

EUA L&T Agenda 2030

**A strategic framework to strengthen
universities' first mission**

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Preface

Through the launch of its Learning & Teaching (L&T) activities eight years ago, the European University Association (EUA) committed to putting a spotlight on L&T. At a time when universities were faced with increasing demands to enhance their first mission and innovate L&T, the Association set out to offer its members a platform through which to focus on higher education's first mission, in the hope of creating an international community of teaching professionals and leadership engaging in vibrant exchange and collaboration. Another aim was to bring education and research closer together in a way that allows them to mutually nurture each other.

EUA sees this community as always including students, not only as end beneficiaries and the *raison d'être* of higher education, but also as partners. Education extends beyond the acquisition of a qualification, and higher education in particular comprises more than *formation*, if I may use an expression from my native France, meaning the “forming” of an individual for the purpose of one specific application, such as in a profession. The goal of higher education is to put students at the centre and equip them with the tools they need for their future path as learners, professionals and citizens. This understanding of education as being centred on the learner and ultimately serving the learner lies at the core of EUA's work.

Building on EUA's past L&T activities, this L&T Agenda 2030 heralds a new stage in their implementation by outlining strategic key themes on which the Association's work will focus for the upcoming five years. These themes are partially new, while others have been addressed in past activities, but they have all been identified as (still) particularly pertinent in the foreseeable future. The overarching aims of EUA's activities remain the same as eight years ago. At a time of funding pressures, evolving priorities and demands for more flexibility in education, it is more vital than ever that EUA regularly offers opportunities for higher education institutions' representatives to exchange in a European peer-to-peer community of practice in L&T.

It is my hope that this Agenda will contribute to keeping the momentum alive and support universities in enhancing their education provision. As the result of multiple international consultation processes, it reflects a collective European ambition to ensure that the quality of student learning will remain front and centre in higher education. By promoting a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and knowledge-sharing, EUA aims to empower its members to become leaders in educational excellence, ultimately benefitting not only their students but also the wider society.

Prof. Anne Lequy

Chair of EUA Learning & Teaching Steering Committee (2022-2025)

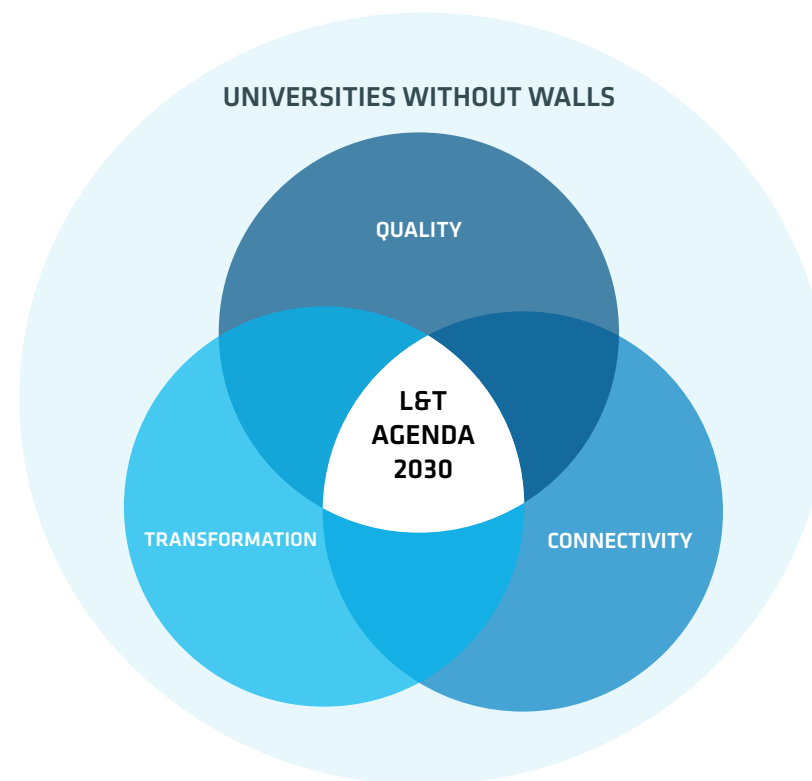


Introduction

Purpose and objective

The L&T Agenda 2030 constitutes a strategic framework for EUA's L&T activities up until the end of 2030, defining the thematic foci of the Association's work in the field of L&T for the upcoming years. Although the Agenda's primary purpose is to guide EUA's activities in L&T, it may also provide inspiration to the Association's members. The Agenda's thematic foci have been identified in close collaboration with EUA's membership, in order to ensure they reflect the most relevant issues in the field of higher education L&T within a five-year horizon, thus enabling EUA to adequately support its members in achieving the strategic goals of their higher education provision.

