



Digital credentials and the mutual recognition of professional services:

Webinar 1: Exploring current practice

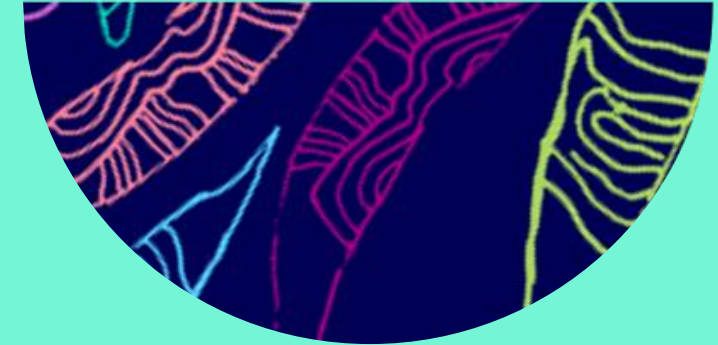
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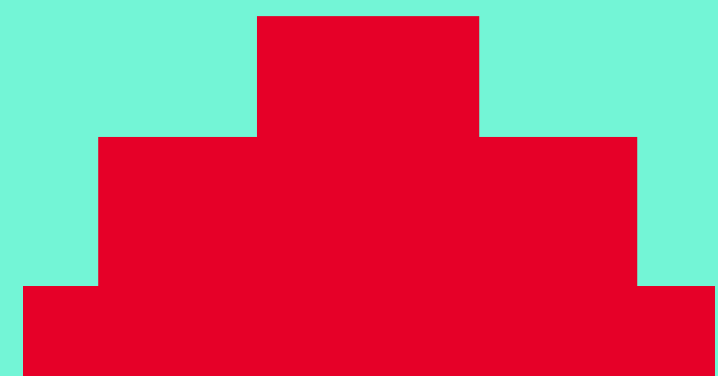
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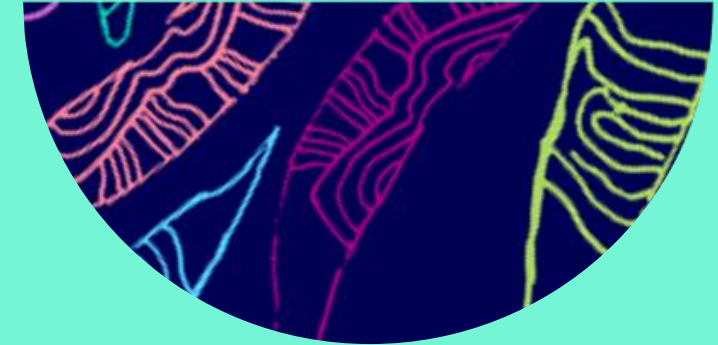




Welcome to Country & Housekeeping

Bonnie Rivendell, APEC Australian Study Centre,
RMIT University



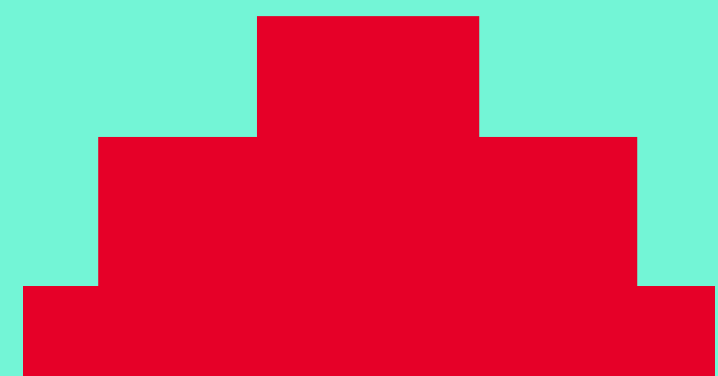


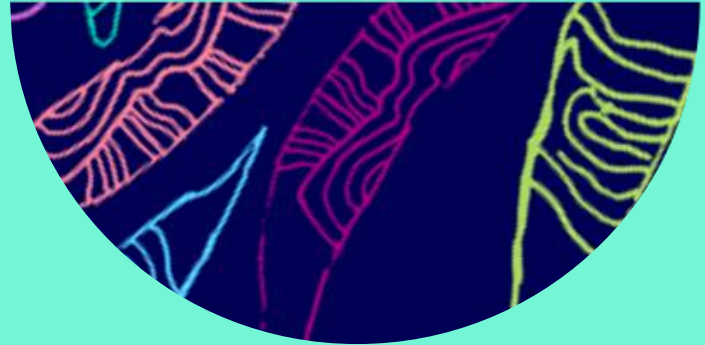
Introductory remarks

Arjuna Nadaraja, DFAT



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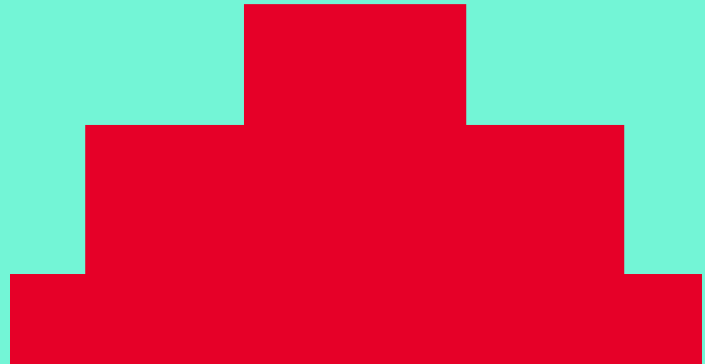
Presenter

