



The Rules of Engagement: Immersing Students in Online Learning

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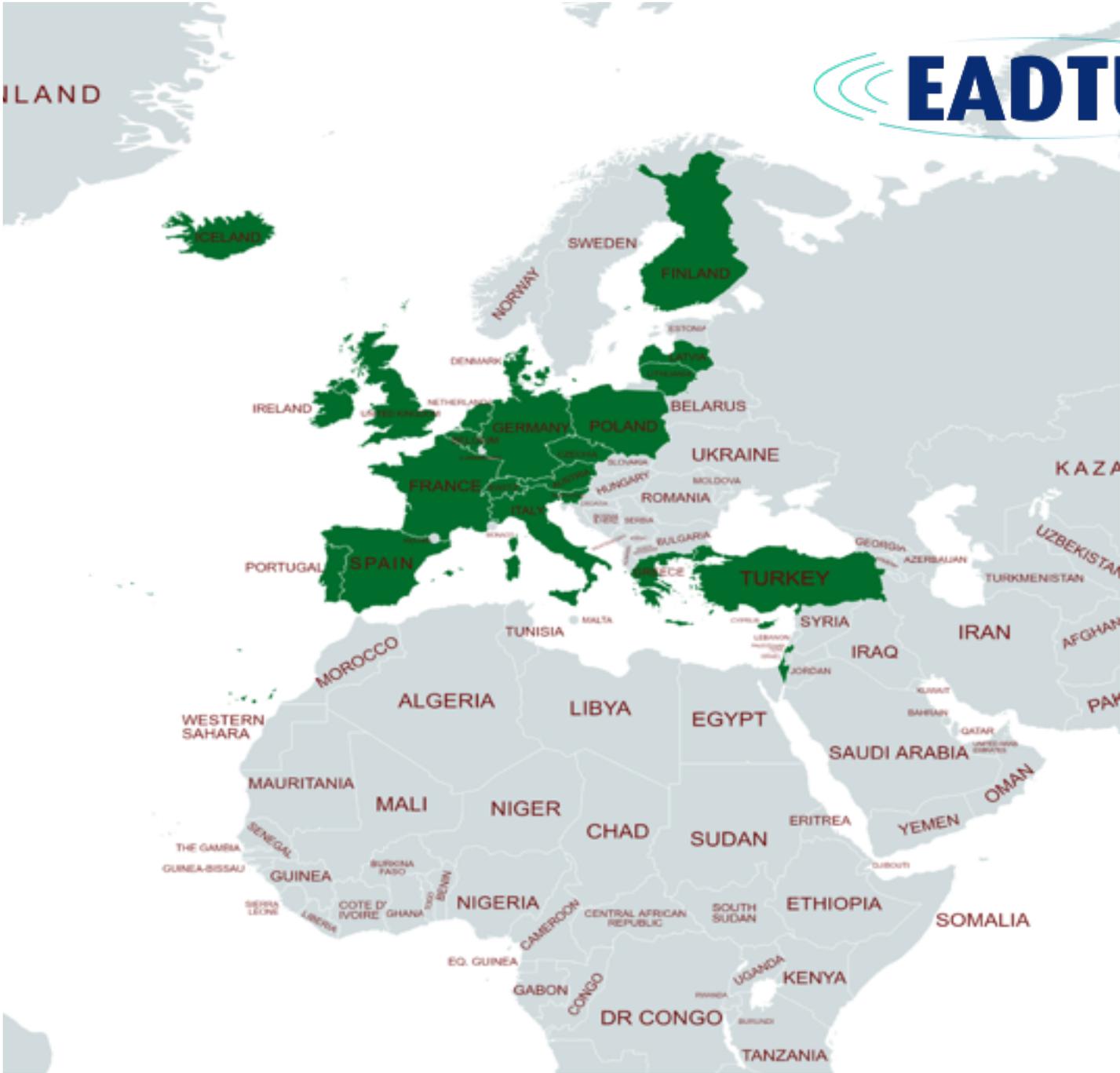


EADTU is Europe's leading **institutional association for open and distance higher education**





Members



EADTU

1987

35

2022

Text



About

- **The European association of leading institutions in online, open and flexible higher education**
- **EADTU:**
 - **Supports policy cooperation and policymaking** at rectors' level and in cooperation with the EU, European stakeholder organisations and national governments
 - **Shares expertise** by organizing events, staff-students exchanges, expert pools, project, task forces, and more
 - **Branding of members and promotion of the sector on Online, Open and Flexible education**

Key topics

Blended and
online education

Diversity &
Inclusion in open
and online
education

Online Education
in the
(post-)COVID era

Micro-credentials
for continuous
education

European
university
networks,
internationalisation and virtual
mobility

Open education
and MOOCs,
European MOOC
Consortium

Short Learning
Programmes

Staff Support
services in online
and distance
education

Artificial
Intelligence in
teaching and
learning

Quality Assurance
in Blended and
Online Education

E-assessment

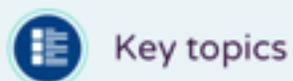
Qualification of
microcredentials,
short learning
programmes and
MOOCs

The changing
European
Educational
Landscape



Europe's leading institutional association for online, open & distance higher education

Sharing expertise



Key topics



Projects



Task
Forces
& Special
Interest Groups



Research
communities

Policy



Position
papers



EU
Policies



I-HE2023
Conference
23 - 25
October 2024



EADTU-
EU
Summit
May 2024

Services



Empower
New modes of
teaching and
learning



OpenupEd
Open
education and
MOOCs



E-
xcellence
Quality in
blended and
online
education



EMC
European
Mooc
Consortium

News

21 Dec

EADTU
newsletter December
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December issue →

