organizational skills, specifically concerning time management. These essential skills are integral to online learning experiences; due to structure and learning methods, learners are guided in this process and have optimal opportunities to reach a high level of competence. Analyzing problems and making decisions are competencies that learners require and develop in different course units of the certificates.

²⁰ See self-report p. 31

Professional ethics and/or societal issues

These Microsoft-aligned professional certificate programs incorporate opportunities for learners to explore and reflect on the ethical and societal implications of emerging technologies, including Generative AI.

The following didactic methods are used to support learning and facilitate the integration of ethical and societal issues:

- **Topic-Based Instruction:** Ethics is presented as one of several topics within each Generative AI lesson, including potential risks such as bias, misinformation, and misuse in sensitive contexts.
- **Formative Assessment:** In the first course, learners complete a formative knowledge check that covers all lesson topics, with at least one question addressing ethical issues.
- **Summative Assessment:** In the final course, a graded quiz (summative assessment) concludes the Generative AI lesson. This quiz includes at least one question on ethical or societal considerations, as part of assessing knowledge across all topics.
- **Professional Relevance:** While the final lesson invites learners to consider Generative AI in the context of their field, the ethical implications are not explicitly tied to each specific professional role. Instead, learners are encouraged to make these connections independently through provided resources.

Additionally, in the Public Relations and Communication Associate program, each of the AI-related modules includes a dedicated lesson on the ethical considerations of using AI in communication contexts. These cover important topics such as transparency, bias, authenticity, and professional responsibility. To reinforce this learning, each of these modules includes at least one quiz question specifically assessing learners' understanding of these ethical dimensions. See below one example from the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** program:

5. What ethical challenge does AI introduce in handling customer data in PR?
- Encouraging unrestricted data sharing.
 - Ignoring ethical standards for faster performance.
 - Completely automating customer interactions.
 - Managing data privacy and security risks.

While the Developer programs do not include standalone modules on ethics or societal considerations, Coursera considers the integration of Copilot to implicitly support awareness of responsible AI use in coding practice.

Appraisal:

The acquisition of methodological competences on the intended level of the European Qualifications Framework is ensured. It is set down as a learning objective in the module descriptions.

For all of the four courses the ability to undertake academic work is out of scope.

Theory and practice are systematically interrelated throughout the curricula, thereby promoting the learners' ability to transfer theoretical knowledge to solve problems in practice (e.g., via capstone projects). Knowledge delivery and practical exercises complement each other to develop competences.

For the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course, the learners acquire transdisciplinary qualifications in accordance with the qualification objectives. This is supported by means of suitable didactical and methodological measures like using different kinds of research methods (market research, observations).

For the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End developer** courses, the acquisition of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary skills is out of scope.

International aspects and intercultural content are out of scope for all four courses and not incorporated into the courses' learning outcomes. However, for the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course, the panel suggests that the course would benefit from some international content and the consideration of intercultural aspects to make sure graduates have some awareness before possibly taking on international tasks and projects. Considering the scope of the course, a possible integration of international content and intercultural aspects could be achieved by including or referring learners to case studies from abroad (e.g., Eastern Europe, Asia, see recommendation chapter 3.3). For example, considering how McDonald restaurants promote new products in different countries. People in a given society react very differently to PR communications depending on their backgrounds, e.g., from individualistic or collective cultures, ceremonial or non-ceremonial, polychronic vs. monochronic, etc. It would benefit the learners to be aware of intercultural aspects and for them to understand the limits of this course when it comes to applying this knowledge in other cultural contexts. It would also give them further suggestions to go deeper into this topic and continue their learning outside the scope of the course.

Employability in the respective occupational field is promoted in accordance with the qualification objectives (see chapter 1.1) and the defined learning outcomes.

For the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End** courses, ethical implications are appropriately integrated.

For the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course, ethical aspects build an integral part of the course's content. The identification and reflection of ethical aspects, especially with regards to the ethical use of AI for creating PR content and the limits of AI application in a PR context, are strongly promoted and considered key competences.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.	Implementation					
3.2	Training of Competences and Skills					
3.2.1	Methodological competence and academic work (academic work if applicable)			X		

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2.2			X		
3.2.3			PR		Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End
3.2.4					X
3.2.5*			X		
3.2.6		PR	Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End		

3.3 Teaching and Learning Methodology

Coursera's platform is built for Mastery Learning, a pedagogical model that allows and requires learners to demonstrate mastery of learning objectives before moving forward to learn subsequent information. The platform organizes content into modules, setting scheduled milestones for their completion, which requires learners to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives over time. According to Coursera, Data analysis from thousands of courses shows that well-designed, high-quality content includes both formative and summative assessments with elaborative feedback to support learners as they work toward mastery of the defined learning objectives.²¹

Coursera's platform structures content to facilitate Mastery Learning by requiring instructors to set key learning objectives at the program level, course level, and modular levels. Formative and summative assessments with feedback-corrective features are used to measure progression towards those objectives. Instructors can embed practice and feedback directly in the learning path using various proprietary tools, including in-video questions, quizzes, technical labs, and other exercises. Providing frequent opportunities for feedback and active learning helps the learner track their progress towards mastery. Feedback is also used for summative graded assessments, which are available to learners at the end of each course module. Whereas practice assessments are low-stakes formative opportunities that provide feedback explaining why a response is correct or incorrect, learners demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives by passing each week's summative assessment. Mastery learning embraces "failure as feedback" to the learning process; therefore, the platform allows multiple attempts on graded assessments. A learner cannot earn a completion certificate until they demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives by passing all graded assessments in a course or program.

The practical application of Coursera's "learners first" strategy begins with effective content and program development. Coursera strives to partner with leading content providers to help learners succeed by completing individual courses or certificate programs. Its real time monitoring of learner progress is an essential element to support all content providers and learners enrolled in hosted content of all its courses and programs. As defined by Coursera Professional Certificate Content Specifications, (see chapter 3.1) the Microsoft Professional Certificates include Applied Learning Projects that help learners hone and apply the concepts learned throughout each course in the asynchronous video lectures, readings, discussion posts, and quizzes.