The publication of this Agenda is the culmination of a work process started in late 2023. Its elements, notably the three focus areas (see Graphic 1) and how they are defined and approached, were identified by EUA's L&T Steering Committee through several brainstorming workshops that took place over the course of 2024. These elements were further refined through online focus groups and workshops with members of EUA's L&T community, most importantly members of its L&T Thematic Peer Groups (cohorts 2017–2024) and the EUA Council, as well as participants in the 2025 European L&T Forum, who all shared their insights into which topics will play a major role in their institutional and national context in the foreseeable future, and how EUA could best support them in addressing these topics.



Context

EUA is committed to supporting efforts at the level of European higher education to enhance L&T. Through its [L&T activities](#), officially launched in 2017, the Association has been promoting the following key messages, which are also reflected in [EUA's position paper on L&T](#):

- ❖ Universities and their members need to drive developments in L&T, and this requires close collaboration with all stakeholder groups, including national and European policy makers.
- ❖ L&T activities need to be geared towards student belonging, learning and success, to respond to the changing needs of our societies, and to contribute to the advancement of academic and professional knowledge and skills and students' personal development.
- ❖ Enhancing L&T requires systemic and inclusive institutional approaches, with a clear institutional strategy involving all relevant stakeholders, to ensure high-quality, consistent and effective L&T.
- ❖ Systematic staff development and better recognition of teaching are central to the academic profession.
- ❖ European and international cooperation should be explored to further enhance L&T.
- ❖ Institutional autonomy, academic freedom and sustainable funding are essential for the development of L&T.

Additionally, an overarching key message of EUA's L&T activities is that parity of esteem and systemic links between L&T and other university missions, notably research, are a vital precondition for universities to succeed and fulfil their societal role. This Agenda builds on these key messages, while introducing a more targeted, longer-term view on how EUA can best support its membership in putting these key messages into action. The Agenda is thus not a revolution, but an evolution of EUA's L&T activities. Accordingly, the core components of EUA's L&T activities, and in particular the European L&T Forum and [Thematic Peer Groups](#), will continue, while their strategic themes are defined in a five-year horizon through this Agenda.

The Agenda was created within the context of, and thus aligned with, two central documents that define the Association's general vision and goals: [Universities without walls – A vision for 2030](#) (published in 2021) and [Europe's universities shaping the future – EUA Strategic Plan](#) (published in 2020 with an [Addendum in 2023](#)), notably its four priorities: 1) effective advocacy, 2) horizon scanning, 3) European solidarity, and 4) enabling enhanced performance. Of note, in alignment with its Strategic Plan (Priority 1) and its 2030 vision, *Universities without walls*, EUA also aims to support institutions in helping to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through the implementation of this Agenda.

EUA L&T Agenda 2030

Three focus areas form the basic framework of EUA's L&T Agenda 2030, establishing the overarching values and goals of EUA's work on L&T over the upcoming years: ensuring quality, connectivity and transformation in and through L&T.

These three focus areas cover three different yet interconnected perspectives:

- ❖ Individual: Students and teachers are those who, among many actors, have a stake in L&T and thus play the primary role in L&T.
- ❖ Institutional: EUA's work generally targets institutions as a whole, and as a system-level player in all higher education missions, including education. This perspective includes matters pertaining to strategic and structural approaches of the institution, such as university policies, but also the leadership perspective.
- ❖ Societal: In view of the context in which institutions operate and the great societal role they fulfil, it is crucial to consider the societal perspective on the identified focus areas. Including, but also extending beyond, higher education's third mission, this perspective includes considerations related to the universities' local, regional, national and international context.

In daily practice, all three focus areas and the three perspectives from which

to view them will be closely interconnected and frequently overlap. Thus, in the implementation of its L&T activities, EUA will also aim to implement its L&T Agenda 2030 in a holistic, interlinked manner, for example by addressing intersections of staff profiles (e.g. teaching and administrative staff) and areas of work (e.g. education provision and quality assurance), as well as the diversity of its membership. In addition, the Association will seek to ensure a holistic perspective in the implementation of its L&T activities by drawing on intersections with its work in other fields, including, but not limited to, quality assurance, leadership development and funding. Finally, continued collaboration with key partners such as the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association for the Applied Sciences in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) will ensure concerted efforts to support European higher education in providing high-quality, well-connected L&T that is ready for internally and externally driven transformation.