13 Oct

'Message of Istanbul'
now available
I-HE2023
conclusions →

26 Sep

EADTU will lead
project on Generative
AI and LLM in higher
education
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2023

IN 23 PAGES



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SHARING EXPERTISE

We look back at a successful gathering of **EADTU Deans**, hosted by the Open Universiteit (OUNL) in Heerlen, the Netherlands. On the 21st of June, Deans of the faculties of Law, Psychology, Management and Educational Innovation and Technology got together in a hybrid setting to explore joint initiatives for mobility and digital course & curriculum collaboration. The Deans discussed innovative partnerships, ranging from traditional avenues like student exchange and teacher mobility to more contemporary approaches such as mobility windows in curriculum networks, blended intensive programs, microcredentials, and the development of joint degree programs.

We eagerly anticipate the results that will emerge from the joint initiatives envisioned during the upcoming meetings in 2024, as we strive to advance mobility and digital



The Open University of Cyprus (OUC) and EADTU co-organized a **Staff Support Event** on 9-10 March 2023, with the aim of building the capacity of conventional and distance teaching universities in open and distance education, and exchanging ideas, know-how and best practices between the participating institutions.

Participants from EADTU and member



Projects



EADTU Task Forces & Special Interest Groups (2024)

E-assessment

Diversity and
inclusion

Green campus

Retention

Personalisation of
education

Generative AI in
education

retention



EADTU TF Retention

The EADTU General Assembly and Rectors Meeting has revealed a cluster of challenges in online distance education institutions, related to widening participation and student numbers, **promoting study progress and preventing dropouts, and providing agile services** to students to address all of this to improve



A task force was established to analyse related challenges and collect examples of good practices. These will finally result in recommendations and guidelines for institutional policies, strategies and frameworks.

TF Retention EADTU Members

- **Open University of Jyväskylä (Finland)**
- **The Open University (UK)**
- **UNED (Spain)**
- **Anadolu University (Turkey)**
- **FernUniversität in Hagen (Germany)**
- **Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)**
- **UniDistance Suisse (Switzerland)**
- **Hellenic Open University (Greece)**
- **Uninettuno (Italy)**

Related actions

This TF has a focus on implementation, practices and experiences,

- **Sharing studies and research** on promoting study progress, retention and agile services to students;
- **Comparing approaches and good practices**, consulting with experts in the partnership
- **Identifying comparative strengths and obstacles of ODL**
- **Find scalable solutions**
- **Leveraging collaboration among EADTU partners**

Expected outcomes

The outcomes of this Task Force Retention will eventually contribute to:

- **Development of strategies to improve study progress and avoid drop-out in online distance education** (identifying and addressing obstacles to successful learning in online distance education)
- Development of a frame of reference with recommendations and guidelines to **improve services to students in online distance education** (offering more agile services);

Defining drop-out

- We can widely define dropout as the non-enrolment of a student in a given number of successive semesters or courses (Marlon & Meneses 2023). For Woodley & Simpson (2014), “student dropout is the elephant in the room” and **“dropping out is the norm and the graduate is the deviant”** in open and distance universities, sometimes **reaching nearly 50%** of new students dropping out before the end of the course (Simpson, 2013).

Why do students drop out?

Wrong choice of course

Finances

illness,
bereavement,
caring
responsibilities,

Employment -
work/life/study
balance

Lack of
preparation,
study skills

Coping with
workload

Lack of
interaction

Lack of
motivation and
self-regulation

Inflexibility
(e.g., examinati
on dates and
location)

Factors in ODE influencing retention

Most distance teaching universities are very large and have high student numbers.

It is harder to create community and to personalise the experience when operating at scale.

Open access means students may not be prepared for study at this level.