For example, in the Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate, learners are instructed through various teaching methods, including lectures, practice and graded quizzes, readings, and hands-on projects. Learners are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process and engage with other learners through applied learning projects. In the final capstone course of the Certificate, learners will apply the skills and knowledge gained throughout the program to complete a comprehensive Full Stack project. The project will involve integrating front-end and back-end components, optimizing performance, and demonstrating proficiency in development workflows.

By the end of this module, learners are able to consolidate what they have learned by completing a capstone project that simulates real-world scenarios.

²¹ see self-report, p.34

Learners should be expected to complete the Entry-Level Professional Certificate in 130 to 420 hours of total engagement time. Each course in the Entry-Level Professional Certificate must include approximately ten hours of total learner engagement time per week (e.g., watching videos, reading materials, completing assessments).

To help learners prepare for an entry-level job, Coursera and Microsoft emphasize that they should get ample practice and hands-on learning time to learn the skills they need for the role. Each course should also include a job-relevant project at the end of each course to help learners demonstrate their skills and build their resumes for potential employers.

Course materials, required and recommended literature

All course materials for Microsoft Professional Certificates are included within the course content on the Coursera Platform. Learners do not need access to supplementary literature to be purchased that the course provider has not produced itself, therefore, no external content is integrated in the course structure. Welcome, and learning/lecture videos for each week are hosted under the “Course Material” section with transcriptions. Under “Course Materials”, learners will find graded quizzes, lecture videos, peer reviews, practice quizzes, readings and labs in the order they should be reviewed. There is a section for learner notes and discussion forums.

Each week of course material begins with a module description and a clear outline of learning objectives that should be met throughout the week of study. The lectures, readings, hands-on projects, and quizzes in each week help learners meet the weekly learning objectives.

In order to enable learning outside the homepage, i.e. during times without constant access to the internet, learners have the possibility to download all videos, the corresponding transcripts and toolboxes to their computers and to read and edit the materials there.

In addition, Coursera offers learning apps for downloading via all common app stores. Learners can keep track of their current learning status, view and download the relevant elements of the current week or the entire course, and watch videos directly in the app. The apps also offer the possibility to receive learning reminders as notification and to be reminded of learning at self-determined times. Only the software-supported labs require learning on a computer.

Another feature was made available with the last update. With the new “audio only” mode, participants can now listen to only the audio track of selected videos wherever they are.

Appraisal:

The methodical-didactical design of the courses is plausible and oriented towards the course-specific learning objectives, the goals of each module (see chapter 3.1 structure) towards the target group, and the teaching and learning format.

A mix of different learning methods is applied (e.g., courses readings, assignments, practical exercises and the capstone projects; additionally for the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course peer-reviewing assignments), depending on the content and curricular requirements. Proof of science-based teaching within the course has been provided. The panel highlights the structural design and scaffolding of the courses’ methodology for the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End developer** courses.

Innovative approaches are used to enable the learners to progress faster in their program and more intensely in their learning.

Learners are encouraged to take an active role in the learning process (e.g., through practical exercises, self-paced learning; additionally, for the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course through peer-to-peer learning). However, during the assessment conference, the panel discussed the missing interaction between learners and other humans (teaching staff or learners) in the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End developer** courses. Support during the self-study phases is provided individually, but via AI-based applications (e.g., with respect to learning topic, learning objectives, self-learning orientation). Coursera explained during the assessment conference that there is an option to include discussion forums and peer-reviews as low threshold measures to stimulate at least some human interaction between the learners. So far, these interactive options are only part of the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course. Therefore, the panel **recommends** integrating similar interactive options for providing some human contact for learners in the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End developer** courses. This is to enhance the learners' experience and reinforce learning.

Concluding discussions with representatives and learners during the online assessment conference, the panel notes that the learners' competencies could be further enhanced by including more case studies, especially from different cultural settings and areas in the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course (see chapter 3.2). In addition, more tips and templates for preparing press releases and the like should be offered (see chapter 3.1). Summarizing suggestions in previous chapters and addressing learner feedback received during the learner interview, for the **Microsoft PR and Communications Associate** course, the panel **recommends** integrating a variety of case studies that take cultural diversity into account and giving learners templates for press releases for using them in their professional fields.

For all courses, the course and learning materials are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They are up to date and easily accessible for the learners. Course materials are user-friendly and appropriately encourage learners to engage in further independent studies. General standards for materials lead the teaching staff and support the lecture quality. Access to literature and digital media is available online and offline.

For the **Microsoft Full Stack, Back-End, and Front-End developer** courses, additional material is provided on request of the learner. As the courses rely heavily on using Copilot, the panel suggests making sure that Copilot or other tools that are part of the courses can be used for free globally.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.	Implementation					
3.3	Teaching and Learning Methodology					
3.3.1*	Logic and transparency of teaching and learning methodology		Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End	PR		
3.3.2*	Course materials, required and recommended literature			X		

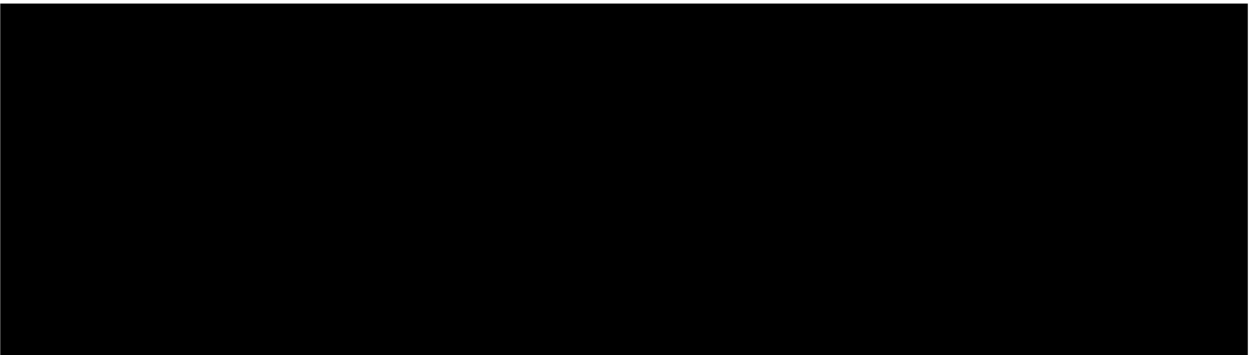
4 RESOURCES AND SERVICES

4.1 Teaching staff of the course

Structure and quantity of teaching staff

Each Microsoft Professional Certificate is developed by a team of subject matter experts, teaching experts, content creation experts and instructional designers. They work collaboratively within the framework of the general project management to operationalize the predefined learning objectives, divide them into units and logically sequenced learning elements, and collect and prepare the corresponding materials through internal cooperation. They prepare these materials in the form of videos, reading units, quizzes, and activities as outlined by the Coursera Pedagogy Principles. Instructors and subject matter experts involved in the course creation are carefully selected based on their professional working experience and academic expertise.

