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Framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities

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Abstract

This document outlines the use of Europass tools within the six universities of the alliance and recast its promotion into the UNITA contexte. As the Europass platform aims to establish the link between learners, institutions and companies, skills aquisiton occurs as a key-concept. After a short description of UNITA initiative for enhancing students mobility, a framework of skills developed during UNITA mobilities is presented. Practical comments conclude the report with some perspectives.

PT: Este documento descreve a utilização das ferramentas Europass nas seis universidades da aliança e reformula a sua promoção no contexto da UNITA. Dado que a plataforma Europass visa estabelecer a ligação entre aprendentes, instituições e empresas, a aquisição de competências ocorre como um conceito chave. Após uma breve descrição da iniciativa da UNITA para melhorar a mobilidade dos estudantes, é apresentado um quadro de competências desenvolvido durante as mobilidades da UNITA. Os comentários práticos concluem o relatório com algumas perspectivas.

ES: Este documento describe el uso de las herramientas de Europass en las seis universidades de la alianza y refunde su promoción en el contexto de UNITA. Dado que la plataforma Europass pretende establecer un vínculo entre los estudiantes, las instituciones y las empresas, la adquisición de competencias es un concepto clave. Tras una breve descripción de la iniciativa UNITA para mejorar la movilidad de los estudiantes, se presenta un marco de competencias desarrolladas durante las movilidades UNITA. Los comentarios prácticos concluyen el informe con algunas perspectivas.

FR : Ce document décrit l'utilisation des outils Europass au sein des six universités de l'alliance et replace sa promotion dans le contexte d'UNITA. Comme la plateforme Europass vise à établir le lien entre les apprenants, les institutions et les entreprises, l'acquisition de compétences est un concept clé. Après une brève description des dispositifs UNITA visant à améliorer la mobilité des étudiants, un cadre de compétences développées au cours des mobilités UNITA est présenté. Des commentaires pratiques concluent le rapport avec quelques perspectives.

IT: Il presente documento illustra l'uso degli strumenti Europass all'interno delle sei università dell'alleanza e rifonde la sua promozione nel contesto UNITA. Poiché la piattaforma Europass mira a stabilire un collegamento tra studenti, istituzioni e aziende, l'acquisizione di competenze è un concetto chiave. Dopo una breve descrizione dell'iniziativa UNITA per migliorare la mobilità degli studenti, viene presentato un quadro delle competenze sviluppate durante le mobilità UNITA. Commenti pratici concludono la relazione con alcune prospettive.

RO: Acest document prezintă utilizarea instrumentelor Europass în cadrul celor șase universități din cadrul alianței și reformulează promovarea acestuia în contextul UNITA. Deoarece platforma Europass are ca scop stabilirea unei legături între cursanți, instituții și companii, achiziția de competențe reprezintă un concept-cheie. După o scurtă descriere a inițiativei UNITA de

îmbunătățire a mobilității studenților, este prezentat un cadru de competențe dezvoltate în timpul mobilităților UNITA. Comentariile practice încheie raportul cu câteva perspective.

List of acronyms

- UNITA technical words:

  - WP: Work Package

  - HoS: Hub of Success

  - TLC: Teaching and Learning Centers

  - IPCP: International Personal Career Project

  - UCIL: UNITA collaborative international learning

  - VM: Virtual Mobility

  - URM: UNITA Rural Mobility

  - IC: inter-comprehension

- European Commission technical words:

  - HEIs: Higher Education Institutions

  - ECTS: European Credit Transfer System

  - E+BIP: Erasmus + Blended Intensive Programs

  - ECBS: European Cross Border Skills

  - CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

  - ESCO: European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations

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1. Introduction

The UNITA work package related to enhance the mobility for all, aims, among its four main tasks, to support and promote the development of the new Europass and its associated documents. "*The new Europass helps citizens to manage more dynamic careers, to value all their skills, both technical and transversal, throughout their lives*", following the French National Agency.