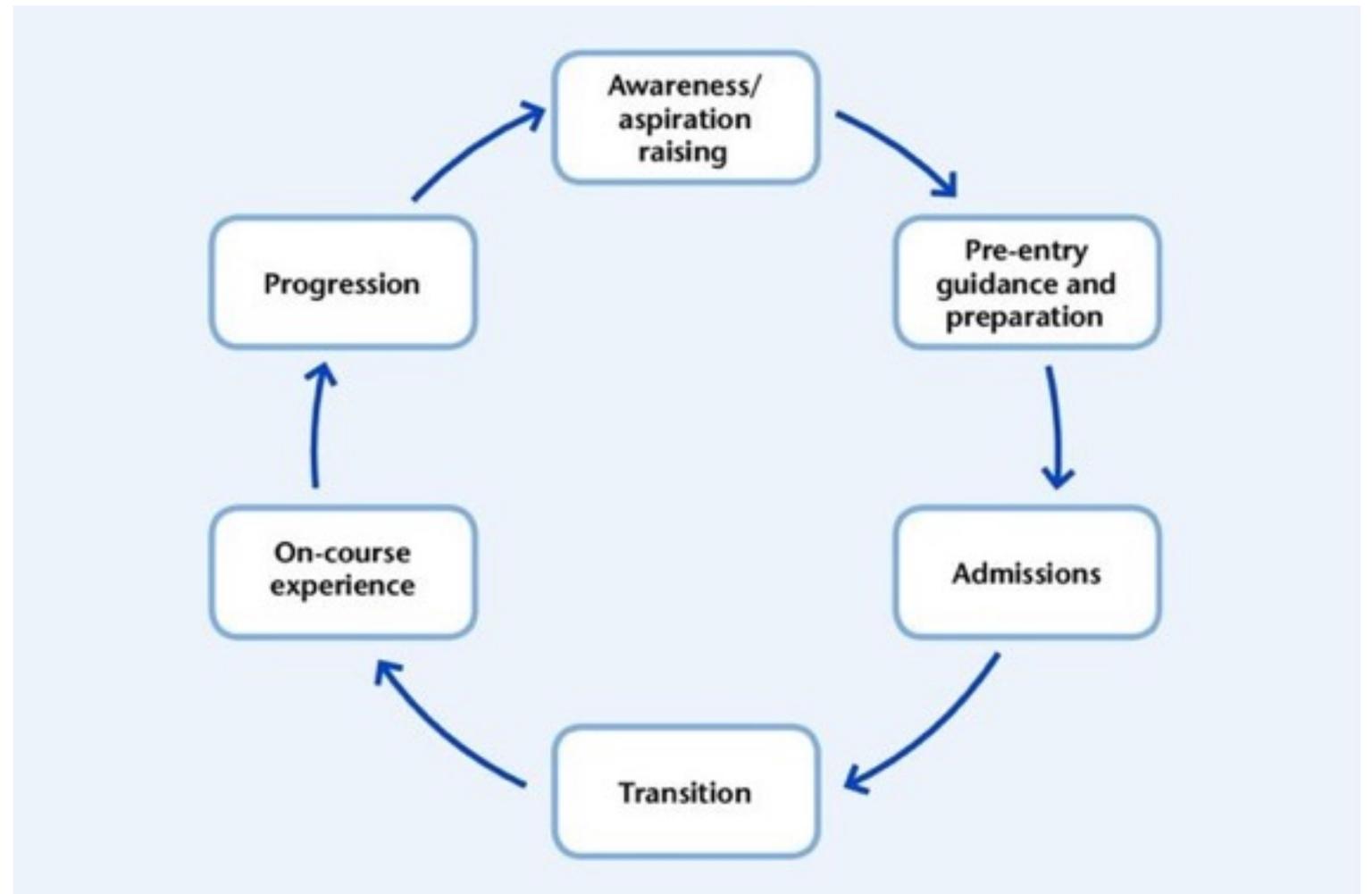
Remoteness can make it easier to become invisible and lonely.

Flexibility increases the number of possible drop-out points

Module sizes can be very large in credit size which actually restricts flexibility

- ▶ High stakes assessment is often too big and therefore riskier.
- ▶ Some students don't want a full degree
- ▶ Life situations often create barriers for adult students
- ▶ Many students study with an open or distance university because they have no choice
- ▶ Distance and open university student characteristics are usually different to those in traditional HEIs – age, employment, family, prior attainment, disability, prison, coastal and rural areas, socio-economic status etc

Student Life cycle



Awareness/Aspiration raising

- Being clear on and managing expectations in marketing materials
- Being realistic about how flexible we are. (e.g., assessment dates, course dates, ... are fixed)
- How much time is needed and how long it will take to qualify
- Providing sample materials and assessments
- Pointing towards diagnostics



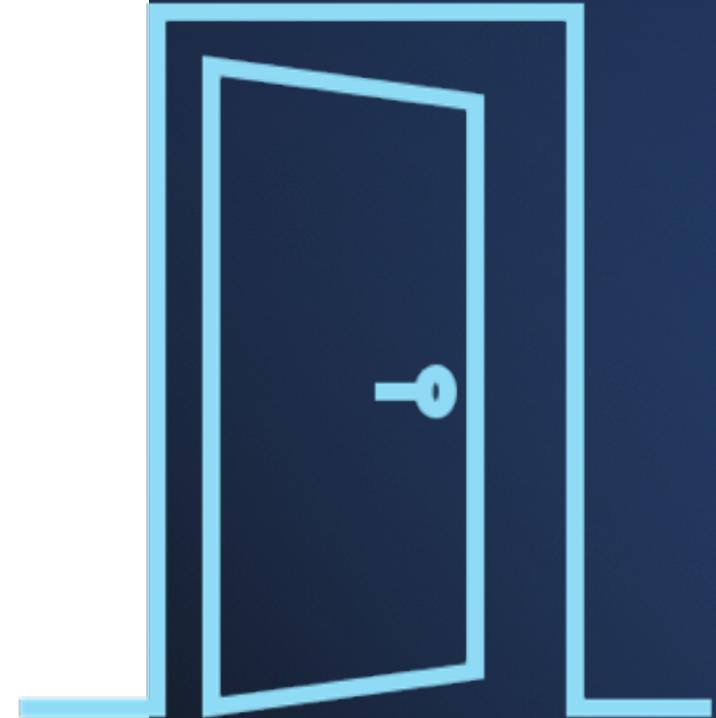
Pre-entry guidance and preparation

- **Providing alternative starting points.** Using diagnostics to guide to the right starting point for individual students
- **Bridging courses** mostly focus on **subject-related skills**, the **orientation courses/modules** provide more **general study skills**
Orientation or preparation modules (could be OERs, MOOCs, Badged courses) including literacy, numeracy, digital skills
- **Time-management, learning techniques and self-management**
- **Careers guidance; post-graduation expectations**



Admissions and induction

- **Introduction to the University community**
 - where students can find the help they need
- **Introduction to the module or curriculum unit**, orientation for LMS, role of the teacher/tutor, key dates
- Where students can **'meet' other students**
 - **sense of community and belonging**



Course design

Three main digital education settings for higher education during and after the COVID-19

- Synchronous hybrid learning: based on course design that simultaneously includes both on-site (“here”) students and remote (“there”) students;
- Blended learning: based on a course design with a deliberate combination of online and offline learning activities;
- Online distance learning: based on a course design with a continuous physical separation between teacher and student.