Focus area 1 - Quality

Keeping the student front and centre

Ensuring the quality of L&T is a basic precondition for achieving the primary mission of higher education. At the same time, high-quality L&T is an evergreen goal that requires continuous attention and efforts. Quality is a dynamic and context-sensitive concept and, as such, it evolves. EUA's [*Universities without walls*](#) envisions that “[a]ll universities will strive for continuous improvement of their activities in all missions in order to deliver high quality in service to society” (p. 7). As such, quality L&T is defined by being attuned to a changing society as well as cutting-edge research, and always putting the needs of students front and centre, especially as those needs evolve.

WHAT DOES QUALITY IN L&T MEAN?

From an *individual* perspective

From the individual student's perspective, quality means that a university is **inclusive** and **student-centred**, and thus gives due consideration to the different learning needs of students of diverse ages and profiles as well as cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, covering all stages of the student life cycle. Admission requirements are **easily accessible and understandable**, and do not prevent qualified applicants from pursuing higher education. Student progression is characterised through **adequate induction and guidance**, thus enabling students to succeed in their studies and take ownership of their own progress. Learning opportunities are sufficiently **flexible** to accommodate the diverse learning needs and profiles of students, for example through hybrid or blended education delivery, as well as diverse subject contents and educational methods. Assessment is thoughtfully designed and **quality-assured**, and is sufficiently diverse and flexible to **authentically assess** the knowledge, skills and competences that students have acquired and how they have grown through their studies, including regular appreciative feedback. Students' learning outcomes, as reflected in **competence-based curricula**, prepare them adequately for their contribution to society, their profession and the broader labour market. **Twenty-first-century skills** such as **critical and analytical thinking**, **intercultural awareness**, **capacity for evidence-informed**, **academic debate**, and **creative and innovation skills** are graduate attributes across all study programmes.

From a teacher's perspective, quality means that teachers receive **adequate preparation** and **continuous professional development** that allows them to expand their pedagogical skill set. Teacher development gives due consideration to blended and transdisciplinary approaches, and fosters a culture of openness to new developments and changes. The professional environment supports, as needed, **experimentation** and **risk-taking** with regard to new pedagogies and **evidence-based insights** from research on L&T, while ensuring that quality teaching and student learning remain front and centre. At the same time, teachers' feedback and ideas for improvement feed into institutional processes in a transparent way. Training gives teachers the opportunity to grow professionally and develop **leadership skills** in L&T.

Finally, quality L&T also includes **student and staff wellbeing**. Students and staff should be able to strike a balance between work, leisure time, study and care duties, as well as understanding how to “slow down” and focus on quality at a time of accelerating change.

WHAT DOES QUALITY IN L&T MEAN?

From an *institutional* perspective

A university offering high-quality L&T is an **open and inclusive space** for **professional and personal growth**, bringing together the educational community, including students, teachers and other staff members, as well as **partners and stakeholders** from a local, regional, national and international context. The diverse perspectives of all these parties are a valuable contribution to free, unprejudiced and evidence-based discussions that lead to new insights. The university adequately leverages its exchange with stakeholders and decision makers at all levels, from the local to the international, to demonstrate in an evidence-based manner the **impact** of its education provision and thus increase **awareness of the societal value of higher education**.

Parity of esteem between all university missions is a vital precondition for quality L&T. This has an impact on how **staff recruitment** and **academic careers** are shaped and requires, among other things, that due attention and acknowledgement are given to teaching excellence and efforts to grow professionally in that area. Agile, adequately integrated and well-staffed **L&T centres** support the institution in continuously improving the quality of the university's education provision. University **leadership** is keenly aware of the need for parity of esteem between the university missions and takes adequate steps to strengthen the first mission.

In its **management and decision-making processes**, the institution uses **evidence** from various types of research and administrative data to take informed decisions in line with its strategic priorities and goals, as well as the needs and interests of its stakeholders. In doing so, the university remains open to revising existing processes and thus to **continuous improvement**.