In practice within UNITA, it consists in:

"*The work of the Hubs of Success (WP2) is based on matching the personal and professional plan (PPP) of the students and the courses offered by UNITA. They also help students to identify specific skills developed through UNITA facilities (mobilities, projects, courses, etc.). This task's objective is to encourage students to create their Europass skills passport integrating the Europass Mobility part. The promotion of the use of the Europass is carried out during the events organized in 6.2.2.*"

Thus, in order to present the related implemented tasks, the report is structured as follows:

1. After having recalled the main features related to the new Eurpoass services, the situation of each institution with respect to the use of Europass plateform is summarized (Sec.1.1). Then some UNITA activities, in which the promotion of the new Europass can take place, are presented (Sec 1.2).

2. As one of main added-value of the Europass services is related to the valorization of the skills and the qualitification aquired during an experience abroad, the UNITA mobility activities are presented (Sec. 2.1). A list of associated skills are provided in the generic framework closely inspired from European projects on skill-based-approaches (Sec.2.2).

3. The present report ends with some perspectives related to the practical management of Europass and also to the valorization of skills associated to an international experience.

1.1. The new Europass

The new Europass is a platform of services developed by the European Commission, in the framework of the Erasmus + programme. The services are mainly addressed to:

- every citizen, through the accompaniment in the valorization of the skills and in the search for a formation or for a job, whatever the age, the qualification or the experience. A personal and individual digital profile is available freely for every citizen.

- The academic institutions, by facilitating the readability of training courses through the issuing of a Certificate or a Diploma Supplement. The higher education institutions (HEIs) are also supported in the valorization of the mobility experience

of a learner thanks to the Europass mobility ; in that sense, the HEIs have effective tools for helping and guiding the learners to formalize their skills, whatever the learning context.

- The employers, by promoting efficient recruitment based on curriculum vitae (cv) providing relevant skills, through the European job portal EURES. The European qualifications are also better understood by the vocational world thanks to a large data base on information on training, qualifications, systems for the recognition and validation of prior learning, country-by-country.

Thus the new Europass platform acts as a set of services, providing recognized documents, to promote the educational and professional development, based on the management of skills and qualification in the career.

Although the six universities of UNITA are registered with their respective national agency to be able to deliver the Europass documents, in practice, the Europass tools are weakly used as a support for the learners guidance. In Table 1, the current situation for each institution regarding the use of Europass tools.

	Europass Mobility	Europass Diploma Supplement	Europass Certificate Supplement
UBI	Not implemented	Automatic delivery	Not implemented
UNIZAR	Not implemented	Automatic delivery	Not implemented
UPPA	Not implemented	Automatic delivery	Not implemented
USMB	Not implemented	Sent on demand	Not implemented
UNITO	Not implemented	Sent on demand	Not implemented
UVT	Partially implemented	Automatic delivery	Not implemented

Table 1- Current status of the use of Europass tools

1.2. UNITA context

In UNITA, through the work package "UNITA Teachning and Learning : flexible and student-centred" (WP2) dedicated to the conceptualisation of consistent personalized and internationalized study paths, two communities have raised. These ones deal, among other activities, on one hand with the architecture of internationalized curricula, involving a better recognition ; on the other hand, on the innovative pedagogies, including the skills-based approaches.

- UNITA Hub of Success (HoS) is a networked set of academic and administrative staff members aiming to enhance the mobilities within UNITA. The dissemination among

the students involves the promotion of the Europass. A specific sub-task is focused on UNITA diploma supplements (T2.1.4), for which the content is provided thanks to the "mobility4all" task force (T6.3.2). Beside the promotional actions, a digital tool is implemented by the task force of the UNITA Virtual Campus (WP5), in the framework of the task T5.2. It aims to facilitate the personalization of international study path, based on the sub-task "Developing faster recognition tracks" (T2.1.1). As the tool is still at the "proof of concept" stage, it includes many theoretical options. One of them consists in personalizing a study path based on the match among learning outcomes and pre-requisites. These informations are provided using knowledge and skills frameworks.