Student engagement, assessment and feedback vary in these settings. See the DigiTeL Pro website, that also contains continuing professional development courses for the three settings:

- <https://digitelpro.eadtu.eu>



On-course experience

- Manageable workload, achievable subtasks, being in control
- Manageable assessment load, regular (positive) feedback
- Study skills support
- Motivational support, community
- Clearly structured, accessible materials and resources
- Information available to students at point of need



Progression

- Support for re-sits or re-assessment
- Guidance in choosing next steps
- Alumni association
- Discounts for further study
- Employability support



The 4D online engagement framework

Emotional engagement

Behavioural engagement

Social and
collaborative engagement

Cognitive engagement

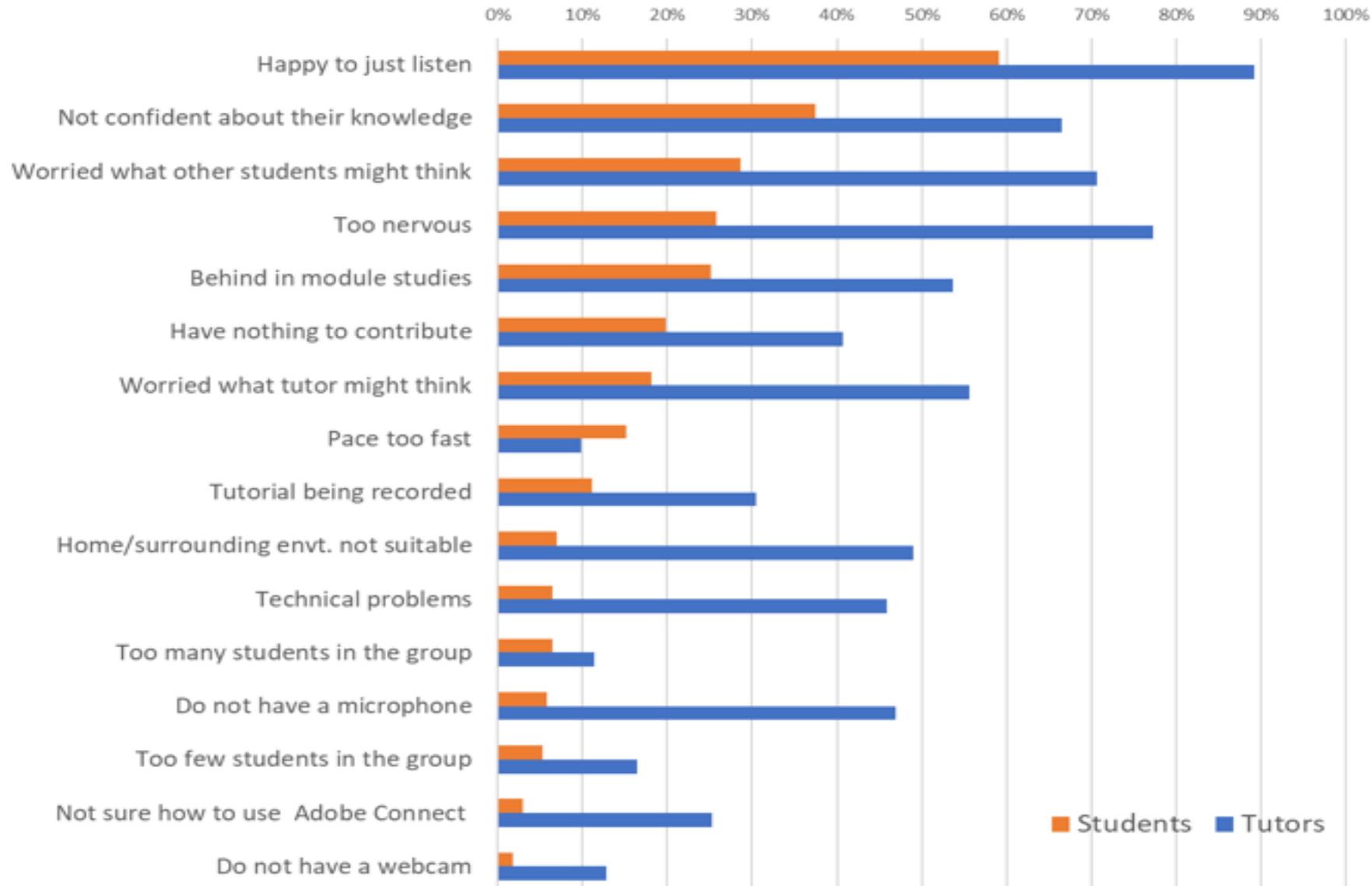
STUDY ON ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE TUTORIALS

Online synchronous tutorials, led by a tutor and using Adobe Connect, are an important part of Open University distance learning. However, there is often a lack of active participation by students.

We considered the following research questions:

- ***What are the factors affecting student engagement in online tutorials?***
- ***To what extent do the challenges of student engagement vary across faculties?***
- ***How can these challenges be addressed?***

FINDINGS : Reasons for not participating actively



FINDINGS : Tool use

Tool	Percentage of students using the tool
<i>Text chat</i>	31%
<i>Whiteboard</i>	21%
<i>Poll/quiz</i>	20%
<i>Reactions</i>	15%
<i>Microphone</i>	11%
<i>Webcam</i>	1%

The poll and quizzes are more enjoyable than writing answers

The whiteboard helps to put answers down instead of using the chat box to save any embarrassment if the answer is wrong.