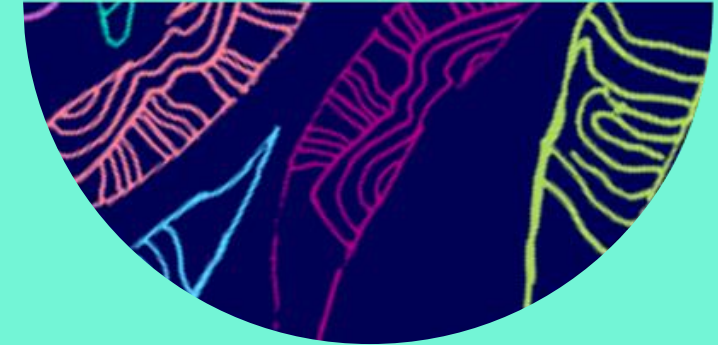
Paul Howorth

APEC Study Centre



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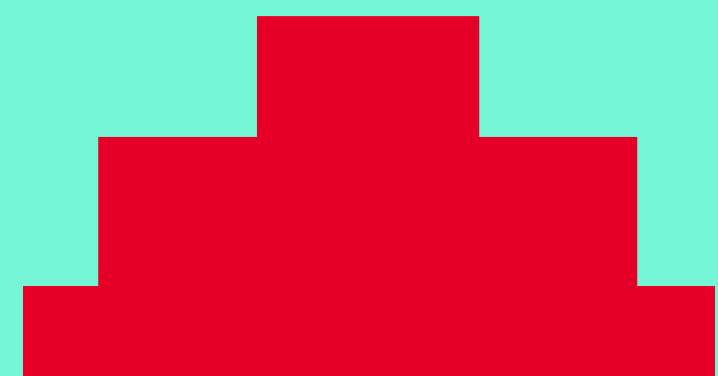


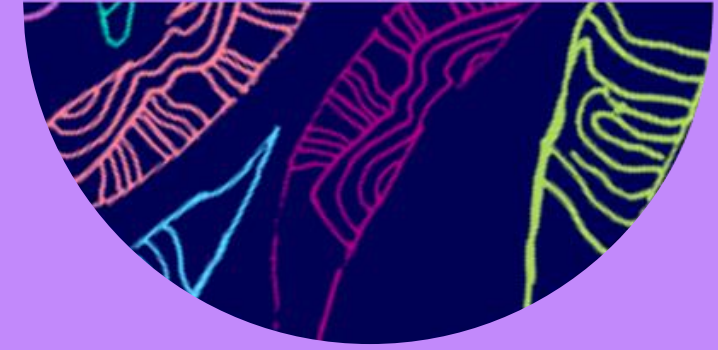
The webinar has 3 sessions:

Session 1 The emergence of the digital credential and the rise of online recognition practices and processes

Session 2 Case study exploration

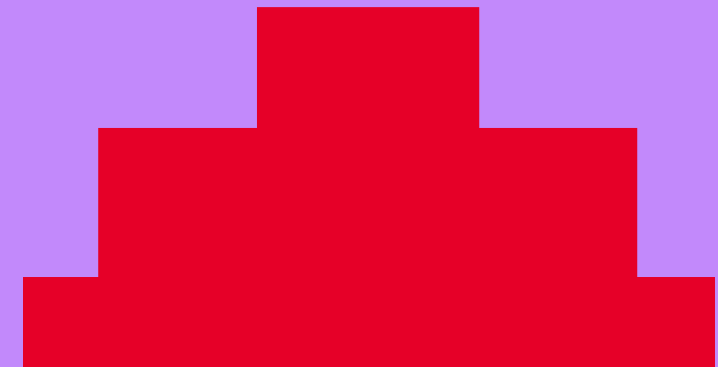
Session 3 Break-out discussion of opportunities and barriers

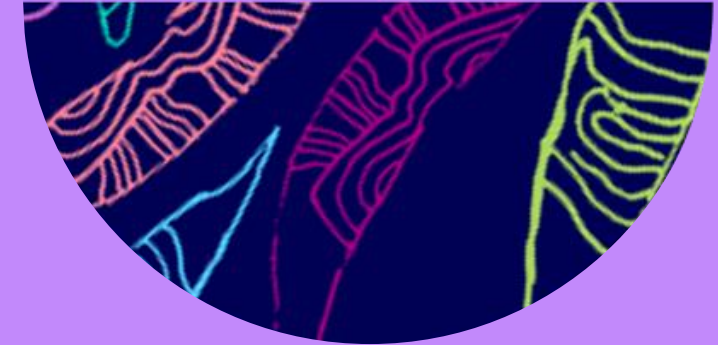




Session 1

The emergence of the digital credential
and the rise of online recognition
practices and processes



