





Microcredentials

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Social, economic, political and also environmental factors affect the E.S.

- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
- Higher education is important:
- It is a rich cultural and scientific asset that enables personal development and promotes economic, technological and social change. It develops:
 - the exchange of knowledge,
 - research and innovation,
 - prepares students with the skills needed for the changing labor markets.
 - for students in vulnerable circumstances is a passport to economic security and a stable future.
- Current Situation:
 - Higher education has changed dramatically over the past few decades with increasing enrollment, student mobility, diversity of offerings, research and technology momentum.
 - About 220 million students are enrolled in universities worldwide - the number has increased 89% in the last 15 years and continues to expand.

year	1960	1995	2020
Nº of students (millions)	13	82	220

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SDG 4

- Sustainable Development Goal 4:

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QUALITY
EDUCATION

ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

- “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”
- ...
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- ...



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Porto Social Summit - May 7th 2021

We call on the European Council to endorse the 2030 headline targets proposed by the European Commission in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and to promote:

- the recovery of employment and quality job creation, as the keystone of economic and social development to achieve the target for 2030 of an employment rate of at least 78%, which implies at least halving the gender employment gap;
- investment in skills, lifelong learning and training responding to the economy's and society's needs, in order to achieve the target, also by 2030, of at least 60% of Europeans participating annually in training and promoting access to basic digital skills for at least 80% of people aged 16-74, thus fostering skilling, reskilling, employability and innovation;

in <https://www.2021portugal.eu/pt/cimeira-social-do-porto/compromisso-social-do-porto/>



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20 most high and low demand jobs in the industry

Increasing Demand		Decreasing demand	
1	Data Analysts and Scientists	1	Data Entry clerks
2	AI and Machine Learning Specialists	2	Administrative and Executive Secretaries
3	Big Data Specialists	3	Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll clerks
4	Digital Marketing and Strategy Specialists	4	Accountants and Auditors
5	Process Automation Specialists	5	Assembly and Factory workers
6	Business Development professionals	6	Business Services and Administration Managers
7	Digital Transformation specialists	7	Client Information and Customer Service workers
8	Information Security Analysts	8	General and Operations manager
9	Software and Application Developers	9	Mechanics and Machinery Repairers
10	Internet of Things Specialists	10	Material Recording and Stock Keeping clerks
11	Project Managers	11	Financial Analysts
12	Business Services and Administration Managers	12	Postal Service clerks
13	Database and Network Professionals	13	Sales rep. Wholesale and Manuf. Tech and Sci. Products
14	Robotic Engineers	14	Relationship Managers
15	Strategic Advisors	15	Bank Tellers and Related clerks
16	Management and Organization Analysts	16	Door-to-door sales, news and street vendors
17	Fintech Engineers	17	Electronics and Telecoms Installers and repairers
18	Mechanics and Machinery Specialists	18	Human Resources specialists
19	Organizational Development Specialists	19	Training and Development specialists
20	Risk Management Specialists	20	Construction laborers

Source:
World Economic Forum
– The Future of Jobs Report 2020

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Reskilling and upskilling of people

- Facing the profound changes in the way businesses and people live, everyone will need:
 - **reskilling;**
 - **upskilling;**
 - Processes that will allow workers to acquire more skills, or improve those they already have, and thus be able to adapt to the changes brought about by the 4th Industrial Revolution
 - The [World Economic Forum](#) claims that hundreds of millions of people will need upskilling and at the same time asks where this task should begin.
- New jobs imply digital skills
- This means that universities have to adapt quickly (!?) to be able to provide this response to the needs of industry and society
 - Important note: universities are also drivers of industry's evolution!

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Rapidly changing world - Portugal included

- Given the rapid changes that have taken place in an increasingly globalized world, there will be a need for people to continually adapt to the work/market needs.
- Globalization makes the world smaller;
- There is more people moving between all the countries;
- There is a greater proximity of different realities, cultures, social needs, communication, commercial dependence, studying abroad (ERASMUS+), etc;
- People must be able to adapt quickly to other realities, to think differently from what is usual in their region, to be more competent, on a global level.

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Personal and permanent training:

- Portugal, but not only...
 - The number of people who invest in their own training is small;
 - Little demand to increase competencies in the different areas of knowledge;
 - Sometimes training is seen as an "obligation" of the employer, with no cost to the employee
 - In Portugal, low salaries have created in society, over many decades, a philosophy and an attitude of some restraint - having to "count the money in the pocket"...
 - In times of crisis, and even outside it, people don't invest in their own education, only in family support and, eventually, in their children's education;
- Huge costs for society;

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- However, it is essential to
invest in continuous training, individually and/or collectively;

although it brings financial costs, it is the best way to obtain personal and professional qualification, guarantee more and better jobs, economic stability, security and also personal fulfillment and happiness.