Does that mean students actually do not want to use the webcam?

FINDINGS : Webcams

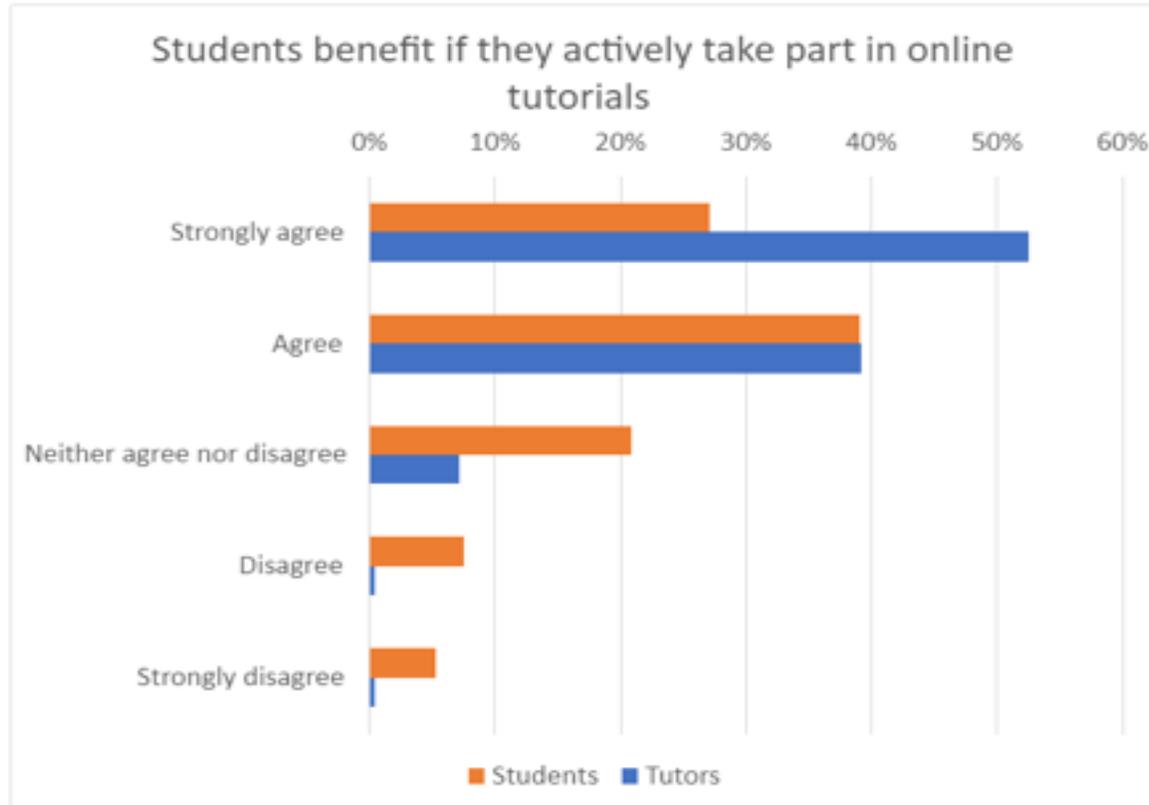
I would prefer if the tutorials were similar to zoom calls where we could see each other as well

I've still not seen any of my tutors faces - only heard their disembodied voices...! Hard to feel you can ask questions of someone if you don't feel you know them.

[From a tutor:] We are told that too many webcams would be a problem for students with low broadband speeds, so we do not use them.

- 30% of students said they would feel comfortable using a webcam
- 4% of tutors thought that students would feel comfortable using a webcam
- Institutional advice on using webcams in tutorials has changed recently
- Tutors are now being encouraged to make more use of them

FINDINGS : Benefits of active participation



Two thirds of students (and almost all tutors) feel that there is benefit in actively taking part in online tutorials.

How do we encourage students without causing stress?

Perhaps by highlighting the benefits of taking part?

More encouragement for anxious students to voice opinions

INTERPRETING THE DATA

Student participation in activities

- Many students enjoy participating, and think it is beneficial.
- But some students find it stressful.