From a *societal* perspective

Taking the societal responsibility of higher education as a starting point, quality L&T means that the university is **responsible, responsive, agile** and **future-oriented**, embracing new opportunities to serve society, especially as the circumstances in which it operates may change. This requires institutional policies and practices that value and support the diversity and various learning needs of students from different backgrounds by offering **flexible learning paths** and formats, including **recognition of prior learning** and **micro-credentials**. The university proactively supports **lifelong learning**, including through **upskilling and reskilling** opportunities that are visible and easily accessible to non-traditional learners. Quality L&T is also defined through a **societally engaged** rationale behind L&T and the targeted development of skills that promote mutual respect and empirical debate.

The university upholds and protects **democratic values** such as **freedom of speech** and **academic freedom**, including through its L&T. In order to be able to keep fulfilling this role, the university ensures that its graduates, in turn, understand and safeguard democratic values.

Sustainable public **funding** models for higher education allow the sector to adequately fulfil its role in educating workforces and citizens.

Focus area 2 - Connectivity

Linking disciplines, peers and stakeholders

EUA's vision of [Universities without walls](#) for 2030 defines higher education institutions as “cooperative and networked institutions locally, nationally and internationally. As such, they continue to build bridges between countries, cultures and sectors” (p. 5). Connectivity is an important ability for universities that spans several levels. Universities need to successfully connect across different missions, disciplines and professions, within the institution, and beyond, with a wide range of actors, from local to global. This enables universities to generate and share the knowledge and learning that academia, society and the economy require, and to innovate education content and provision, anticipating and responding to the changing local and global learning needs of students.

WHAT DOES **CONNECTIVITY** IN L&T MEAN?

From an *individual* perspective

From an individual student's perspective, connectivity covers both the academic and social aspects of the learning experience, as it ensures that students see themselves as active and appreciated partners in their own education while also having a **sense of belonging** within the institutional community beyond the classroom. Academically speaking, connectivity implies that students are actively involved in the **co-creation of learning experiences** through taking responsibility for their learning and through their input into course design, content development and assessment design. This empowers students to actively pursue and curate their education. Socially speaking, connectivity means that students are empowered to engage with their peers and other members of the **institutional community** through **non-curricular activities**. Both aspects support the **human aspect of education**, i.e. supportive interpersonal relationships between students and teachers.

From an individual teacher's perspective, connectivity is essential for the development of a sense of belonging to a **professional community**, sustaining teachers' motivation and encouraging systematic inquiry about L&T. The professional environment within the institution prioritises **collaboration over competition**, supporting diverse teaching teams and encouraging peer coordination, exchange and learning, as well as the **sharing of (open) educational resources**.

For both students and teachers, adequate **physical and virtual spaces** for exchange and collaboration facilitate engagement, accessibility and flexibility in education.

WHAT DOES CONNECTIVITY IN L&T MEAN?

From an *institutional* perspective

Institutional connectivity with regard to L&T implies a culture of collaboration, by which universities proactively establish **joint educational programmes and activities** and share expertise and resources with **academic and non-academic partners** from diverse geographical and professional backgrounds, thus maintaining the spirit of a university without walls.

Internationalisation in L&T yields a range of different approaches and means for a university's education mission, such as collaborative degree programmes, transnational education and virtual exchanges. Well-connected universities emphasise a **strategic approach to internationalisation**, invest in international partnerships, and investigate aspects such as geographic priorities, funding sources and recruitment policies for staff. A strategic approach to internationalisation, based on targeted prioritisation, also ensures that international cooperation is **sustainable in the long term** and includes, for example, **internationalisation at home** and sustainably funded **mobility programmes** for students and staff alike.

Within the institution, **interdisciplinary collaboration** that explores topics from multiple angles fosters critical thinking and holistic understanding of these topics among both academics and students. This approach prepares students for complex, multifaceted challenges that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Throughout all disciplines, adequate **links between research and L&T** are ensured.

From a *societal* perspective

In terms of a societal perspective, **community engagement** is a way for higher education to demonstrate its direct connection with society. This can be achieved by facilitating opportunities for students to engage with local communities through projects, partnerships or service-learning initiatives that address community needs and foster **social and societal responsibility** among graduates. Such activities strengthen ties between the university and its surrounding communities.

Furthermore, connectivity means that higher education is adequately reflective of and responsive to the broader external ecosystem, from a sustainable and long-term perspective. In support of L&T that seeks to address global challenges, the curriculum is designed to promote **global citizenship** by incorporating diverse perspectives from different cultures, regions and contexts, reflecting the interconnectedness of the global community. This helps to cultivate **cultural competences, empathy and a broader worldview** among students. In this context, the diverse academic disciplines and how they contribute to societal progress are equally valued and supported. To ensure continuous improvement and adaptation to the educational needs of an evolving global society, teachers are supported with ongoing professional development opportunities focused on innovative teaching methods, technology integration, interdisciplinary approaches, intercultural competence and community engagement strategies.