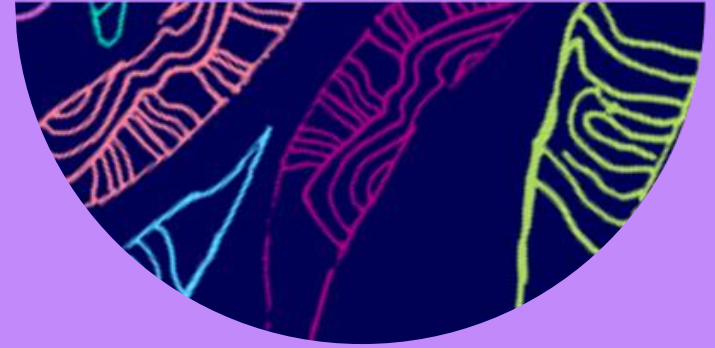


Digital credentials

A **credential** is a **formal representation** of the different types of learning, qualification, skills, experience and professional standard acquired by an individual. These are commonly worked with in recognition practice to assess candidates against set criteria for recognition

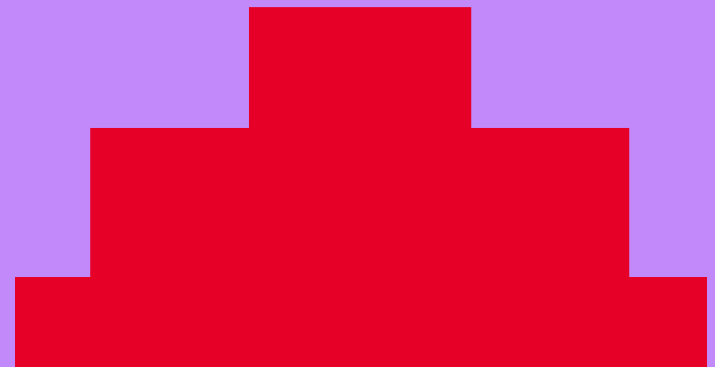
A **digital credential** is a **digitised, secure, immutable record** of information about someone's credentials, which can be **shared, verified, and published online**. More than just a text-based title or nominal and issued as an outcome of an assessment or recognition process

How digital credentials are created

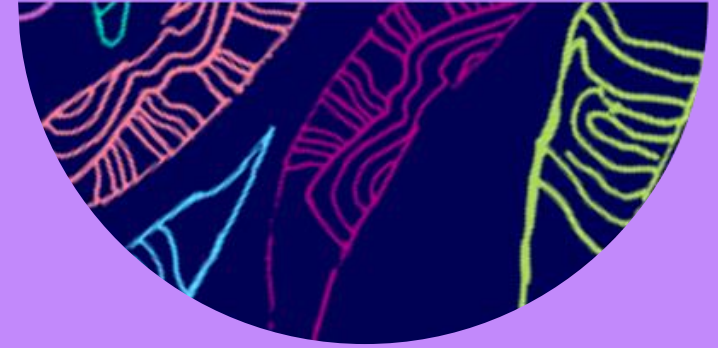


A digital credential is created **via processes and tools that assess and verify** whether someone satisfies criteria that lets them hold a credential.

These processes and tools are usually accessed and applied by all parties via **online platforms** and the **online environment** generally