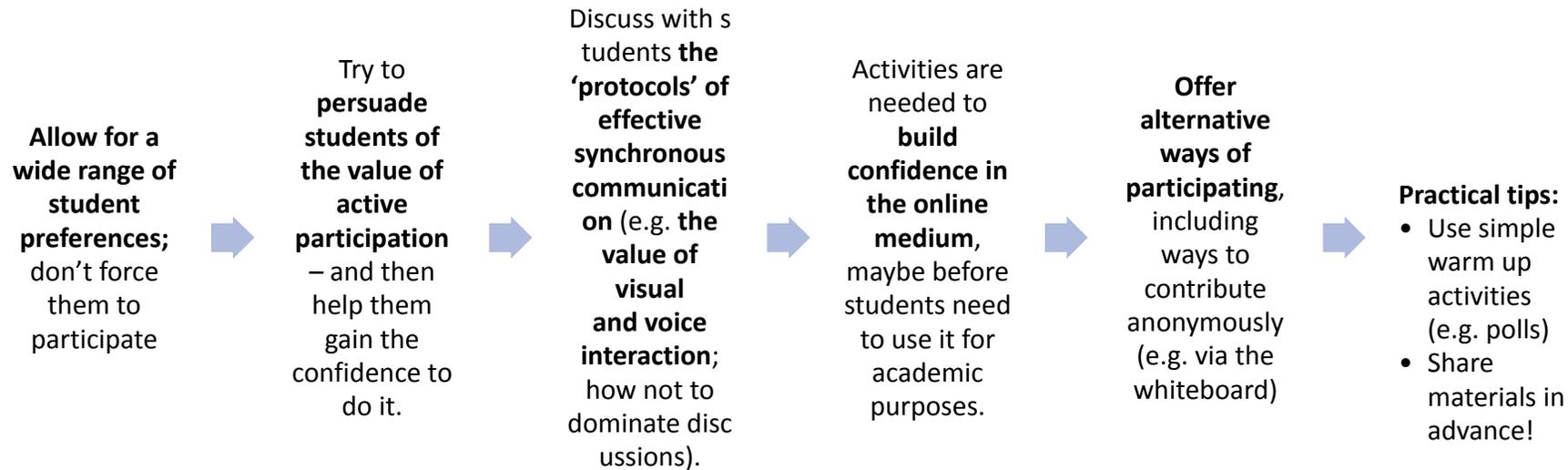
Reasons for not actively participating

- Students may not be confident in their knowledge or may be behind in the module.
- They may be worried about what other students, or the tutor, might think of them.

Tutors' perspectives

- Tutors think interaction is helpful for students and for tutors.
- Tutors understand the limitations of online interaction, and the benefits to students of anonymous participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS from this study



Looks like we take anonymity as the default.

Online Courses / Study Skills



A Digital Edge: Essentials for the Online Learner

★★★★☆ 4.7 (129 reviews)

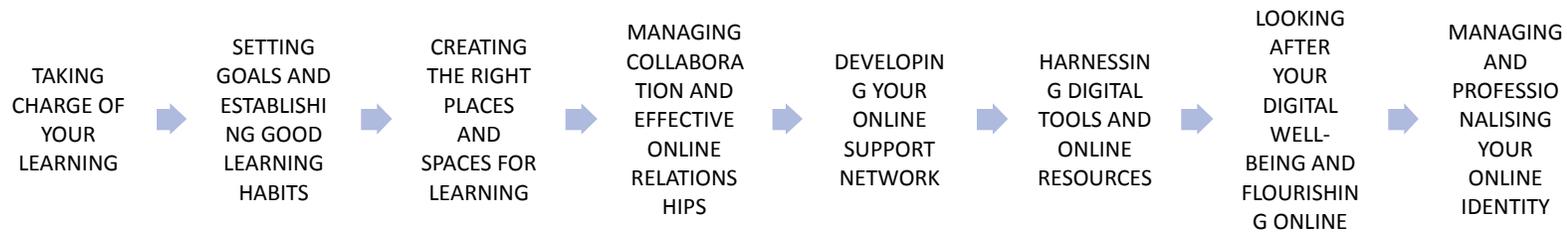
Thrive at university in the 'new normal' and build the skills you need to get the most out of online university learning.

[Go to course](#)