Table 1: Microsoft Professional Certificates/Specialization instructors' qualifications



Professional qualification of teaching staff

According to Coursera and Microsoft,²² the teaching staff members' and subject matter expertise, practical experience, and pedagogical and didactic qualifications have undergone thorough assessment and documentation, thus supporting the certificate's quality profile and practical orientation. Emphasis is placed on the practical experience of the teaching staff, the instructors have mostly accumulated decades of professional experience. As a provider of application-oriented education, Coursera and Microsoft recognize the value of practical experience in teaching the required practice-oriented knowledge. Therefore, instructors are continuously assessed through feedback mechanisms (see chapter 5).

Pedagogical qualification of teaching staff



²² see self-report p. 38

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Internal cooperation

[Redacted text block]

Learners' support by teaching staff

Coursera collaborates closely with partners to execute on a number of items related to learner services. These services include but are not limited to:

- monitoring all course forums and Slack channels on a regular basis to answer learner technical questions,
- reviewing learner progress in certificate progression,
- identifying at-risk learners, or learners that may demonstrate behaviors that indicate they may not be on a path to being successful in pursuit of their program, and
- generating automated and personalized communications to support successful engagement and completion (such as motivation help, pain-point help, and dropout intervention). These include
 - in-course pop-ups,

- learning reminder and nudge emails, and
- app notifications.

Coursera can ensure that learner inquiries will be dealt with within one business day.

In addition to automated in-product retention support, Coursera provides staff support via:

- Program Support Dashboards, which are created using learner behavior data (e.g., assignments attempted/passed, activity in course, and platform behavior) and by highlighting learners at risk of not progressing successfully through a course, term, or program, and
- Learner Support Dashboards, which enable course staff to track learner progress within a specific course.

Learners are also supported and coached by instructors and teaching staff through a variety of proprietary tools in the learning path, including in-video questions, quizzes, technical labs, and other exercises. Providing frequent opportunities for feedback and active learning helps the learner track their progress towards mastery. Feedback is also used for summative graded assessments, which are available to learners at the end of each module of a course. Whereas practice assessments are low-stakes formative opportunities that provide feedback explaining why a response is correct or incorrect, learners demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives by passing each week's summative assessment. Outside of feedback related to formative and summative assessments, instructors can create engagement opportunities with learners through custom forums where learners can engage with instructors by asking questions and answering discussion prompts. Learners and instructors can also engage via email messaging in the "Messages" section of the platform.

Appraisal:

The qualification structure, tasks and number of teaching staff correspond with the requirements of the courses. Coursera's selection of new teaching staff follows non-discriminatory processes.

The academic and pedagogical qualifications of the teaching staff correspond to the requirements and objectives of the courses. The teaching staff is able to cater to the needs of the target group (e.g., in this case in the form of making sure their appearance and presentation on video stimulates engagement of the learners with the content).

In addition, Coursera verifies by means of established procedures (e.g. regular evaluations) that the pedagogical qualifications and competence of the teaching staff are up to date. Measures for further qualifying the teaching staff pedagogically are regularly offered by Coursera (e.g., via Coursera Teaching and Learning team, Coursera Classroom, Coursera Educator Resource Center).

A key element of the courses' concept is that teachers contribute their practical professional experience to improve the content and thereby learning experience. [REDACTED] teaching staff use their professional experience in a valuable way to design the courses.

The modules of the courses are conducted cooperatively to add to the learning experience. Thereby, [REDACTED] teaching staff closely cooperated for the purpose of tuning the components of the courses towards the overall qualification objectives. Furthermore, they review each other's materials to make sure content is not aimlessly repeated and also give each other

It is a collaborative, research-driven, and quality-focused approach that ensures all Microsoft programs hosted on Coursera meet professional standards, align with evolving job roles, and deliver measurable value to learners entering the field.

Process organization and administrative support for learners and teaching staff

Coursera offers learner support and educator support designed to empower learners, educators, and administrators to do what they need to do on the Coursera platform. The Learner Help Center aims to help learners with questions they have on the Coursera platform from finding courses to take, to participating in their chosen course, to troubleshooting technical issues as needed. The Learner Help Center is exclusively for Coursera learners before, during, and after their course participation and completion. Learners can reach the Learner Help [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and get assistance in the following areas:

- **Account settings, login issues, and notification preferences.** Here, learners can get help with setting up their Coursera account, changing account settings and password troubleshooting, changing email notifications, and using the Coursera mobile app.
- **Payments and subscriptions.** Here, learners can receive help with payments for their courses, apply for financial aid or scholarships, learn about their subscription details, and receive information about promotions and free trials.
- **Enrollment options.** Learners can receive help enrolling or un-enrolling in a course and finding courses to take.
- **Grades, peer reviews, assignments, and labs.** Learners can receive help with troubleshooting the submission of peer-reviewed assignments, taking quizzes and assignments, checking grade details, understanding how to complete programming assignments, in-browser coding, and common issues with Coursera Labs.
- **Sharing and verifying Course Certificates.** Learners can access guides on how to download and share course certificates, verify their identity, and solve problems with course certificates.
- **Coursera Policies and Program Terms.** Learners can access accessibility statements,²³ accommodations for learners with disabilities, third-party policies, code of conduct, honor code, age restrictions, General Data Protection Regulations, and more.
- **Course content, including videos, discussion forums, and common course issues.** Learners can receive help troubleshooting problems with the Coursera platform, learn about recommended browsers and devices, receive assistance with video settings and subtitles, report problems within a course, and receive help with course content in discussion forums. Learners can also report abuse in forums here.