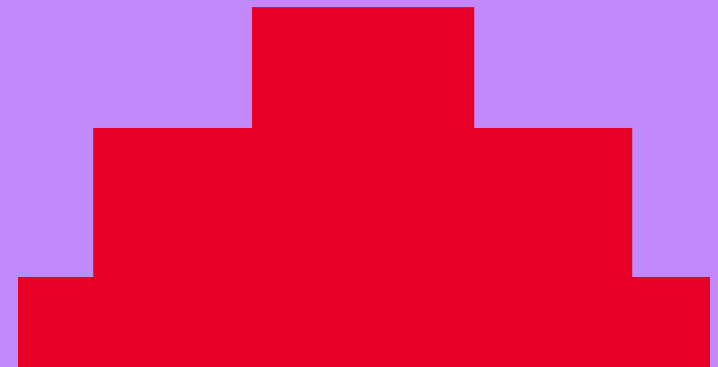


Where digital credentials are being used

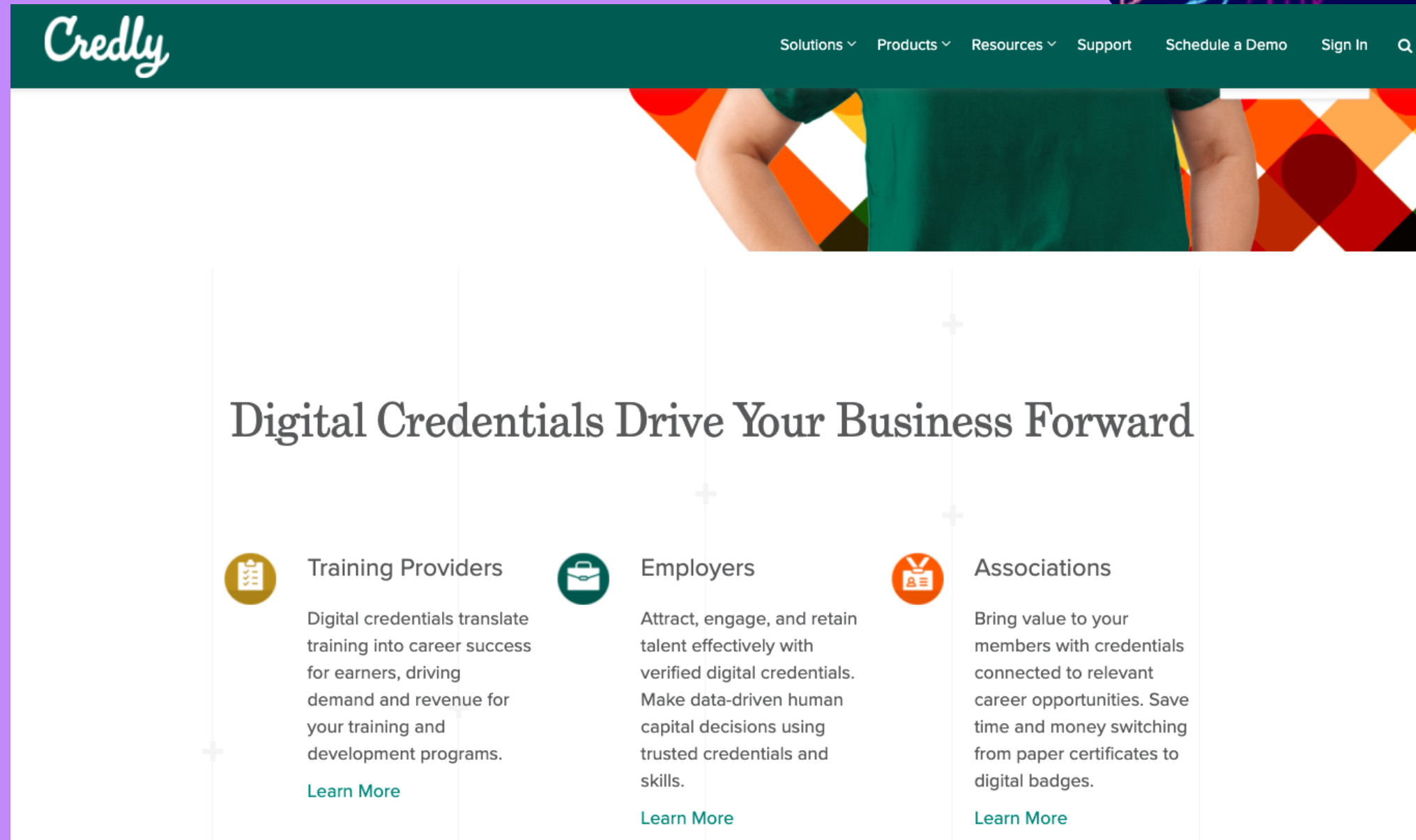


So far, digital credentials are mainly in use in **the education and training sectors**, supported by platforms that help institutions to create digital environments and processes that enable them and their candidates to create, achieve and share credentials

Professional associations are also emerging users of digital credentials, particularly around continuing professional education and development




Platform example


The image shows a screenshot of the Credly website. At the top, there is a dark green navigation bar with the Credly logo on the left and a menu of links on the right: Solutions, Products, Resources, Support, Schedule a Demo, Sign In, and a search icon. Below the navigation bar is a hero section with a background image of a person in a green shirt. The main heading is "Digital Credentials Drive Your Business Forward". Below this heading are three columns, each with an icon, a title, a paragraph of text, and a "Learn More" link. The columns are: 1. Training Providers (yellow icon of a clipboard), 2. Employers (green icon of a briefcase), and 3. Associations (orange icon of a TV with a play button).

Credly Solutions Products Resources Support Schedule a Demo Sign In


Digital Credentials Drive Your Business Forward

-  **Training Providers**

Digital credentials translate training into career success for earners, driving demand and revenue for your training and development programs.

[Learn More](#)
-  **Employers**

Attract, engage, and retain talent effectively with verified digital credentials. Make data-driven human capital decisions using trusted credentials and skills.

[Learn More](#)
-  **Associations**

Bring value to your members with credentials connected to relevant career opportunities. Save time and money switching from paper certificates to digital badges.

[Learn More](#)

The recognition process

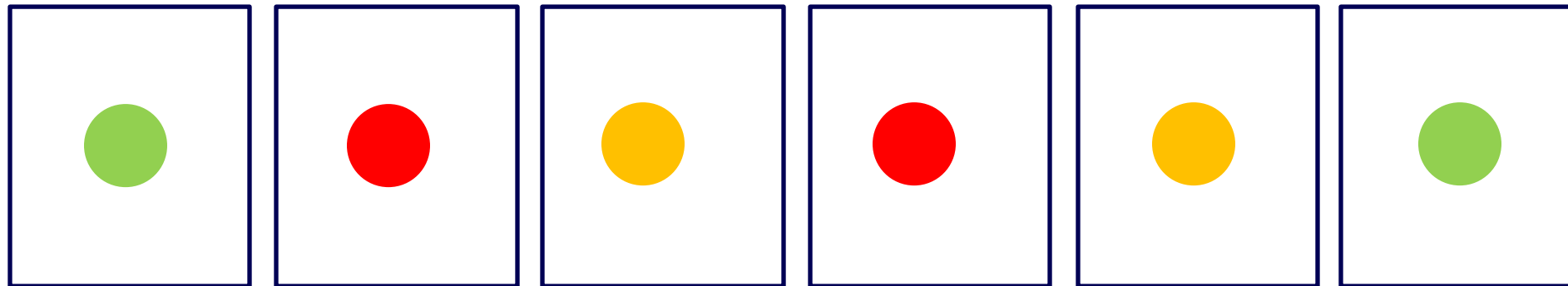
Common phases in recognition processes:





