



# **First Coimbra Group High-Level Workshop on “Lifelong Learning and Employability”**

**Case studies at Coimbra Group Universities and their  
potential generalization**

**“Promoting employability through higher education”**

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# ‘GRADUATE JOBS’ VIA HIGHER EDUCATION

**The goal:** acquiring relevant, expendable dynamic knowledge in the course of higher education

This means developing specific competencies/skills instrumental to employment without sacrificing academic standards

**How can we achieve this goal?**

- ✓ **adapting curricula** within HE
- ✓ connecting the adaptation of curricula to **work-based learning and intense cooperation** between Universities and business leaders



# ADAPTING AND ANTICIPATING

- ✓ Dialogue between stakeholders should be established in order to develop **transversal skills**
- ✓ Embedding employability in higher education needs close cooperation with stakeholders **outside academia**, especially actors within the labour market
- ✓ Priority should be given to the analysis of how university curricula can be
  - 1) developed and
  - 2) intertwined with the acquisition of sets of skills expendable in the labour market and constantly evolving



# A COOPERATIVE SCHEME

- ✓ We have aimed at matching the experience of Northeastern University's students entering the workplace with up to **18 months of professional**, career-related experience due to their co-op and experiential learning experience
- ✓ This approach is based on the idea that an **equal partnership** should be created:
  - **Students are paid a wage** (but do not require company benefits, such as health insurance)
  - Students must have **broad exposure** to rules, mechanisms, projects and people in the **workplace**.
  - The energy of talented students eager to learn are expected to **emerge** and make a difference in the **workspace**

- ✓ **It's a consortia of Italian universities** created precisely to identify such **sets of skills** by collecting data regarding **graduates** entering and moving within the **job market**
- ✓ Counts **74 Universities** and represents about **90% of Italian graduates**

## Main Tasks:

- ✓ **Annual survey of graduates' profiles** (*internal effectiveness of the higher education institutions*)
- ✓ **Annual survey of graduates' employment condition 1/3/5 years after graduation** (*external effectiveness of the higher education institutions*)
- ✓ **Online database of more than 2.5 million CVs** contributing to the understanding of the matching of supply and demand of graduates
- ✓ **Internationalisation:** skills and research activities in a global perspective, cooperating with EU Countries in line with the Lisbon Strategy, and also non-EU countries, particularly in the Mediterranean basin and most recently in Asia

# TOWARDS THE PAVIA MODEL

Experience of Cooperative Education and Career Development at Northeastern University has provided a very significant precedent in elaborating the the Pavia model

## Why?

It has inspired our University, regional/national business leaders and local authorities to reflect on how we can ease the access of academic talent to the workplace and create new competences at the same time

## Assuming that:

We can provide our graduates with a level of critical thinking and **problem-solving skills enabling them** to contribute from the very beginning to the performance of the host organization



## UNIVENTURE PROJECT: A UNIPV BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

### OBJECTIVE

- stimulate **entrepreneurship and innovation** by combining different but complementary skills in **academia, business and industry** ( including PMI and startups)

### HOW

- innovators collaborate with students in drafting a business plan to be presented at the key event: **“FAIR OF IDEAS”**

### AWARD

- n. 1 award of **€ 10.000** for the best *Business Plan*;
- n. 2 awards of **€ 5.000 each** intended to support patent applications or the software development necessary for the proposed business project

### DONOR

Municipality of Pavia

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

- anyone who has **an innovative entrepreneurial idea** and is interested in turning it into business in the short term
- Established **Startup or micro/SME registered** with an annual revenue, which in the last 3 years has remained lower than € 150.000 euro
- Preference is given to projects led – as project leader - by a student at UNIP



How does it work?

***This is not a standard Master Degree Program offering more or less extended periods of work experience***

- ✓ This is an integrated experience of learning and acquiring professional competences within a common framework that academia and business come to share
- ✓ **Degree Plus** is designed over 5 semesters instead of 4: 2 of them aimed at **acquiring academic AND professional competences**
- ✓ In practice the hosting business/industry partner outside our University negotiate and commits itself to a program with specific learning goals that is bound to be constantly reviewed and updated
- ✓ Perspective students can be involved in this process getting to know business/industry partners of the university and their activities





✓ Students enrolled as part-time

- ✓ 5 semesters
- ✓ 12 months internship
- ✓ 7 Master programmes
  - ✓ Advanced Biotechnology
  - ✓ Chemistry
  - ✓ Electronic Engineering
  - ✓ Philosophy
  - ✓ International Business and Entrepreneurship
  - ✓ Mathematics (new)
  - ✓ Physical Sciences (new)
- ✓ 40 Companies involved

- ✓ 500 € per month basic salary
- ✓ Only the best (5 to 10 students)

*Selection process:*

- *students' curriculum*
  - *personal disposition (motivation, capacity to adapt, etc.)*
  - *interview with the project partner organizations*
- ✓ 2 Tutors: 1 academic mentor and 1 company programme manager supporting and advising students also in view of their final dissertation
- ✓ 2 assessments (midway and final)

Objectives gained by the student both on a learning as well as on a professional level





# OUR PARTNERS+

YOOX  
NET-A-PORTER  
GROUP



Science For A Better Life



# COLLABORATION UNIPV - ACCENTURE OF SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Unipv signed a two-year cooperative agreement with Accenture aimed at students' professional training

UNIPV hosts:

- **Seminars offered by ACCENTURE employees on topics related to technological innovation and business and open to UNIPV students:**
  - ✓ The future is now: how to prepare for a changing job
  - ✓ Internet of things: building a connected world

- **CMS - Career management skills**

The course consisted of 4 meetings discussing the following topics:

- ✓ Self awareness and problem solving
- ✓ Innovative processes and bankruptcy management
- ✓ Leadership styles (including case simulation)
- ✓ Job interview via storytelling

- **Recruiting Days**

**Business intelligence skills of young talented candidates was examined offering them** the opportunity of meeting Accenture professionals and be potentially selected for job interviews



# PROJECTING INTERNATIONALLY OUR IDEAS AND EXPERIENCE

## Merging ad hoc curricula in higher education and traineeship strategies

Partner Countries involved: **Lebanon**

### CONSORTIUM

University of Pavia, University of Poitiers, University of Tampere

- LAU, LU, Université Antonine – UA, LIU, USEK, AUB
- UNIMED
- European Association Career Guidance
- Chambers of Commerce business organizations from Lebanon
- Education for Employment



### OBJECTIVE

- building on **best practices** already implemented both in **EU and MENA regions**
- **rethinking the curriculum** of master courses in partner HEIs via a process of **comprehensive involvement of local business and industry**
- Introducing **internship placement as a component of the curricula** as well as **modules aimed at the acquisition of soft skills** by creating partnerships with both business and NGOs



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# CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ **Our Degree+ model** has just been launched and is a **work in process**
- ✓ It revolves around a basic idea: **promoting cooperative joint higher education/business & industry teaching/training projects such as Degree+ or the Accenture initiative**
- ✓ We aim at cooperating with academic and business partners as well as local authorities and **NGOs at local, regional, European and global levels**
- ✓ Our capacity building project in the **MENA region** aims at working closely with University and business partners in areas characterized by the **highest level of graduate unemployment**