Focus area 3 - Transformation

Enabling excellence in dynamic contexts

Universities need to be resilient, agile and proactive to maintain relevance in their contexts, especially as these very same contexts are dynamic and face change, for example due to evolving demographics, economies and labour markets, the emergence of new technologies, and acute political, environmental, social and health-related crises. In such situations, universities must draw upon their capacity to transform. EUA's [Universities without walls](#) defines them as “an open, transformative space for common knowledge production” that will “shape the future of a knowledge-driven society” (p. 5). Yet in order to fulfil this function, universities need to be in a position to quickly and comprehensively adapt their L&T approaches and resources, intra- and inter-institutional cooperation practices, and connections to society and its various actors, if and as required. Such transformative processes are intrinsically systemic and may thus also concern the institutional governance and strategy, action plans, education policies, curricula, regulations related to programme design, and staff and academic careers, including training and assessment.

WHAT DOES TRANSFORMATION IN L&T MEAN?

From an *individual* perspective

From the perspective of an individual student, transformation means that universities stay informed and adapt to students' evolving learning needs, expectations and interests. This adaptation extends beyond **innovative pedagogical methods, resources and tools** to include access to the most suitable infrastructure, materials and services. It also implies a need to remain attentive to the **changing learning capacities and behaviours** of students. Embracing a genuine student-centred perspective is essential for **maintaining the added value and appeal of higher education**.

Teachers equip students with a **solution-oriented** capacity to understand and appropriately react to and leverage transformation, preparing them to manage potential change in their future lives. With this in mind, it is crucial from a student's perspective that both the education they receive and their instructors are adequately open to transformation.

From the perspective of an individual teacher, transformation entails receiving **continuous support and professional development** throughout their career. This support is essential for enhancing, through an evidence-informed approach, the quality of their teaching approaches and setups. It enables teachers to respond to societal changes, such as the rise and ubiquitous role of artificial intelligence in society, and to ensure that high-quality L&T evolves together with society.

Among teachers, there are frequently **early adopters and innovators**, whose efforts are proactively supported through institutional openness, the freedom to experiment and **adequate acknowledgement** of their contributions to teaching innovation.

WHAT DOES TRANSFORMATION IN L&T MEAN?

From an *institutional* perspective

From an institutional perspective, transformation means that universities are responsive to societal changes, challenges and demands. Universities that seek to be resilient in the face of significant and externally driven changes deploy **foresight strategies** in order to anticipate such changes and foster **institutional agility**.

They have a well-grounded and visionary **L&T strategy, flexible frameworks** for education provision and a sound ecosystem of **bottom-up and top-down approaches** for managing and communicating innovation and **managing change** within. All of these mechanisms enable universities to respond to changing circumstances using a forward-thinking, strategic approach instead of relying on ad hoc or emergency responses that may lack strategic vision. Embracing transformation also means that universities **harness the potential of disruptive processes**, such as the digital transformation, to enhance the institution's capacity to provide effective and high-quality L&T, thus turning a challenge into an opportunity.

Their **leadership** is well equipped with the skills, capacities and remit needed to effectively steer the institution through ongoing change and towards future transformations.

From a *societal* perspective

With universities as societal hubs of education, knowledge and innovation, transformation in L&T also implies universities **contributing to shaping societal transformations**, such as the **digital and green transition**, including through the knowledge and skills transmitted through education. Universities educate responsible and ethical citizens capable of effectively tackling unexpected challenges.

Collectively, institutions can contribute to **policy making** and can **advocate** strongly in areas with a significant impact on their strategic objectives for L&T and how education is provided.

Implementing the EUA L&T Agenda 2030

Until the end of 2030, this Agenda and its three focus areas will inform EUA's L&T activities, in particular the following elements.

↻ European L&T Forum

This recurring international event brings together university staff, policy makers and students to discuss current issues and good practice in L&T, thereby facilitating:

- quality through regular exchange on good practice and innovation in the field of L&T;
- connectivity by sustaining an international community of peers;
- transformation through regular exchange on new trends and developments affecting the circumstances under which L&T are conducted.