Online recognition practice involves the use of the online environment to support the recognition process, and this provides a platform for moving towards the creation and used of digital credentials


Online recognition processes and practices

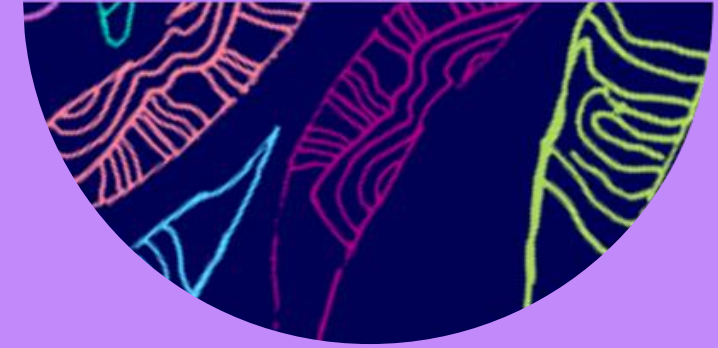
How much is the online environment already being used?



 = common

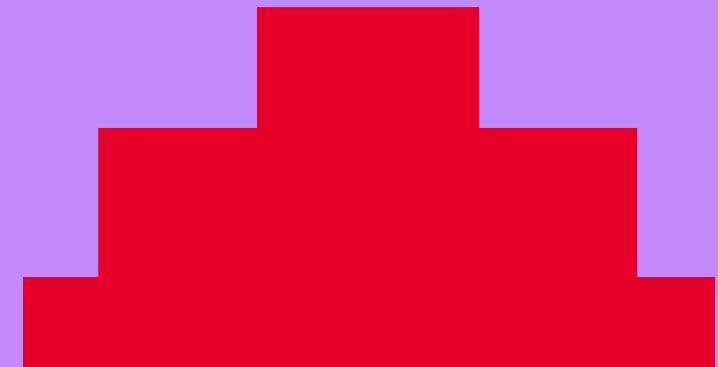
 = emerging

 = rare



Session 1 Q&A

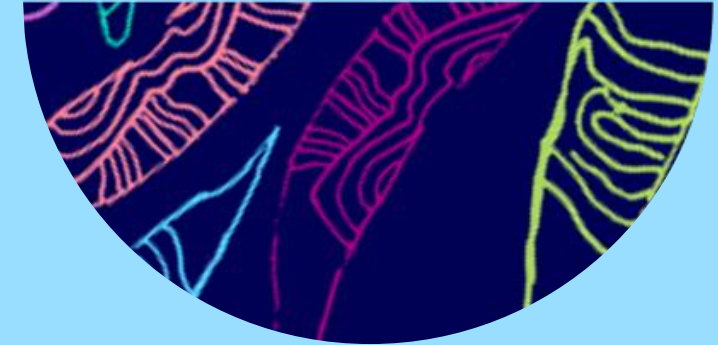
Questions, answers and comments





Session 2

Case studies: the emerging use of the online environment and digital credentials to support recognition practices and processes



The three case studies are:

- > Architecture services, Australia**
- > Accounting services, USA**
- > APEC Engineer, regional**

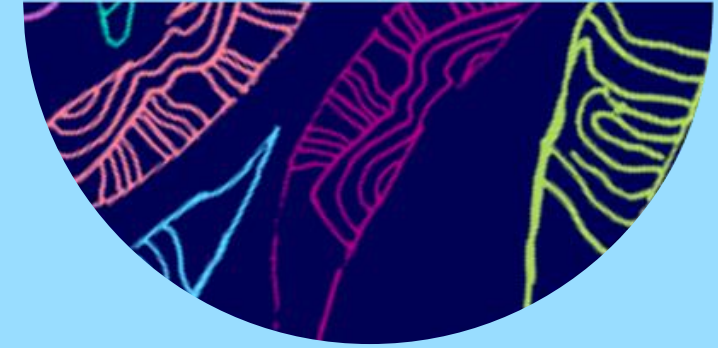


Approach

The focus is on the use of the online environment to support recognition processes generally, highlighting where these are used to support the recognition of overseas professionals via various pathways, including mutual recognition agreements

Also exploring enablers, barriers, and Covid-19 impacts

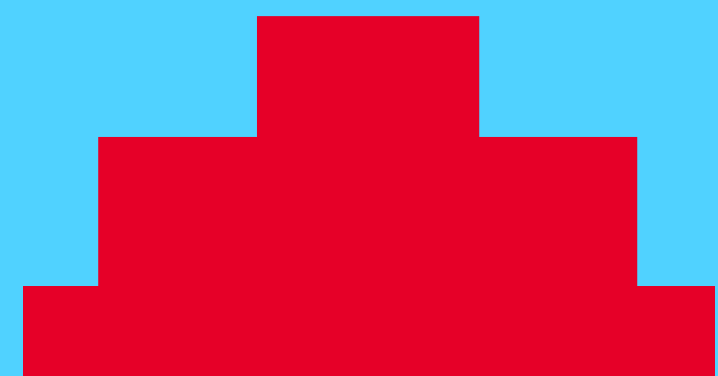
Not a deep dive into recognition rules, criteria, etc, though some of these may well come up as barriers as we begin to explore these