²³ https://www.coursera.support/s/article/360050668591-Accessibility-Statement?language=en_US (last call July 1, 2024)

The Coursera Educator Resource Center, exclusive to Coursera instructors, is a place for both self-service and on-demand support to ensure the success of the digital classroom. Instructors can reach the Educator Resource Center 24/7 and get support in the following areas:

- **Platform onboarding & best practices.** View articles, instructional videos, and frequently asked questions on Coursera terminology, production milestones, partner communication channels, recommended browsers, and Coursera Pedagogy Principles.
- **Creating course content.** View resources on creating and organizing instructional material in lessons and modules through course authoring tools, digital course content management, templates for importing and exporting course outlines, video recording, and formatting guidelines, importing, and exporting content assistance, reading item management, and more.
- **Developing effective assessments and managing learner submissions.** Learn how assessments on Coursera work, how to set and adjust grading formulas, how to add new assessment items, auto-graded questions, and question variations, peer review assignments, how to manage quizzes, staff graded assignments, and discussion prompt management. This section also includes information on programming assignments, team assignments, high-touch grading features, question banks, proctored assignments, and academic integrity.
- **Building custom learning content and programming assignments.** Instructors can learn about how to create custom programming assignments, lab activities, and coding labs. Learn about developing, managing, and adding plugins, in-browser coding, and managing and configuring code blocks.
- **Viewing tips for launching, branding, and marketing content.** Through this resource, instructors can learn how to launch a new course, set a target launch date, marketing recommendations, improve search engine optimization, how to beta test, and how to reach new learners in the Coursera community.
- **Managing their course staff, landing pages, and other settings.** Instructors can learn how to manage staff roles and permissions, how to copy a course, how to invite group members, manage landing pages and brand assets, update and manage course certificates, and how to create and manage private sessions.
- **Interacting with learners through discussion forums and announcements.** Here, instructors can learn how to leverage Coursera discussion forums, send course announcements and messages, recruit mentors to help support learners, and schedule live events.
- **Tracking content performance with data dashboards and exports.** Instructors can learn how to leverage course dashboards, download grade books, manage organization dashboards, and export data.
- **Finding content and accessibility policies.** Here, instructors can review content policies, platform changes, sharing and research policies, data privacy information, and copyright guidelines.

All Coursera employees have access to all learning opportunities on the platform, and partners, like employees, have additional access to Coursera Classroom Resources and Coursera Administrator Training.

Information and transparency

The Microsoft Professional Certificates are documented and publicized through the Coursera platform. Learners can access the entirety of the course description and learning objectives before enrolling in the course through the course description pages. Learners can access all course data and content by enrolling in Professional Certificates and Specializations at the following points of registration (landing pages):

- Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate:
<https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/microsoft-full-stack-developer>
- Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate:
<https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/microsoft-back-end-developer>
- Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate:
<https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/microsoft-front-end-developer>
- Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate:
<https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/microsoft-public-relations>²⁴

All course content, including lectures, projects, readings, assessments, and assignments are accessible for interested parties within the Coursera platform. The courses' content, curricula, and assessment schemes are documented on the course and module description pages accessible by the stated web address.

In addition to course documentation through the Coursera platform, Coursera's academic policies and procedures related to accommodations for learners with disabilities, age restrictions, accessibility, honor code, general data protection regulations, international restrictions, and third-party tools are constantly updated and made publicly available.²⁵

Inclusive and equitable education

Coursera's mission is to provide universal access to world-class learning so that anyone, anywhere has the power to transform their life through learning. It is what inspires Coursera's team members, attracts educator partners, and enables their customers to make high-quality education a growing reality for millions of learners around the world.

The platform's impact on the millions of learners it serves is the foundation of Coursera's sustainability strategy and the focus of the company's impact initiatives. At Coursera, their mission and values are deeply integrated into their operations, processes, and culture. They are focused on creating long-term growth and stakeholder value, while demonstrating Coursera's impact on the individuals, institutions, and communities they serve.

Coursera's 2025 impact report (part of Coursera's documentation for this audit) is designed to illustrate how they bring their mission to life through. It is a continuation of their commitment to creating a positive impact on society, focusing on the activities determined to be of significant importance based on the greatest relevance to their business and key stakeholders. Coursera is a public benefit corporation and certified B Corp®.

²⁴ Last access on August 29, 2025

²⁵ https://www.coursera.support/s/learner-help-center-coursera-policies?language=en_US, last access on August 29, 2025

Learners can apply for financial aid²⁶ which is approved in over 90% of cases, as was reported by Coursera during the assessment conference.

Additionally, a dedicated accessibility policy is published and addresses accommodations for learners with disabilities.²⁷ Coursera is committed to maintaining access to the website and mobile applications to all learners, including those with disabilities via the following:²⁸

- Coursera strives to comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”) 2.1 AA published by World Wide Web Consortium.
- All course lecture videos offer closed captioning. Learners may flag issues while watching lecture videos and are encouraged to submit support tickets for content that is not captioned appropriately. Coursera is committed to address the matter promptly.
- Coursera’s videos are available to learners at any time which allows learners to get a head start on the course.
- An independent accessibility consultant periodically reviews the platform. Potential accessibility issues are identified so that Coursera can address such issues and take any remedial actions deemed necessary.
- Coursera developers engage in training and projects relating to accessibility that both educate and improve the accessibility of their products as they are being developed.
- Coursera has published accessibility guidelines for content providers and contractually requires that content providers comply with their independent obligations under applicable accessibility laws.
- Coursera manages an email alias where incoming accessibility support tickets from learners are addressed.

Networking and Career Counselling

All Professional Certificate completers receive access to the Professional Certificate Community, which not only provides further peer support, but also offers a range of career services. Coursera Career Certificates also include content that teaches learners how to set

²⁶ See https://www.coursera.support/s/article/learner-000001455?language=en_US#:~:text=Reading%20time:%203%20minutes,Code%20and%20Code%20of%20Conduct, last access on September 8, 2025

²⁷ See https://www.coursera.support/s/article/learner-000001416?language=en_US, last access on September 8, 2025

²⁸ See https://www.coursera.support/s/article/learner-000001351?language=en_US, last access on September 8, 2025

up a professional network and maintain connections that will be helpful to their career, such as professional social media profiles, elevator pitches, and personal portfolios and websites.