↻ L&T Thematic Peer Groups

These groups of peers gather selected EUA member universities to discuss and explore good practice and lessons learnt in organising and implementing L&T at the institutional level. Through this bottom-up approach, the groups support:

- quality by investigating current issues in L&T from a problem-based starting point;
- connectivity through an internationally minded peer-to-peer methodology identifying potential solutions;
- transformation by focusing on the institutional and organisational level of L&T, thus working towards structural and systemic solutions.

↻ European-level projects with a focus on L&T

EUA regularly coordinates Erasmus+ funded projects. In so doing, the Association enables:

- quality by investigating specific issues or methodologies in the field of L&T through data collection and an in-depth, evidence-based approach;
- connectivity by gathering the expertise of an international partnership and harnessing that partnership's extended network to secure insights and engagement from beyond EUA's membership;
- transformation by drawing on a diversity of contexts and practices, thus helping to identify potential new challenges and developments on the horizon and supporting leadership in L&T to innovate higher education.

↻ Policy monitoring and advocacy

On a European level, EUA monitors and contributes to shaping policies and funding programmes. EUA also advocates for universities' interests based on the available evidence base, for the benefit of its membership's evolving needs and activities. Through its work, the Association fosters:

- quality by advocating for supportive policy and funding frameworks that help to enhance the parity of esteem between university missions;
- connectivity by linking insights from the institutional, national and European level;
- transformation by advocating for sufficiently flexible frameworks that respect universities' autonomy and enable them to be agile and resilient.

➔ Information provision and dissemination

EUA keeps its members and the broader public abreast of its work and new developments in the field of L&T. This crucial communication work enhances:

- quality by sharing good practice in organising L&T, from the practitioner to the institutional and national level;
- connectivity by enabling EUA's L&T community to benefit from key findings from the Association's full range of work;
- transformation by alerting universities to new developments on the horizon.

These elements have formed the core of EUA's L&T activities since their establishment in 2017. They will continue to do so, since this Agenda is not intended to expand the L&T activities as such, but rather to provide them with a strategic thematic framework up until 2030, when new thematic foci will be defined for the L&T activities. At the same time, EUA considers its L&T Agenda a living, future-oriented framework that can be adapted to urgent new challenges and needs as they arise and can reach out to new target groups through novel formats and channels of communication. These challenges and needs may be disruptive circumstances that require swift action, or novel policy developments in the European Education Area and European Higher Education Area (EHEA). EUA is committed to serving the needs of its members and will continue to support them in their efforts to strengthen the first mission of higher education.

GLOSSARY

In its work, EUA understands and applies the terms outlined below as follows:

Internationalisation at home is understood as the integration of international elements into the L&T offer in order to ensure that all students – regardless of whether they are physically mobile or not – benefit from an internationalised education. This may include the adoption of international content in curricula, recruiting international staff and students, enhancing the English-language education offer, and a general consideration of international trends in L&T (e.g. full implementation of the Bologna reforms in the framework of the EHEA).

A micro-credential is understood as “a small volume of learning certified by a credential. In the EHEA context, it can be offered by higher education institutions or recognised by them using recognition procedures in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention or recognition of prior learning, where applicable. A micro-credential is designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills or competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials have explicitly defined learning outcomes at a QF-EHEA/NQF level, an indication of associated workload in ECTS credits, assessment methods and criteria, and are subject to quality assurance in line with the ESG”. This is the definition developed by the Erasmus+ funded [MICROBOL project](#).

Open educational resources are understood as academic resources specifically created to be freely used and shared by end-users.

Student-centred learning is understood as a holistic view of education, as focusing on the learner, and as making learning not only, or primarily, about the transfer of knowledge, but about deeper understanding and critical thinking. Teachers share the responsibility for learning with students, with a focus on students’ autonomy and proactive attitude in constructing their own meaning and independently learning, discovering and reflecting.

Recognition of prior learning is understood as the formal act of recognising the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning.

Twenty-first-century skills are understood as transversal, future-oriented skills, i.e. cross-cutting skills that are not specific to any profession or discipline, which equip students for working, living, further learning and contributing to further shaping and advancing society, in our current age of technological, economic, societal and other changes.

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The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the voice of European universities is heard wherever decisions are being taken that will impact their activities.

The Association provides unique expertise in higher education and research as well as a forum for exchange of ideas and good practice among universities. The results of EUA's work are made available to members and stakeholders through conferences, seminars, websites and publications.

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