7,682 enrolled on this course



Topics Covered



Online Courses / Study Skills



A Digital Edge: Essentials for the Online Learner

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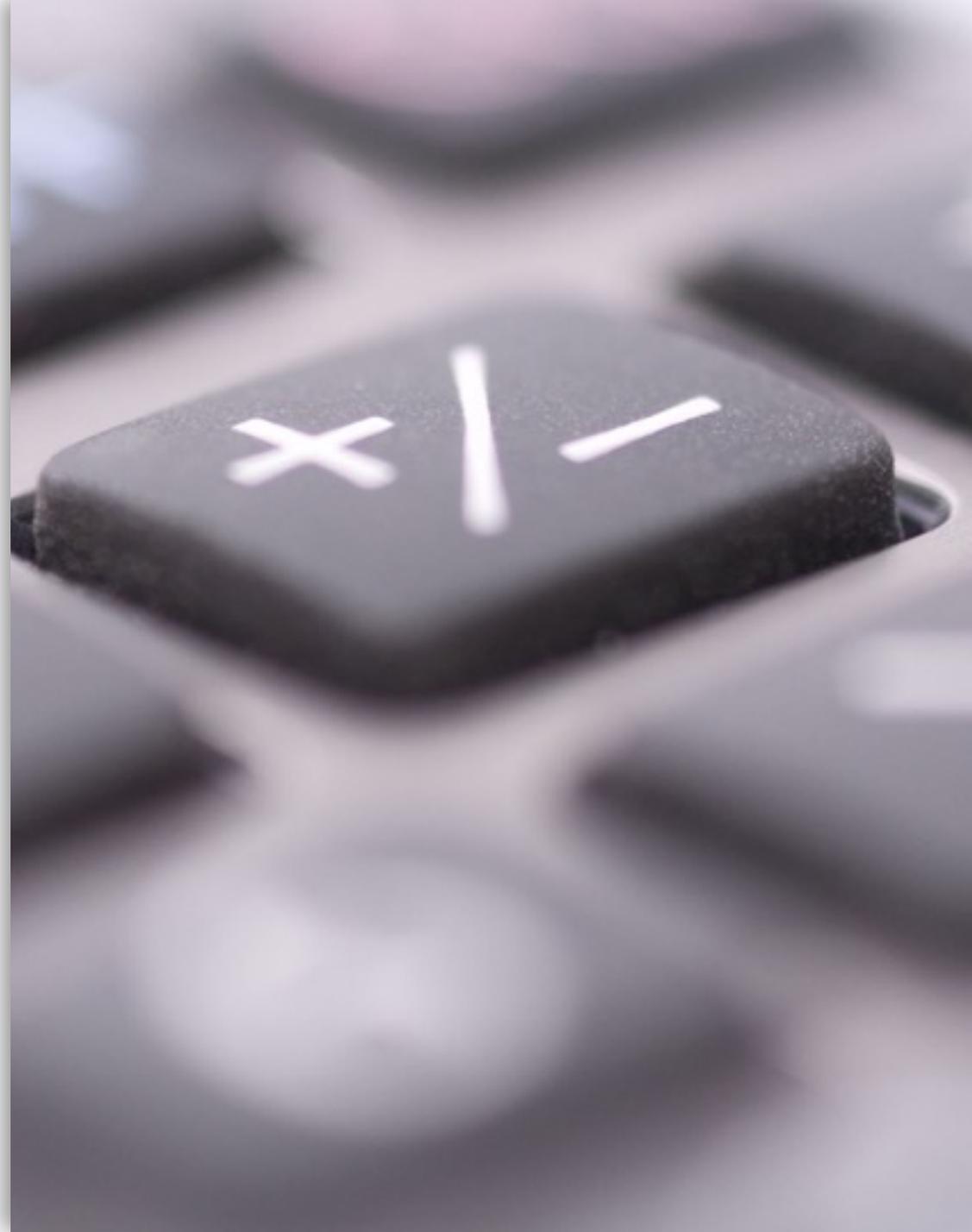
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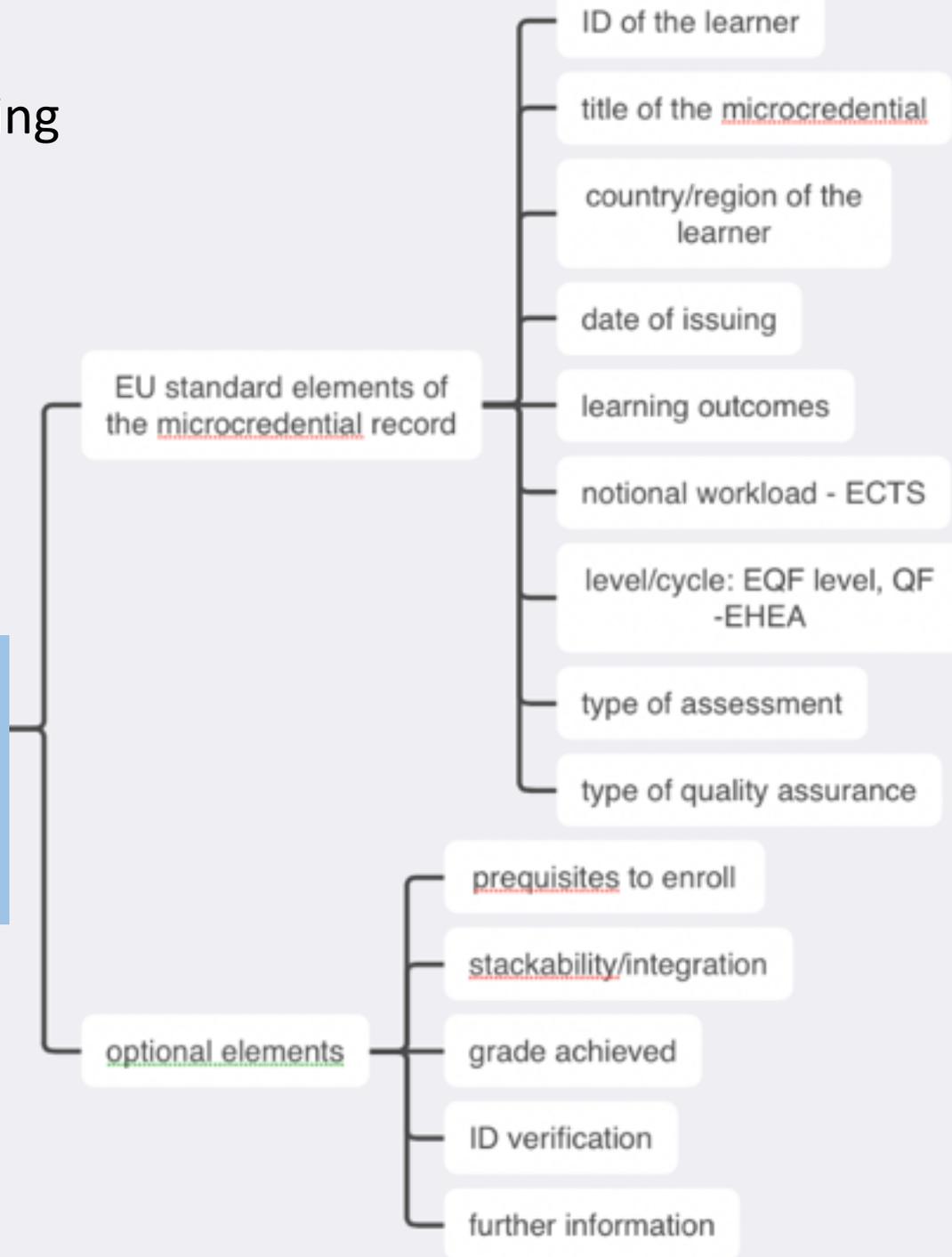
Drop-out versus achieved goals and expectations? How to define succes?