Professional Certificate Career Resources

All Professional Certificate completers will have access to a number of career support resources to help them reach their career objectives.

- **Job Search Guide:** The job search process is complex, especially when switching to a new career field. Our 5 step guide helps learners navigate the job search process.
- **Resume support:** Learners get free access to an AI-powered checker to score their resume and LinkedIn profile with actionable feedback for improvements, a resume builder, and a library of resume templates and guides to help them build a standout resume.
- **Hands-on interview practice:** Learners can practice mock interviews tailored to their specific industry, job, and experience level with free access to Big Interview.
- **Professional Certificate community:** Learners get access to the Professional Certificate community where they can get peer support and network with alumni who have successfully made a career change.



Appraisal:

The course management is in charge of the overall quality of the courses (content, methodology and development across all phases of course development) and has clearly defined responsibilities. The qualifications and experience of the course management correspond with the requirements of the course.

Teaching staff and learners are supported by a sufficient number of administrative staff that is clearly qualified to provide the described services. All processes described are implemented appropriately and the courses run smoothly. Decision-making processes, authority, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Teachers are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of expertise/activity are involved.

A main point of service for the learners has been appointed. Learners are informed on all relevant matters in advance and in a comprehensive way. The information is distributed in an understandable and user-friendly manner. User-friendly access to administrative support and services is ensured. The reachability of service staff is clearly determined. Requests are dealt with in a timely manner.

The course title, issuer of the Certificate Supplement (see chapter 3.1), awarding body, qualification objectives, content, workload, type of assessment, and teaching and learning format have been suitably documented, published, and are easily accessible for the learner before enrolment.

The course provider ensures inclusion and equality to cater to special needs of learners.²⁹ The panel highlights Coursera's various measures and policies in support of learners in special circumstances. Coursera could further strengthen its commitment to inclusion and

²⁹ e.g., with learning/mobility/economic/social issues etc, and also those who are exceptionally able.

[Redacted]

Quality Assurance in Implementation:

During implementation, either the key account manager (program responsibility) or a dedicated implementation success manager ensures that all work streams according to Coursera’s blueprint for high-quality courses, are being well informed, kicked off, have their relevant action items and keep their deadlines in order to complete the production process of the course to a level where the beta testing can start (see also chapter 5).

Initial launch and further cooperation:

[Redacted]

Feedback loop:

After the content is launched, Coursera starts receiving feedback from learners and from the content partner (Microsoft) itself. Therefore, both the quantitative performance data as well as the qualitative information received is taken into consideration for future content mapping by Coursera’s content strategy team making sure that they can collaboratively learn from their mistakes and celebrate their successes. (See also chapter 5)

Appraisal:

The scope and nature of cooperation with industry and content creation partners are plausibly presented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on the conception and implementation of the course.

The agreements forming the basis of the cooperation are documented. All such activities contribute to the development of the learners' qualifications and skills. In cases where other organizations conduct parts of the course, Coursera is responsible for the execution of quality assurance as described in chapter 5.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.	Resources and Services					
4.3	Cooperations with academic institutions or enterprises (asterisk criterion for cooperation courses)					
4.3.1(*)	Cooperations with academic institutions (if applicable)					X
4.3.2(*)	Cooperation with enterprises or other professional organizations (if applicable)			X		

4.4 Facilities

Teaching and learning platform

Coursera is a 100% online platform. The platform is designed to enable learners to discover the right content and credentials by domain (e.g., business, technology, health), by skill (e.g., Python, statistics, data visualization), and by job role (e.g., data analyst, marketer, engineer). Once learners enroll in a course, the unified technology platform is designed to enable them to learn more effectively to advance in their careers and earn credentials to signal their learning to prospective employers.

The learning experience includes:

- Courses with video-based lectures, in-video quizzes, notes and highlights, readings, assessments, peer reviews, and group projects,
- AI-driven learning features to help learners stay motivated and making progress,
- Coursera Labs with hands-on projects that teach practical skills using real-world tools such as Python, Jupyter Notebooks, VS Code, R-Studio, and many other desktop and cloud-based applications fully in-browser with no software or data downloads,
- A mobile app that is designed to enable course downloads for offline learning, regarded to be especially important for learners with limited or intermittent internet connectivity or power, and
- Localized learning experiences include localized homepage, payment options, local partnership, and content discovery.

Learners enroll in their preferred course by clicking “Enroll” and subscribing to Coursera through the course description page. After enrolling, learners can view all course³⁰ content by

³⁰ For Coursera terminology program/course/module, see chapter 3.1 and glossary.

module and week, continue to the course and begin navigating the Coursera platform. Within the platform, there is a navigation bar that contains sections including Course Material, Grades, Notes, Discussion Forums, Messages, and Course Information. All tools and multimedia files are integrated into the Coursera platform, and the entirety of teaching and learning activities in Coursera courses occurs within the Coursera platform.

- **Course Material:** In this section, learners can navigate throughout the weekly learning material. Each week begins with a summary overview, introductory videos, an overview of the learning objectives, video lecture, readings, and assignments, and ends with a summary of the week.
- **Grades:** In this section, learners can view the quiz or assessment item, their completion status, the due date, the weight of the quiz or assessment item, and their grades.
- **Notes:** Learners can utilize the Notes section as a digital notebook, where notes are collected throughout the duration of their study.
- **Discussion Forums:** Instructors can create custom forums to provide a space for learners to interact with one another. Learners can share resources and help answer questions about course materials or assessments. This section holds all discussion forums for the course by week, where learners can discuss the week's modules or respond to assigned prompts. Discussion forums can also be used to ask questions, debate ideas, and find classmates who share their goals. Forum guidelines are available for reference in the Discussion Forums section.



- **Course Information:** In the Course Information section, learners can view a course description and course details, view instructor information, and review the syllabus.

In addition to the above features, learners can access the Learner Help Center, and Instructors are able to access the Educator Resource Center, directly through their respective instance.