- It will also be a way to make society increasingly fair, creating equal opportunities for both genders.

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Recovery and Resilience Program for Lifelong Learning

• Adult Incentive

- targeted at higher education institutions in articulation with public and private employers;
- conversion and updating the skills of active adults in short-term training in higher education
 - initial and/or post-graduate level and lifelong learning in articulation with public and private employers

• Youth Impulse (STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics)

- higher education for young people in science, technology, engineering, arts/humanities and mathematics

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At Universidade Aberta

- UALV - Lifelong Learning Unit
 - Created in 2009, succeeding the Office for Lifelong Learning (GALV), established in 2008
- Lifelong Learning (LLL), a concept established in 1996 in a report of the Council of Europe, saw its action program established by Decision 2006/1720/CE, of 15.11.2006, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.
- Being one of the strategic priorities of UAb, the **LLL** aims through **non-formal and informal courses**
 - acquiring and improvement of competencies, skills and knowledge of adults, with a view to building active citizenship and increasing employability.
- UALV, Universidade Aberta's organizational unit mission
 - to organize and manage specific resources in strategic areas for the University, aimed at the creation, development and delivery of **Lifelong Learning programs and courses**, in articulation with the Departments

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UALV - Unidade para a Aprendizagem ao Longo da Vida Unit for Lifelong Learning

- Over the years, we have been working on conducting various types of certified training:
- Postgraduations
- Integrated and Complementary Studies
- Professional Training
- University and Cultural Extension
- Certified Modular Formations
- “Older than 23 (y.o.)”
- Continuing Education for Teachers
- Single Curricular Units
- [Micro Credentials](#)

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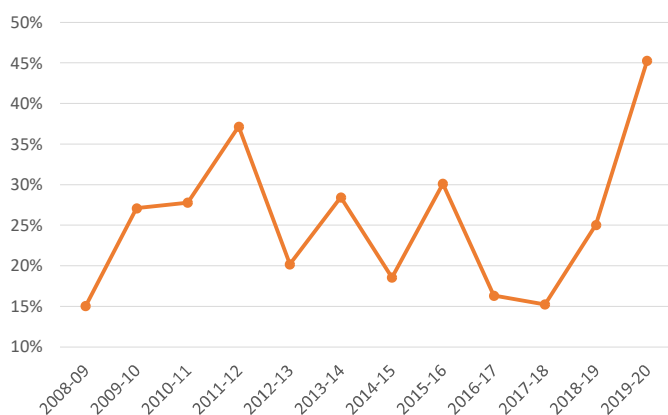
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Lifelong Learning at Universidade Aberta :



- Increase due to pandemic with several networked digital teaching training courses that include:
 - Elementary and secondary school teachers;
 - Teachers in higher education;
- It is UAb's response to an urgent need felt at all levels of classroom teaching:
 - how to teach when at a distance and using digital tools?

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LLL(ALV) – Professional Training Program

- Actions oriented to training, employability, continuous professional development and knowledge update (examples)

Formação Profissional (cursos)	ECTS
Empreendedorismo e Negócios	4
A Administração Pública no Contexto da União Europeia e da Globalização	2
Formação Complementar em Cadastro Predial (Tipologia E Topógrafos);	8
Formação Complementar em Cadastro Predial (Tipologias B e C – Ciências Geográficas e Engenharia);	7,5
Especialização em Direção de Segurança (CEDS)	14
Especialização em Cibersegurança;	4
Sistemas de Informação Geográfica: Exploração e Treino com ArcGIS	5
Formação Avançada em Gerontologia;	7
As Autarquias na Construção do Novo Paradigma da Política Educativa;	2
Liderança Emocional;	1
Reforma da Administração Local, Inovação e Novas Competências;	3
Seminário Europeu em Desenvolvimento Sustentável;	6
Soft Skills – Ferramentas de Sucesso;	1

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LLL (ALV) – other training programs

- **Integrated and Complementary Studies** - CQES - Qualification Course for Higher Studies (12 ECTS) - access to HEIs
- **University and Cultural Extension**
 - Complementary Education in Environmental Engineering
 - Specialization in Non-Structural Pathologies
 - Specialization in Structural Pathologies
 - Paleography and Diplomatics (6 ECTS)
 - Cinema - from thought to action (8 ECTS)
 - Climate Change - from global to local action (12 ECTS)
- **Certified Modular Programs**
 - Social Sciences; Management; Applied Languages; Education; History; Mathematics and Applications; Artistic Studies; Humanities; Applied Mathematics for Management;
- **Older than 23** - program to help all those who need an effective stimulus to pursue studies at the higher education level.
- **Continuing Education for Teachers** - Training for teachers of basic and secondary education; Accredited by the Scientific-Pedagogical Council for Continuing Education / Ministry of Education.