- impacts not only the learners' educational achievements but also the reputation and financial stability of the institutions
- Some students do not want a full-degree MICRO-CREDENTIALS



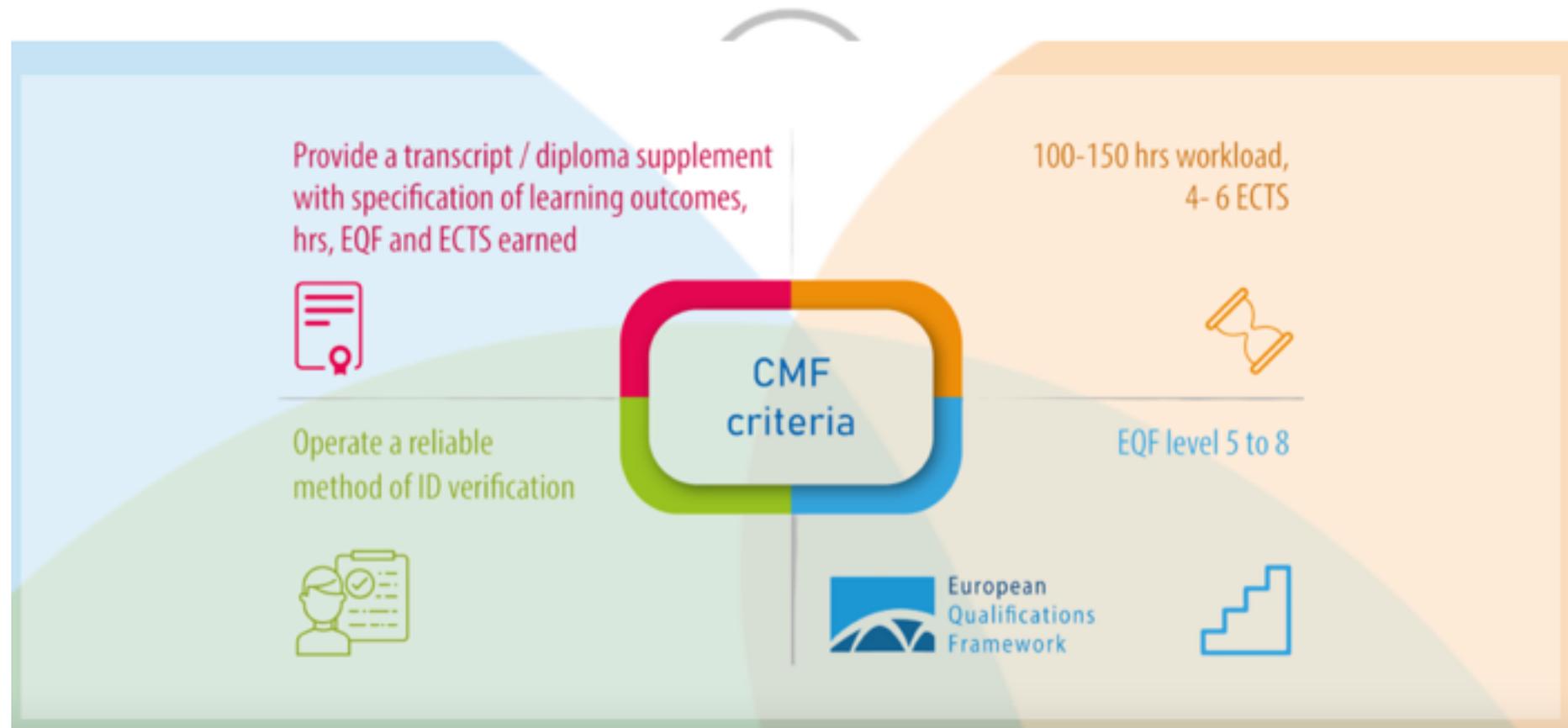
Elements supporting transparency

Adopted EC proposal by Council of Ministers



What are the requirements of the CMF?

To meet the requirements of the CMF, microcredentials must meet the following specifications:



From learning unit to degree programme	Volume (ECTS)	Level	Milestones/Awards
<i>Learning unit/micro-learning</i>	<i>Less than 1 ECTS</i>	<i>Undergraduate EQF level 5, 6 Postgraduate EQF level 7,8</i>	<i>a badge/proof of attendance (can be part of a course or stackable to a course)</i>
<i>Educational offer called microcredential</i> <i>A single course A microcredential course A single MOOC with credits</i>	<i>1-3 ECTS</i>	<i>Undergraduate EQF level 5, 6 Postgraduate EQF level 7,8</i>	<i>Certificate ECTS course credits (stackable)</i>
<i>Educational offer called microcredential</i> <i>CMF- microcredential programme MOOC pathway</i>	<i>4-6 ECTS</i>	<i>Undergraduate EQF level 5, 6 Postgraduate EQF level 7,8</i>	<i>CMF / gradeo (stackable)</i>
<i>Educational offer called microcredential</i> <i>Microcredential programme Microdegree programme MOOC-based programme</i>	<i>20-40 ECTS</i>	<i>Undergraduate EQF level 5, 6 Postgraduate EQF level 7,8</i>	<i>Undergraduate/postgraduate certificate Microdegree, specialisation certificate expert certificate, certified, professional programme, focus diploma,</i>
<i>Degree programme (bachelor/master/doctorate)</i>	<i>180 ECTS 60-90-120 ECTS</i>	<i>Undergraduate EQF level 5, 6</i>	<i>short cycle graduate bachelor/master degree</i>

European Digital Education Hub

The open online collaborative community for digital education stakeholders in Europe and beyond.



Join the community of the Hub

Collaborate, exchange best practices and develop solutions with stakeholders from all sectors of education and training in an inclusive and supportive environment.

[Join the community](#)

**Online clinics and mentorships | Meeting the challenges
of digital education**



European Commission's offer for exchanging expertise and support



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Merci beaucoup!

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