- UNITA Teaching and Learning Centers (TLC), involving pedagogical experts, work on innovative pedagogies (T2.2). A pilot experience of a skill-based assessment in an inernational contexte has been implemented recently for a cohort of students during their long term mobility within UNITA. This activity, called International Personal Career Project (IPCP), takes place in the sub-task T2.1.2 related to the HoS. The IPCP aims to accompany the learners in the identification and the formalization of international skills. The international skills occuring in the IPCP activity correspond to the language skills (romance language, inter-comprehension method), the intercultural skills (adaptation, communication) and the collaborative skills (teamwork, time management).

2. Framework of skills in UNITA mobilities

In general, the UNITA activities are, at the present time, provided to the students as optional activities (Sec. 2.1). Even asssociated with ECTS, these ones are in general not contributing to the degree. This lack of valorization constitutes a severe limitation for enhancing the mobilities within the alliance. However, by identifying the skills that are developed during such UNITA international activities, efforts are invested also from the pragmatical point view, consisting in fostering the skills aquisition towards a better employement. This approach is tackled by the group of dedicated counsellors constituted within UNITA: the accompaniment of the learners to put consistent contents on the skills related to an international experience is also a crucial part of the guidance. A conceptual framework for identifying the skills is designed (Sec. 2.2) in order to set the bases of an efficient tool for learners guidance.

2.1. UNITA mobilities

Since November 2020, the six UNITA universities have implemented pedagogical activities at the international scale. In most cases, these activities result of a strong cooperation among the academic staff members of the alliance, supported by the administrative staff members. The activities promote new forms of mobility, in addition to the classical physical ones : short mobilities and internationalization at home. The later ones use an online mode for communicating. Thus, some digital skills are applied throughout these activities.

1. Activities involving a physical mobility

   i. all long term mobility (semester or annual mobility for study) within a university of UNITA correspond to the regular and historically most developed type of mobility.

   ii. UNITA Rural Mobility corresponds to an immersive experience into a rural zone abroad. Even if the students application process is related to the academic institutions, the nature of the activity is rather linked to the needs of a local rural organism.

2. International mobility based on hybrid mode

   i. UNITA alliance promotes new forms of mobility, including short ones. The Erasmus + Blended Intensive Programs (E+ BIP) intend to support international co-built activities provided in a hybrid format. UNITA Blended Intensive Programs are used to support thematic schools proposed by a UNITA university. It constitutes an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students, who are generally not used to participate to such thematic schools, as the integration of the later into the study program is not common.

   ii. Green mobility ideathon and hackathon are events driven by the students themselves, even if a coordinator animates the session using methods based on creativity enhancing. This kind of event happen regularly in the framework of innovation, where applicants have to come up with a thorough solution of a real-life problem. The second edition of UNITA ideathon and hackathon is planed to be support by a E+ BIP.

3. Internationalization at home, mainly based on online mode

   i. Among the UNITA institution, academic staff members have the opportunity to internationalize some of their teaching, through the initiative called UNITA collaborative international learning - UCIL. This initiative is based on the celebrated Collaborative Online International Learning, also known as Globally

Networked Learning. The principle consists in sharing a part of a regular course with at least one colleague of the alliance. By construction the shared course belongs to a regular study program. Thus, all student involved in that study program, attends *de facto* the internationalized learning experience. Some E+ BIP are also used for internationalizing a part of a course from a regular study program. In that case, the financial support can be seen as a promoting feature for enhancing the UNITA Collaborative International Learning initiative.

ii. The teachers of the alliance provide their online courses through the UNITA Virtual Mobility (VM) initiative. With this internationalization at home, a student can attend a VM course in optional mode, or he can substitute a course from his regular study program with a VM course, after validation of the pedagogical responsible, as for a regular mobility. Thus VM gives the opportunity to a student to attend a course given by a university partner, in the same classroom as the local students on-site.