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The future? Innovation

- Universities
 - Traditional, formal courses, typically with a duration of around 3 to 5 years (Bachelor/Master's degree)
- In the European academia there is discussion about the need to disaggregate courses, then re-aggregating, but adapting them to the new needs
 - integrating digital technologies
- Unbundling courses by short courses that transfer the necessary skills for a certain task/job, without having remnants of less necessary subjects and/or of less useful subjects.
 - (This process is a challenge)
- This rearrangement should allow everyone to choose the courses that best suits their needs.

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The future? Innovation

- This movement of unbundling and consequent bundling is essentially related to Lifelong Learning
 - Non-formal courses, of variable length, which do not confer an academic degree.
- The process has been under construction, with the discussion of the type of courses and structures that should be adopted.

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Future today: Micro Credentials


- In all over Europe there was felt the need to adapt the training of people to emerging needs
- According to the [European Commission](#):
 - “a growing number of people needs to update their knowledge, skills and competences to fill gaps between their formal education and the needs of a fast-changing society and labour market”.
 - “The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to accelerate the green and digital transitions also requires individuals to upskill or reskill.”



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Future today: Micro Credentials


- The European approach to Micro Credentials has been announced in several instances:
 - In the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training for the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030);
 - In the European Skills Agenda 2020;
 - In the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027).
- However, common standards are needed that ensure:
 - quality, transparency, cross-border comparability, recognition and portability.



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Micro Credentials

- According to the European Commission a Micro Credential
 - It is an evidence of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired after a short learning experience.
 - These learning outcomes should be assessed using transparent and standardized systems.
- A Micro Credential is a form of recognition of the acquisition of a competence acquired through training of a short character and not leading to a degree.
- This recognition should become automatic between Universities, allowing the learner to join the different Micro Credentials and do their own training, according to their needs.

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Micro Credentials

- The proof of completion of Micro Credentials must be a certified document that must contain:
 - The name of the holder;
 - The objectives achieved;
 - The evaluation process;
 - The issuing entity;
 - The number of ECTS and/or corresponding level of the European Qualifications Framework.
- Micro Credentials:
 - are owned by the learner,
 - are portable and can be shared (in the sense that they can be obtained at any institution),
 - can be combined to obtain more comprehensive credentials or qualifications.

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Micro Credentials

- These courses may:
 - Be longer than the 1 ECTS short courses but clearly shorter than formal courses, such as an academic degree course (Bachelor's Degree);
 - Be labour market oriented;
 - Have greater social relevance and impact as they should be more affordable, shorter and more easily accessible.

- Globally, Lifelong Learning may gain more protagonism!

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Micro Credentials at Univ. Aberta

What are the differences between Micro Credentials and what has been happening at UAb?

- We have been promoting LLL courses in a similar way as the Micro Credentials are currently being designed...

- At UAb, Micro Credentials:
 - "short credited training should not exceed 12 ECTS credits"
 - "may be formulated in multiples of 2 ECTS and should allow the assessment of the acquisition of skills acquired by the student".
 - "Should not be confused with Single (Isolated) Curricular Units
 - the microcredits seek to respond to a specific need to acquire competences for the context of upskilling or reskilling, that is, the application of knowledge in a work context." - more oriented to specific training needs;

- "can be developed for initial or post-graduate training"


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Micro Credentials at Univ. Aberta

- Under the scope of the *Impulso Adulto* program of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR)
 - the Open University had a project approved "UAb Impulso2025";
 - It involves several entities that need to train their assets;
 - It will involve, until 2025, the training of +5500 people;
- Structure of the courses in the Microcredit format
 - Short courses and Post-graduation
- Strategic training areas:
 - Distance and Digital Learning,
 - Digital Transition and Transformation,
 - Sustainable Development Goals,
 - Languages and Communication..
- "Out there" these first trainings in the Micro Credentials format are a talk-topic among all HEIs;
- Other trainings, within the scope of Micro Credentials, are already being thought and developed


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Conclusion

- At Universidade Aberta (UAb) the LLL:
 - Has a long history that began in 2008 with the creation of the Lifelong Learning Unit;
 - Large dozens of short courses and post-graduate courses have been created;
 - Thousands of students have been trained in LLL;
 - The structure of the courses has been an important, cutting-edge milestone in HEIs across Europe;
 - UAb continues to be at the frontline in the provision of non-formal Lifelong Learning courses and is observed with respect and appreciation by peer universities.
 - Challenges have been faced enabling us to continue to make UAb a reference in Distance Learning.
- Universidade Aberta has been able to adapt and be flexible!

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