



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society programme under grant agreement no. 872483



Project acronym:

DocEnhance

Project title:

“Enhancing skills intelligence and integration into existing PhD programmes by providing transferable skills training through an open online platform”

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Pilot course in career management and entrepreneurship

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¹ Document will be a draft until it is approved by the coordinator

² PU: Public, PP: Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services), RE: Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services), CO: Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)



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Deliverable D2.4

Pilot course in career management and entrepreneurship

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SUMMARY

The Career Management and Entrepreneurship course has been developed for the entire duration of the DocEnhance project and run as a pilot two times in two partner universities, UNL and TAU. The course material, targeted at trainers from other higher education institutions, is openly available with CC BY 4.0 license in the DocEnhance Moodle LMS. In the next weeks we intend to upload additional material regarding the career part, and the guidelines for trainer.



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INTRODUCTION

One of the major outputs of the DocEnhance project is the development of three transferable skills pilot courses that address the future needs and competences of researchers. The project focusses on transferable skills, as these skills facilitate the transition into employment and are widely applicable, regardless of scientific field and chosen career path.

The topics of the three courses are:

1. Data stewardship
2. Career management & entrepreneurship
3. Supervision

All three courses are currently available on the DocEnhance courses website: <https://courses.docenhance.eu/>. Once they are available for the public the courses will be accessible through the DocEnhance platform, which is to be finalized by the end of 2022.

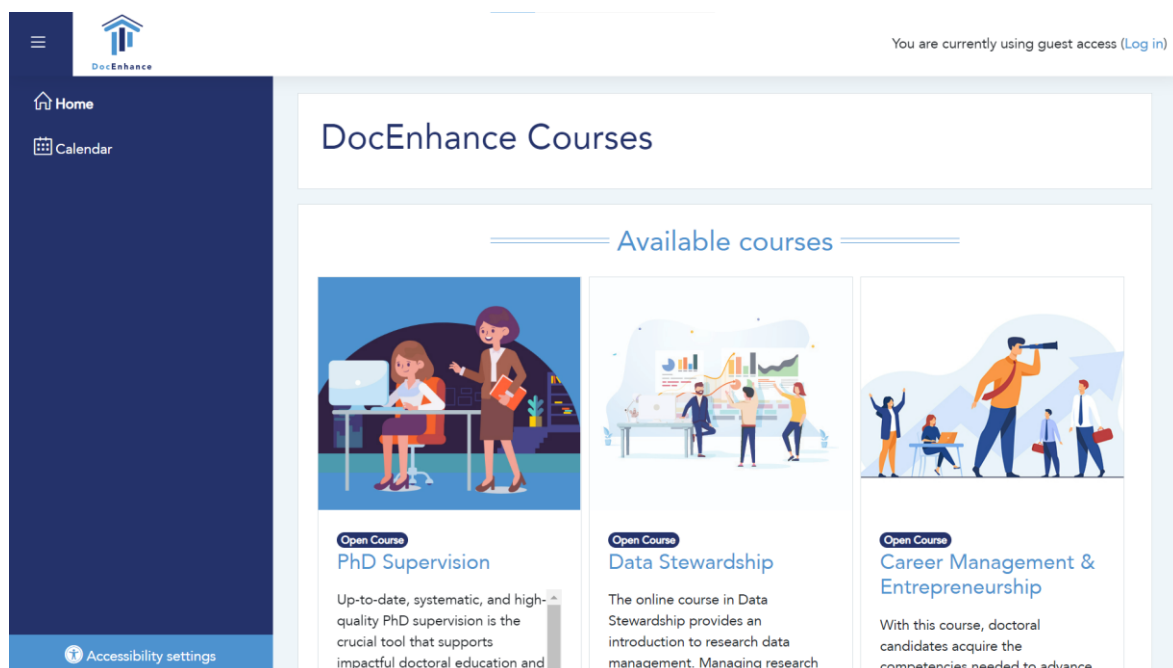


Figure 1. DocEnhance courses website frontpage



PILOT COURSE IN CAREER MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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The course is structured in core modules that constitutes the basics for further developing the contents detailed as ancillary modules. The rationale for this approach is that, while entrepreneurship constitutes a potential career avenue, this is not the only option; on the other hand, entrepreneurial competences are also important to develop one's career in many work environments, including academia. We exploit this feature to intertwine the two contents together.

Although this works to some extent, and although attendees of the courses were overall satisfied and happy with the outcome, our trainers (who have contributed to the development of the course concept and contents), found some shortcomings to its design. After piloting the course at our partner universities and after receiving the feedback of two stakeholder meetings, we concluded that the course would work best as presented as two different topics, interconnected, and possible to combine, but probably better to split. In fact, the current course has the following disadvantages:

1. Since many courses are provided over a few days, there is no time to fully develop the contents and to provide attendees with a clear picture of the skills they need.
2. Although we identified a few core modules that can be common to both contents, the way to further develop them is different; therefore, the trainers have to make an extra effort help attendees learn the most relevant competences from both sets of contents.



3. It's not easy to find trainers experts in both topics; given the different type of background and expertise needed to cover the contents of the two, the best option would be for participating universities to find two trainers, one for each content. This may become an expensive option for some institutions as they might have to hire external consultants if they don't have the competences in house. Splitting the course in two, would give them the option to cover only one of them with no additional expenses.

4. In general, one important concern of most doctoral candidates is related to develop a career; therefore, the skills and competences about career management should be fully developed and not be mixed with others. Although we framed the contents around entrepreneurship as a potential career option, the vast majority of attendees are more interested into all potential career paths and not this one in particular.

5. While many universities have developed internal structures to support the career development of their students and doctoral candidates, most of them have very basic (if non-existent) structures and processes for entrepreneurship; in these cases, the course on entrepreneurship might be sterile as the attendees cannot follow-up on the that to further develop the competences needed.

Considering that the courses on the DocEnhance platform are expected to be shared to a large number of universities, we think it's wiser to split the course into two. Since we have developed the course as one, we would add this provision on the platform so that institutions with different structures and in-house trainers are able to develop their own version of the course either as one or two different courses, or to develop the parts that are most relevant to their doctoral candidates. Currently, UiT is developing a course on Entrepreneurship for its doctoral school based on the videos and contents of the DocEnhance course. Likewise, we expect that the modular nature of the concept we designed will establish a general basis to inspire universities and course providers in the development of their own course.



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REFERENCES

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