Architecture services, Australia

Architects Accreditation Council of Australia



Key insights

Candidate applications

MRA and Australian APEC Architect candidates can access [online guides, application forms and payment](#)

Overseas trained experienced practitioner candidates can access online the [Experienced Practitioner Assessment](#)

Overseas Qualifications Assessment candidates can access an [online information application form](#)

Checking of qualifications / experience

Overseas trained experienced practitioner candidates can use [an online process](#) through which they can upload required evidence

Overseas Qualifications Assessment candidates can complete [an online process](#) through which they can upload required evidence

MRA and APEC Architects can complete and submit a [downloadable electronic form](#)

Supplementary assessments

Overseas Qualifications Assessment candidates assessed for Stage 1 by verification of evidence / desktop assessment Stage 2 involves a portfolio assessment and interview. If Stage 2 is passed the candidate can register for the **Architectural Practice Examination**

The exam has 3 parts. Part 2 is an online National Examination Paper, supported by [online proctoring](#) using a platform called [ProctorU](#), also supported by a partner platform, ACER

Results / certificates / credentials

Broadly speaking, **successful candidates across all** are issued an **Assessment Outcome Certificate**, which enables them to seek registration with a state or territory board.

Assessment results were issued on secure letterhead prior to Covid-19, but now **pivoted onto issuing results online using secure PDF technology.**

A register is maintained by the AACA for **Australian APEC Architects**

Registration / licensure

Registration / licensure is carried out and maintained at the state / territory level by state / territory boards.

For example, the **Architect Registration Board of Victoria** has [an online application process](#) for registration, for candidates coming from either via the AACA's assessment process or via mutual recognition between states, territories and NZ

CPE / CPD

CPD maintained at the state / territory level by boards. There are online CPD platforms available.

For example, the Australian Institute of Architects provides a [platform](#) for its members, with courses tailored to meet state / territory level CPD requirements. Courses reflect the National Standard of Competency for Architects

Highlights

Close to an end-to-end solution across multiple pathways

Highly legible, easy to follow processes

Quick and successful pivot to online assessment during Covid-19

Integrated use of trusted technology partners

Fast track available for MRA, APEC Architect, experienced practitioners

Key enablers

Trust in and recognition of the overseas jurisdiction's system is all important

Partnerships with trusted technology essential to convince stakeholders to adopt the online environment

National consistency seems to be a condition precedent to supporting the efficient use of the online environment

Barriers

Regulations, contracts / other legal requirements limit who can become an architect registered in Australia (have to have practiced in Australia for at least 12 months)

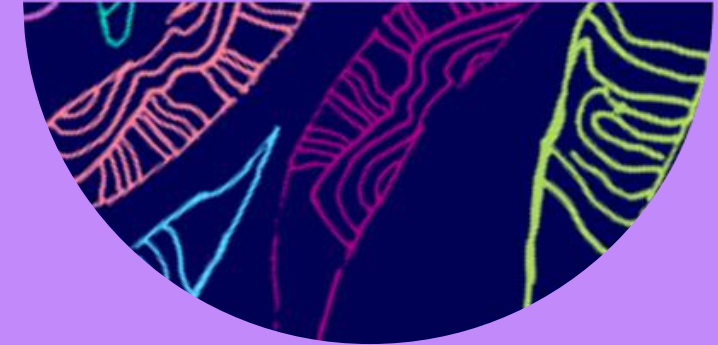
Domain-specific supplementary assessments / time-serving requirements limits the use of the online environment.

Covid-19 effects

The main Covid-19 impact has been pivot onto online proctoring of the exam since August, because testing centres became unavailable

Face to face interviews used in various stages of recognition have pivoted onto platforms like Zoom

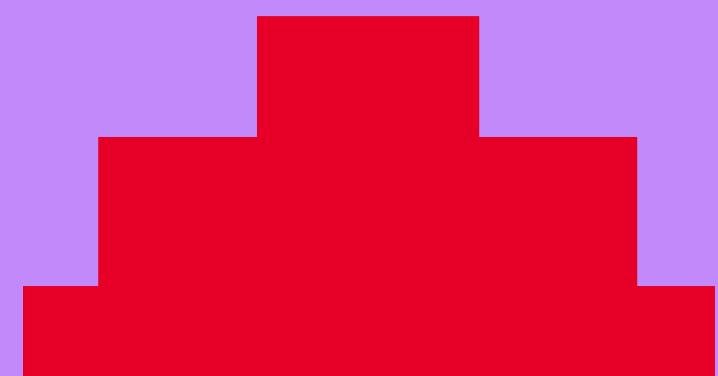
Only 2 of 680 applicants had trouble using the online exam system on its first run, maintaining the candidate pipeline



Accounting services, USA

**American Institute of Certified Public
Accountants**

**National Association of State Boards of
Accountancy**



Key insights

Candidate applications

Online applications are available

Payments are online

Exam scheduling is online

Checking of qualifications / experience

[IQEX](#) used to assess qualifications, knowledge, skills of overseas accounting professionals

[NASBA Experience Verification / NASBA International Evaluation](#) Services portals, both of which support overseas accounting professionals to check and apply

Supplementary assessments

Exams, [certificates](#), in many cases supported by an online assessment software platform call [Question Mark](#)

Third party software platform called [Kryterion](#) to support testing through onsite and online proctoring of exam moved to continuous testing, take an exam anytime (for advisory services assessments) via online proctoring (use of cameras, biometrics)

Results / certificates / credentials

Moved away from sending out printed certificates.

