Poster n.3

Title: Non-traditional students at the University: the M23 case in two HEI in Portugal

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Topic: Learning contexts

Type: Case study

Abstract

Non-traditional mature students (NTS) older than 23 years, in Portugal, were given the chance to enter University through a new form of access, called M23.

In this poster we present the case study of M23 learning contexts, fostered by two Portuguese Universities (University of Aveiro and University of Algarve) that means to portrait the interaction between different actors - administrative, teaching and learning, RVPLE and research - of the NTS trajectories in these Universities.

We begin by presenting a brief description of M23 access, emphasising the relevance of the recognition and validation of prior learning and experiences (RVPLE) procedures that embodies the entire process, as it is directed to the entering of those who have some sort of professional experience. On the sequence, an innovative “one-stop shop” was created in the Longlife Learning Unit (Uinfoc) of the University of Aveiro, where M23 candidates deal with all the related administrative procedures. A schematic description of the design and internal articulation of this office is also presented, as it constitutes an example of good practices, contributing to the well-being of the M23 candidates.

From the individual contact with the students at Uinfoc and the feed-back from teachers, some obstacles to the progression of this students in their trajectory inside the University became apparent. A research project called “Non-traditional students in HEI: searching solutions to improve the academic success” (Project PTDC/CPE-CED/108739/2008, FCT) was designed by the two Universities that identified those constrains, with the purpose of clearly identify them and design measures to be implemented at various levels (administrative, social, curricular,...) in order to contribute to the success of this students and provide specific support they may need. This project is now ongoing.