Coursera provides several technologies to support offline and mobile learning: learners can download videos, transcripts, and toolboxes for offline access on their computers. The Coursera mobile app, available on major app stores, allows users to track progress, download course materials, watch videos, and receive customizable learning reminders. Additionally, the app now includes an “audio only” mode for selected videos, and software-supported labs require a computer for full functionality.

Data Protection

Data is collected by Coursera from the platform in a variety of ways for learning analytics and course performance. Coursera has also contracted with third-party vendors to perform certain specialized tasks, including processing personal data, for example:

- **Hosting:** The Coursera platform is hosted on third-party servers.
- **Analytics/Marketing:** To improve Coursera and the content offered, Coursera uses various third-party analytics and marketing tools to refine offerings, understand learner habits, optimize the platform, and tailor marketing efforts (with learner consent, where

necessary).

- Customer Support/Communication: To provide customer support, Coursera uses third-party tools and services to communicate and respond to questions promptly.

Coursera has implemented policies establishing when and how personal data may be shared with such third parties, including steps that must be followed to facilitate compliance with data protection requirements (for example, security due diligence, contracting and international transfer processes).

Coursera provides learners with access to on-platform resources and functionality to facilitate compliance with data protection requirements, for example:

- Coursera’s Terms of Use³¹, Privacy Policies³², and Cookies Policy³³ provide detailed information to learners about how and why Coursera uses learner data, to comply with transparency obligations.
- Coursera has built product features that give learners the ability to exercise legal data protection rights on a self-service basis, including access and account deletion.
- Coursera offers learners in relevant markets the ability to opt-in to marketing communications and non-essential cookies (or equivalent technologies), and offers all learners the ability to opt-out of such personal data uses.

Technical unit

For the work of the technical organizational unit to enable and support the implementation of digital teaching see description of the Coursera Educator Resource Center in chapter 4.2. Coursera regularly maintains and updates the Educator Resource Center and the Coursera platform with guides on various innovative technologies and tools for teaching, digital classroom management, assessment management, and learner management so that instructors can create a seamless digital learning experience for learners.

Data Analysis System

[REDACTED]

³¹See <https://www.coursera.org/about/terms>, last access on September 18, 2025

³² See <https://www.coursera.org/about/privacy>, last access on September 18, 2025

³³ See <https://www.coursera.org/about/cookies>, last access on September 18, 2025

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Technical support for learners

Apart from the administrative support that learners receive from the Coursera Learner Help Center (see chapter 4.2) learners can also reach the same hotline for technical support³⁴. The Learner Help Center includes 24-hour, live chat support for immediate issues. Learners can email clientsupport@coursera.org or submit a form through the Learner Help Center “Contact Customer Support” portal to receive help over email. Coursera technical support usually responds to requests by email within 24 hours and responds to chat support immediately.

Coursera supports learners in using technologies and tools to enable digital learning and increase digital skills through the various articles, tutorials, videos, and help resources available in the Learner Help Center. The Learner Help Center aims to help learners with questions they have on the Coursera platform from finding courses to take, to participating in their chosen course, to troubleshooting technical issues as needed.

Appraisal

The teaching platform is clearly structured and designed to be user-friendly. It is stable and scalable and there are no disruptive impulses during use. It offers sufficient possibilities for embedding text, audio, images, graphics, animation, multimedia files and social media.

Coursera follows trends in technology and enables teachers to implement innovative technologies and tools in teaching beyond the standard. It offers regular and varied training to teachers and works continuously on the further development of digital learning tools (e.g., via the Coursera Educator Resource Center). There is a plan at course provider level for the provision of training in the technical aspects of digital teaching.

Coursera has a data analysis system and sufficient technology to process large amounts of data.

Learners can reach the Coursera Learner Help Center by appropriate means (e.g.: 24h-live-chat, email). Questions regarding technical issues and the teaching platform are answered and solved in a timely manner. Coursera ensures appropriate training for the learners to handle the technologies and tools.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4. Resources and Services					
4.4 Facilities					
4.4.1* Infrastructure of onsite teaching environment (if applicable)					X
4.4.2* Teaching and learning platform			X		
4.4.3 Technical unit (for online courses)		X			
4.4.4 Data analysis system			X		
4.4.5* Technical support for learners			X		

³⁴ https://www.coursera.support/s/learner-help-center-contact-us?language=en_US last access on July 1, 2025

5 Quality Assurance

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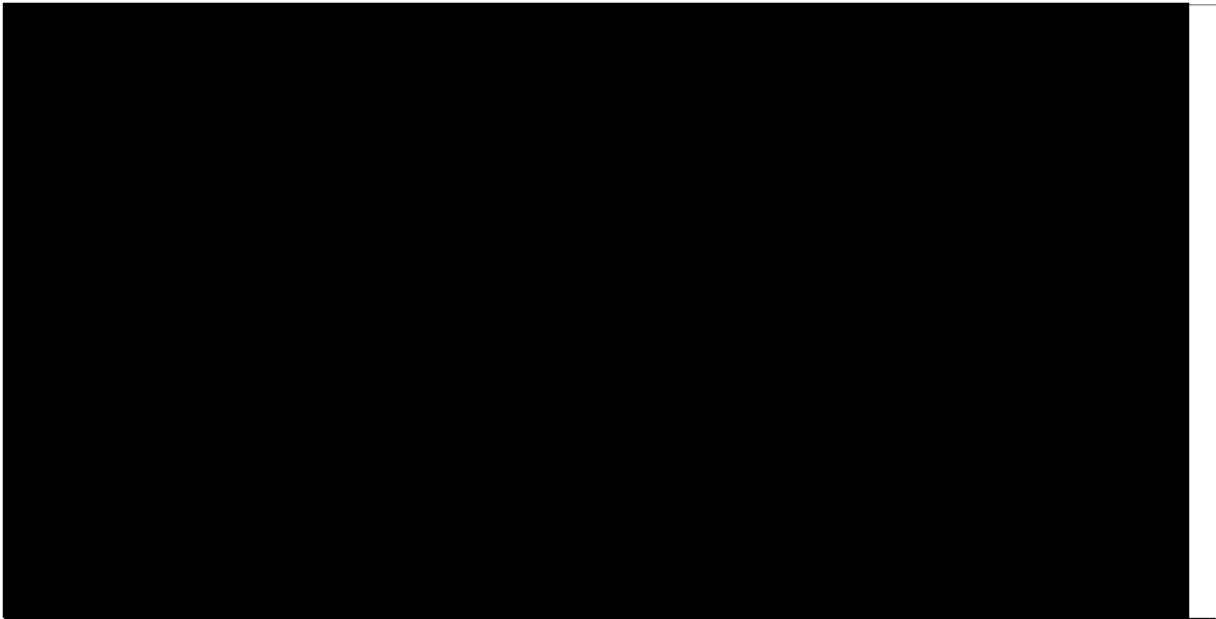