For advisory services credentials, works with third party vendor ([Credly](#)) to provide digital badges that can be shared through virtual media platforms. This isn't in place for the CPA or CGMA yet

Registration / licensure

All licensure processes are online and are managed / operated by State Boards

There is a National Licensing Database, state level, Board facing, searchable, includes discipline / enforcement and the CPA Verify tool, public facing and searchable

CPE / CPD

Working to a hybrid CPE environment - all major conferences are now online with massive increases in attendance

State boards have databases for CPE that has been taken through them

There is a CPE 'rules engine' that looks across all the different CPA rules across the states and tracks / calculates what requirement a CPA needs to meet (could be and is being used for rules across international states too)

Highlights

End-to-end
online
solution for
recognition

Includes the
issuing of a
digital
credential
(for advisory
services, not
CPA)

Quick and
successful
pivot to more
virtual during
Covid-19

Integrated
use of
trusted
technology
partners

Can be and
has been
used to
recognise
overseas
professionals

Key enablers

Trusted partnerships, especially
with tech platforms

Trust between stakeholders
around uniformity and reliability
of process

Strong, open, supportive
relationships between
jurisdictions

Barriers

CPA, a high stakes credential,
so the degree of trust required
is much higher

Concerns about the security of
exams and use of remote
proctoring and virtual offerings

Concerns about managing
special accommodation
candidates, and fairness

Covid-19 effects

Last exam round went virtual right before
Covid-19, helped to keep the pipeline and
momentum going in terms of candidates
moving through the pathway

Pivoting CPE to hybrid environment

Increased numbers of candidates taking
advisory services exams because of Covid-19
and pivot onto virtual



APEC Engineer, Regional

An APEC initiative to facilitate mobility of professional engineers among the APEC Economies



Key insights

Candidate applications

Applications to register as an APEC Engineer are managed at the economy level

Checking of qualifications / experience

Eligibility requirements are set by recognition agreements and managed / checked at the economy level

Eligibility to be registered as an APEC Engineer could be automatic for those holding certain recognised qualifications / credentials or could require assessment against eligibility requirements for others, with assessments conducted via professional associations with the applicant's economy

Supplementary assessments

Where required, these would be administered at the economy level

Results / certificates / credentials

The IEA maintains a [global APEC Engineer database](#)

Registration as an APEC Engineer allows someone to use the postnominal APEC Engineer

Intended to serve as a credentials-sharing platform for professionally qualified engineers in APEC economies - APEC economies can verify whether the credential of an engineer is substantially equivalent

Registration / licensure

APEC Engineers will still need to become registered or licensed with a professional association in a foreign economy, where regulation requires this of all engineers practicing in that economy

Professional associations and / or practice boards within each economy manage registration / licensure

CPE / CPD

This is managed at the economy level where regulation requires registered / licensed engineers to meet these requirements

Peru

Candidate applications

Eligibility for admission to the APEC Engineer Register Peru is limited to engineers registered and licensed by the Peruvian Engineers Association who have met [specified criteria](#)

There is an [online portal](#) for applications to register as APEC Engineer in Peru

Checking of qualifications / experience

Supplementary assessments

The Monitoring Committee Secretariat conducts the assessment and evaluation process for registration

No supplementary assessment seems to be required

Results / certificates / credentials

Applicants are informed in writing of the decision and the rationale for it.

Registration / licensure

The Monitoring Committee develops and maintains a Register of APEC Engineers in Peru in accordance with the criteria, procedures and provisions approved by the APEC Engineer Coordinating Committee.

CPE / CPD

Applicants are required to provide records and evidence of their CPE / CPD as part of the application process

Hong Kong, China

Candidate applications

There is a downloadable application form for candidates, payments are made by cheque only

Checking of qualifications / experience

The Hong Kong IPEA Monitoring Committee and/or the Hong Kong APEC Engineer Monitoring Committee assesses applications against set criteria, including experience and CPD requirements

Supplementary assessments

Results / certificates / credentials

Applicants are notified in writing of their outcome if successful, and can use the APEC Engineer nominal

Registration / licensure

Successful applicants are entered onto the APEC Engineer register

CPE / CPD

Applicants are required to provide records and evidence of their CPE / CPD as part of the application process

The Philippines

Candidate applications

Checking of qualifications / experience

Supplementary assessments

Results / certificates / credentials

Registration / licensure

CPE / CPD

The PTC website has [a link to a downloadable application form](#) and guide that takes applicants through the evidence required to demonstrate eligibility for registration

The PSME website has a link to [a downloadable application form and manual / guide](#)

The Monitoring Committee Secretariat conducts the assessment and evaluation process for registration

No supplementary assessment seems to be required

Applicants are informed in writing of the decision and can use the APEC Engineer nominal

The APEC Engineer register is maintained by the Philippines Engineers Association

Applicants are required to provide records and evidence of their CPE / CPD as part of the application process