iii. One of the main UNITA identity component is related to the promotion of inter-comprehension (IC) in romance language. A complete work package is devoted to this UNITA flagship. The associated teachers provide training involving groups of international students.

iv. Tandem and Language café constitute an informal time of discussion based on interculturalism and multilingualism.

v. UNITA micro-credentials are, at the current stage, online short trainings focused on specific topics with targeted learning outcomes objectives. The related learning materials are built jointly by a group of international teachers.

vi. European citizenship workshops correspond to seminars on European questions. Towards the students, the workshops are provided in an online mode by some experts on the topic.

vii. International contest participation: UNITA contests refer to international among the students of the alliance. There are various topics (photos, European citizenship, …) and the application can be made by individuals or by groups. In most cases, an awarding session gather all international applicants.

2.2. Description of associated skills

At first, a list of skills is presented in Tab. 3. The skills are selected as being intrinsic, but not exclusive, to an international experience through any kind of mobility. Thus, one may have considered other skills in the field of the academic education, but not systematically linked with the international experience.

The presentation follows a standard description :

- Skill name, with a short and informal definition

- Example of typical situation during which the skill is aquiered/improved

- Sample of theoretical and/or practical knowledge related to the skill

The two last items refer to the level of skill mastering. For example, one can distinguish different levels depending on how autonomous the learner is for applying the skill, and/or on how complex the situation is for the learner to apply his skill. Although these qualitative features and their measure are crucial from the practical point of view, they constitute a field of investigation beyond the scope of the present report.

Intercultural skills	
Definition	Ability to integrate specificities of cultural field (behaviours, feelings, education) in the relation of communication and exchange with the partner.
Situation for aquisition	Communicate effectively and appropriately with representatives of other cultures. Receive and share elements of culture without jugement and understand relations among them. Use foreign language, inter-comprehension approach.
Related knowledge	Culture-specific concepts, Culture-specific ways of behaviour, International/intercultural relations, Foreign languages, inter-comprehension method.

Adapting	
Definition	Ability to adapt to a new learning environment, to supporting change implemented via new approaches, initiatives, methods, and technologies.
Situation for aquisition	Change his own actions if they are not relevant with versatil situations. Change his own strategies to adapt to new references. Adjust behaviour and communication techniques to other people.
Related knowledge	Communication techniques. New technologies including digital ones. Savoir vivre.

Learning orientation	
Definition	Self-management of learning, understanding of learning strategies, learning needs and the ability to search for learning opportunities.
Situation for aquisition	Assimilate new knowledge and skills. Look for learning opportunities. Plan and monitor the learning process.
Related knowledge	Learning techniques and strategies.

Learning orientation	
	Knowledge on personal learning needs and the related available education and training opportunities.

Teamwork	
Definition	Ability to work effectively with partners who have different competences, personalities, work styles and motivation levels, in order to deliver efficient and effective results.
Situation for aquisition	Constructive communication to progress towards the common objectives. Receive and provide feedback to other members on the shared ideas. Resolve conflict.
Related knowledge	Basic concepts in psychology. Communication techniques. Communication technologies. Methods of teamwork and conflict resolution techniques.

Organisation and time-management	
Definition	Ability to plan activities on the basis of available resources, competences, available tools, with the constraint of deadlines and expected outcomes.
Situation for aquisition	Define plans and priorities, and update them at strategic steps. Check the progress of activities. Refuse to do something that collides with his own plans if it has a lesser priority or importance.
Related knowledge	Time management techniques. Project management. Agile methods.

Table 3 – Description of skills occurring to an international experience provided by UNITA

The above list is based on the results of the Erasmus + projects : KeySTART2Work and European Cross Border Skills – ECBS. The later has been led by UPPA, with UNIZAR and USMB as partners. Some academic staff members of ECBS are currently involved in UNITA, in particular into the Work Package "Mobility4all", responsible of the current report.

In Table 4, the framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities is presented.