Figure 10: Content Design Process

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Figure 11: Course level feedback

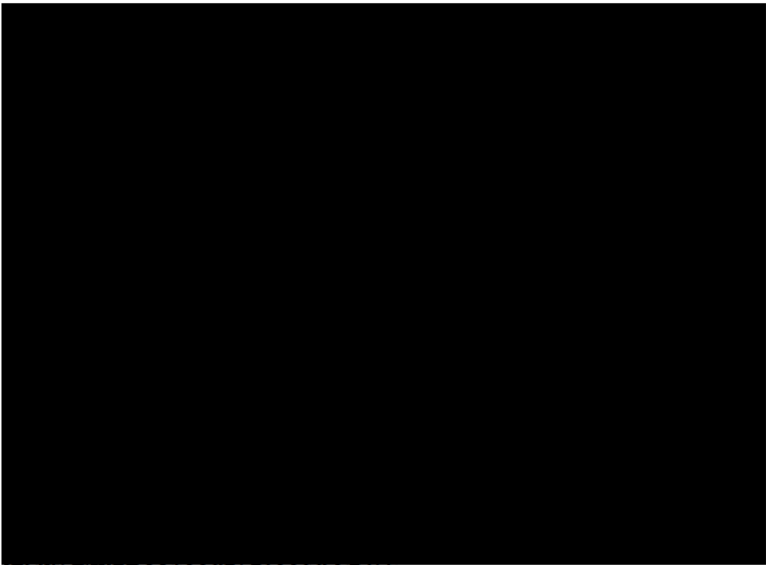
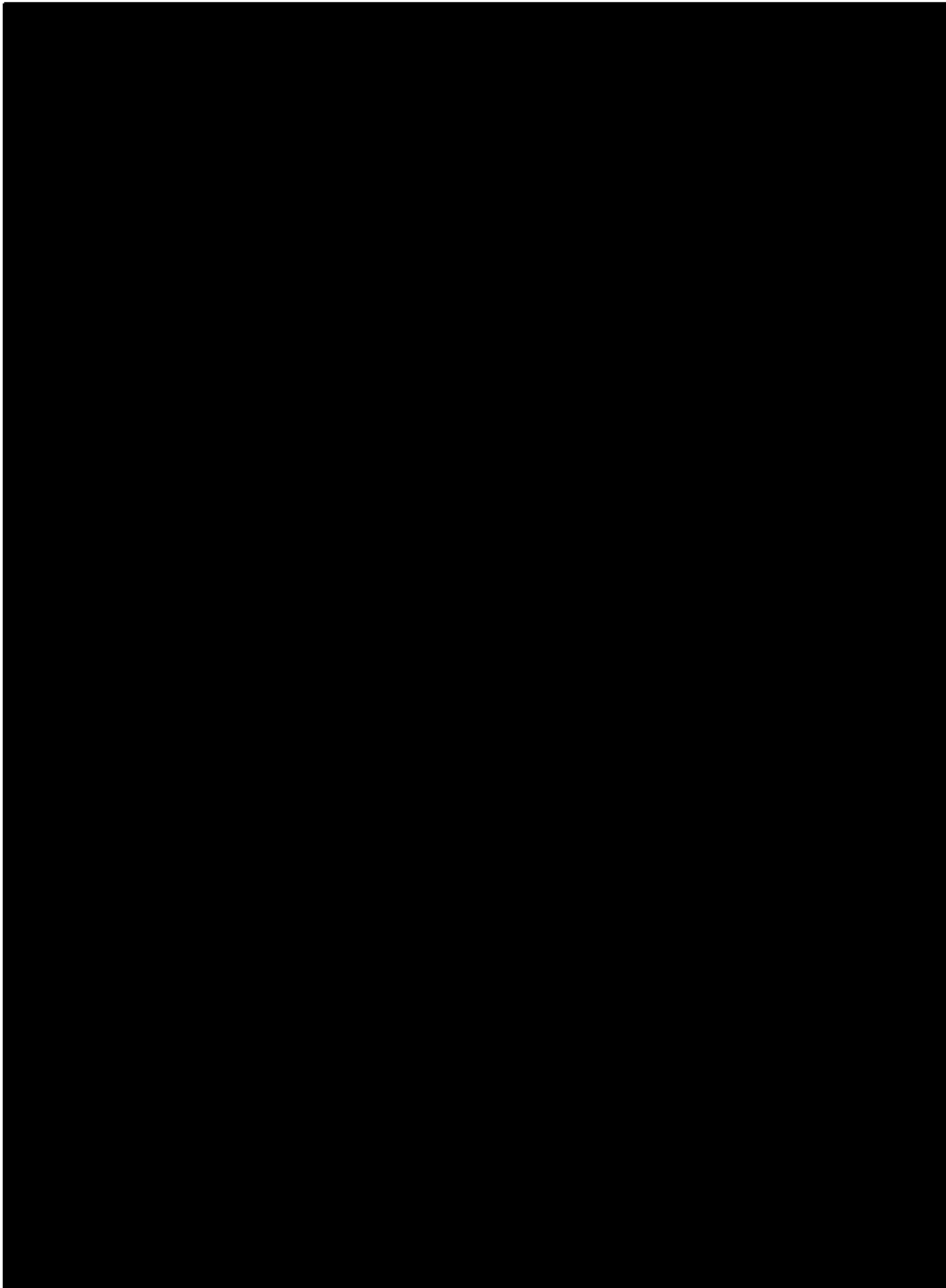