Highlights

Provides an example of a regional credential-sharing platform

Provides a fast track for enabling cross-border mobility

Some use of the online environment to support applications and registration

Natural variation in processes because of management at the economy level

Potential for greater use of APEC Engineer and similar credentials

Key enablers

A trusted entity to maintain an international register of APEC Engineers

Online processes at the economy level that make it easier for engineers to apply

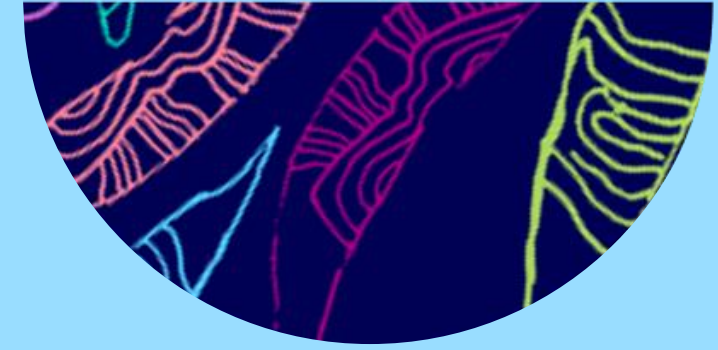
Barriers

Management of the process at the economy level requires an APEC Engineer pathway / portal for each economy

A very high level of trust would be required for an international organization to issue the APEC Engineer credential directly

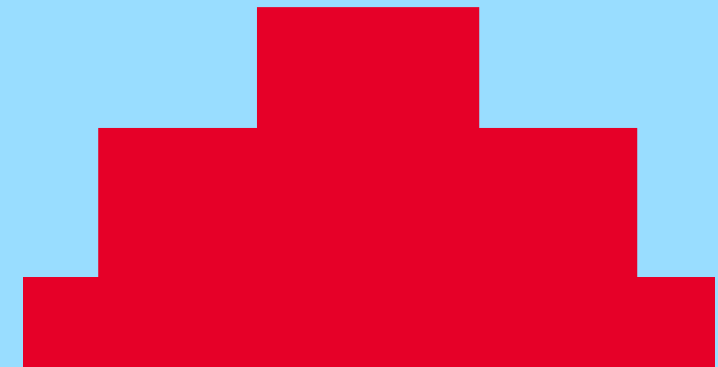
Covid-19 effects

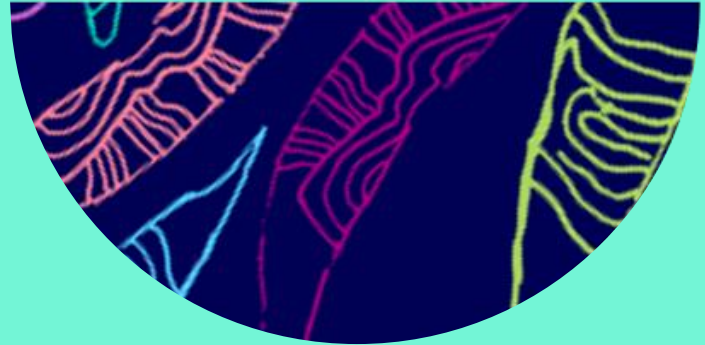
None identified so far



Session 2 Q&A

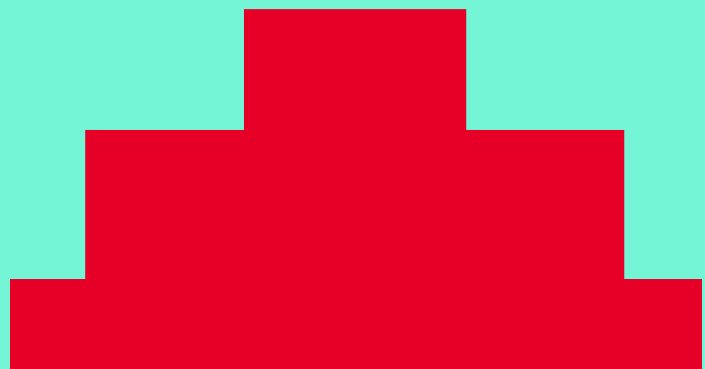
Questions, answers and comments

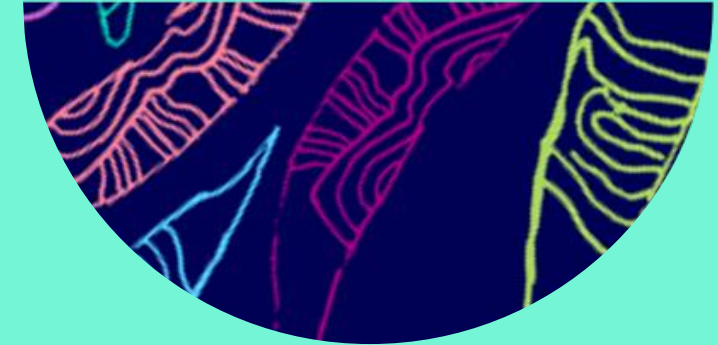




Session 3

A collaborative discussion of the opportunities for and barriers to more extensive use of digital credentials in mutual recognition practice





Wrapping Up

Where to from here, towards pathways (Webinar 2), closing remarks, evaluation

