


Open Universities Australia partners with OpenLearning in short courses

By **TIM DODD**, HIGHER EDUCATION EDITOR

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Open Universities Australia, which offers more than 2000 online study units that students can build into degrees, is entering the microcredentials market and offering universities funding and other support to develop courses.

OUA has partnered with Australian online education company OpenLearning, which will host OUA microcredentials on its new OpenCreds platform.

Microcredentials are short courses on specific topics, often focusing on particular skills in demand from employers, that can be completed in a few months or even a few weeks.

Under its new plan OUA and OpenLearning will offer support to universities to develop a short course from their new open microcredential development grants. Up to 30 grants will be made, each offering a one-off payment of \$10,000 backed by \$15,000 worth of learning design support from OpenLearning to create a microcredential.

The new microcredential grants are an extension of OUA's rapid development fund, which has operated since 2017 and so far has handed \$3m to universities to develop degree-level courses.

OUA chief executive Stuart Elmslie said the fund had generated more than 10,000 student enrolments worth more than \$19m in tuition fees. With the new microcredentials, he said, OUA would be able to offer courses shorter than its current standard of a single subject in a degree, with lengths varying from 2½ hours up to 150 hours.

Mr Elmslie said they would be “a strong complement to the 2000 individual units of study we already provide access to today”.

OpenLearning chief executive Adam Brimo said the aim was to “increase the range of courses available to people nationwide and enable universities to attract more students”.

OUA, owned by seven universities, does not create its own courses but is a marketplace for courses offered by universities.

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Tim Dodd is The Australian's higher education editor. He has over 25 years experience as a journalist covering a wide variety of areas in public policy, economics, politics and foreign policy, including reporti... [Read more](#)