Figure 12: Feedback to teaching staff

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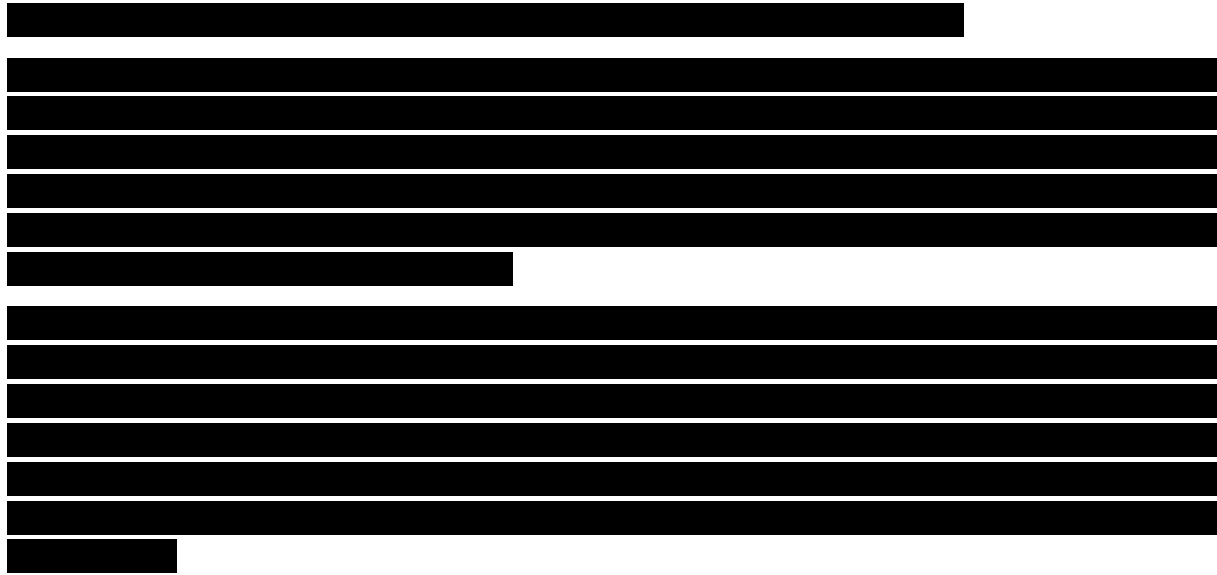
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Appraisal:

There is a quality-assurance and development procedure, which systematically and continuously monitors and develops the quality of the courses with respect to its contents, processes, and outcomes following a PDCA cycle. Sufficient staff resources are available, and the responsibilities are clearly defined. Teaching staff and learners' contribution to quality-assurance and development procedures is ensured.

When reviewing the workload, the institution also considers evaluation findings, including feedback from learners.

Evaluation by the learners is carried out regularly at appropriate intervals and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes provide input for the quality development process.

Quality control by the teaching staff [redacted] is ensured during the content creation phase of the courses. It is carried out regularly at appropriate intervals and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated within the [redacted] teaching staff and course management. Outcomes provide input for the quality development process during content creation. For the further development of the courses after launch, this criterion does not apply, because the [redacted] teaching staff is only involved during the content creation phase.

An external evaluation with alumni is carried out regularly at appropriate intervals and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; Coursera collects feedback information and processes this into the "Learner Outcome Report". However, it has not become clear to the panel whether and how information of the Learner Outcome Report is provided to the learners and completers. The panel therefore **recommends** communicating current Learner Outcome Reports on the website. Furthermore, Coursera does not analyze course-specific completer-data, but tracks data for all Professional Certificates. In order to provide input for the quality development process of a specific course, a course-specific alumni survey would have to be introduced. The panel therefore **recommends** developing ideas to generate valuable course-

³⁵ Alumni evaluate the course after a certain time after completion of the course in terms of impact on professional career.

specific data from alumni and employers to be able to assign results to corresponding courses.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
5.	Quality Assurance					
5.1*	Quality assurance and development of course content, processes and outcomes			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by learners and course graduates			X		
5.2.2	Quality assurance by teaching staff					X
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and/or other third parties				X	

Quality Profile

Institution: Coursera Inc.

Continuing Education Course: Microsoft Full Stack Developer Professional Certificate
 Microsoft Back-End Developer Professional Certificate
 Microsoft Front-End Developer Professional Certificate
 Microsoft Public Relations and Communications Associate Professional Certificate

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1. Strategy and Objectives					
1.1*			X		
1.2 Positioning of the course					
1.2.1			X		
1.2.2		X			
1.2.3		Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End	PR		
2. Admission					
2.1*			X		
2.2*			X		
2.3*			X		
3. Implementation					
3.1 Structure and content					
3.1.1*			X		
3.1.2*				Condition	
3.1.3*			X		
3.1.4*			X		
3.1.5*			X		
3.2 Training of Competences and Skills					
3.2.1			X		
3.2.2			X		
3.2.3			PR		Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End
3.2.4					X

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2.5*			X		
3.2.6		PR	Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End		
3.3	Teaching and learning methodology				
3.3.1*		Full Stack, Back-End, Front-End	PR		
3.3.2*			X		
4.	Resources and Services				
4.1	Teaching staff of the course				
4.1.1*			X		
4.1.2*			X		
4.1.3*		X			
4.1.4		X			
4.1.5		X			
4.1.6*					X
4.2	Course management and overall organization				
4.2.1*			X		
4.2.2*			X		
4.2.3*			X		
4.2.4*			X		
4.2.5			X		
4.3	Cooperations				
4.3.1(*)					X
4.3.2(*)			X		
4.4	Facilities				
4.4.1*					X
4.4.2*			X		
4.4.3		X			
4.4.4			X		
4.4.5*			X		
5.	Quality Assurance				
5.1*			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance				
5.2.1			X		

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
5.2.2	Quality assurance by teaching staff				X
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and/or other third parties				X

Glossary

Coursera and report terminology	description
Professional Certificate (program); Specialization (program); Program	Course (entity that is subject to certification)
Course	Content entity covering one topic within the program
Module	Weekly learning entity, smallest learning entity
Subject Matter Expert	Employee of Microsoft (Coursera content partner) or third party assigned by Microsoft (Coursera content partner), who is qualified for content development
Instructor	Teaching staff that is part of the team that conceives, designs, and produces the course