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
International learning experience involving a whole classroom and its teacher from each international partner.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness for different points of view. Interest in languages.	UNITA Collaborative International Learning

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
		Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas.	
International learning experience based on online mode.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Learning orientation.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. Curiosity. Motivation to pursue and succeed in learning throughout one's life.	Virtual Mobility
Online learning experience involving a group composed of international students.	Intercultural skills. Adapting.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness for different points of view. Interest in languages.	Inter-comprehension courses. Tandem & Language café
International learning experience based on both online and face-to-face periods ; the later involves a group of international students.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork. Learning orientation.	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness for different points of view. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Curiosity. Willingness to apply the effects of prior learning.	UNITA Blended Intensive Programs
Immersing experience abroad based on a contribution to the socio-economical development of a rural zone.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork. Organisation and time-management	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness for different points of view. Interest in languages. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. The willingness to work with other	UNITA Rural mobility

Type of mobility	Skills	Related attitudes	UNITA mobility
		people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Assertiveness. Responsibility. Proactiveness.	
Online learning experience based on focused topics internationally co-designed, with targeted learning outcomes.	Adapting. Learning orientation.	Openness to new experiences. Curiosity. Motivation to pursue and succeed in learning throughout one's life. Willingness to apply the effects of prior learning.	UNITA microcredentials
Collaborative experience of work involving international groups, aiming to promote European values towards educational and non academic people.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Teamwork. Organisation and time-management	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness for different points of view. Openness to new experiences. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Assertiveness. Responsibility.	European citizenship workshops
International contests involving multi-cultural groups of students from various academic disciplines and levels.	Intercultural skills. Adapting. Learning orientation. Teamwork. Organisation and time-management	Appreciation of cultural diversity. Openness for different points of view. Openness to new experiences. Readiness to change behaviours depending on the situation. Curiosity. Willingness to apply the effects of prior learning. The willingness to work with other people. Openness to other people's ideas. Responsibility. Assertiveness. Responsibility. Proactiveness.	UNITA Ideathon - hackathon

Table 4 - Framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities

From the selected skills in Table 3 and the list of UNITA mobilities of Sec. 2.1, the main result of the current report is presented in Table 4. Some elements of perspectives related to the topic are presented in the concluding section.

3. Perspectives

Although the conceptual framework of skills developed during the UNITA mobilities is designed, its implementation within each institution may face some practical obstacles. These ones are mainly due to local practices:

- First of all, many frameworks of skills already exist for some academic communities. For example, in language courses, the celebrated Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR, describes the competences for language acquisition in very precise way. The related grid of language skill levels is intensively used in both academic and vocational worlds.

- In the academic syllabus, learning outcomes are provided for each training. In the description, aquired skills are identified. However, in most cases, these syllabus are filled in by the responsible teacher without any reference guide associated to skills description.

- At the European level, the European Commission provides a digital platform for assessing the digital skills, thanks to the Europass service. The database related to the skills framework is based on the project European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations, ESCO. It provides a list of almost 14.000 skills, divided into four categories (knowledge ; language skills and knowledge ; skills ; transversal skills and competences). Each category has up to 12 sub-classifications. Extracting skills related to an international mobility experience from this framework remains tedious. Identify the consistency with other well-established frameworks, as the CEFR or national , may be challenging. Recast the academic syllabus within this framework may be unaffordable in practice.

- On the other side, in order to be effective towards the vocational world, the description of competences, theoretical and practical knowledges and attitudes gained during a formation, has to be accurate and as relevant as possible.

- In addition to the lack of unification among the skills frameworks, the question on the valorization of skills related an international experience remains. Up to now, the European Diploma Supplement is an option, as a UNITA version can be built (Task 6.3.2), but its recognition remains weak.

A framework of skills developed during UNITA mobilities is provided. A conceptual result has been produced, with still some lacks due to the huge diversity of contextes and applications. At present, the practical use of this framework is associated to the new Europass promotion, the International Personal Career Plan activity and the implementation into the UNITA Diploma Supplement.