



2023

IN 23 PAGES

EUROPE'S LEADING
INSTITUTIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR
ONLINE, OPEN
AND **DISTANCE**
HIGHER EDUCATION

EADTU // ANNUAL REPORT



WEBINAR WEEKS

EMPOWER supports collaboration and sharing of expertise between European universities and provides specialist advice and guidance for institutional leaders on the latest developments in online, open and flexible education. Last year, EMPOWER experts supported two webinar weeks on a diversity of topics.

QA AND AI FOR THE FUTURE OF MICROCREDENTIALS



The growth of microcredentials reflects a shift towards a more agile, skills-based approach to education and professional development. Microcredentials are expected to play an increasingly prominent role in empowering individuals to stay relevant, adaptable, and competitive in the ever-changing workforce.

In this webinar week, EADTU explored the promising future of microcredentials by looking at the status of quality assurance as well as the potential of artificial intelligence for microcredentials.

With the rise of online learning platforms and virtual classrooms, keeping students actively involved can be a challenge. Fostering engagement helps combat feelings of detachment and enhances the overall learning experience.

In this Empower webinar week, EADTU explored student engagement from the perspective of Learning Design Practices (Day 1) and Immersive Technologies (Day 2).

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT: IMMERSING STUDENTS IN ONLINE LEARNING



MCE stands for Modularisation of Continuing Education and Professionalisation through Micro-credentials. In 2023, the MCE consortium produced six reports and actively participated in international events, including the ICDE conference in Costa Rica, where it hosted a workshop on policy development, and the International Micro-credentials Summit in Barcelona, presenting data collected from the project and engaging in discussions about the future of micro-credentials.

REPORTS 2023

MCE is committed to involving its policymakers and institutional leaders in shaping the future of education through an evidence-based approach. This approach assists each university within the consortium in defining and implementing the most effective policies related to modular offerings.

The first two reports published in 2023 explore the learners' perspective on micro-credentials, identifying formats that align with their preferences and needs (D2.1 and D2.2). The third report offers recommendations to universities (HEIs) on developing policies for micro-credentials (D2.3), which, if adopted, could support HEIs in contributing to the advancement of lifelong learning and professional development.

The fourth and fifth reports focus on the current institutional qualifications for Continuing Education and Professional Development (CEPD) and micro-credentials within the partnership (D3.2) and compare institutional policies, strategies, and frameworks for CEPD, aligning with the EC Recommendation on micro-credentials (D3.1).

The sixth report presents 19 examples of micro-credentials available within the MCE, providing conclusions and recommendations for partner institutions. These insights are particularly valuable for the pilot studies initiated in 2023, which will continue into 2024 and the local empowering events.

Visit **this page** for all outcomes of the project!



**Modularisation of Continuing
Education and professionalisation
by Micro-credentials**

WELCOME, TÉLUQ !

EADTU is excited to share that TÉLUQ, based in Canada, is now part of the association.

We've invited Alexandre Delong (Director of the International Office) to introduce TÉLUQ to us (below).

We welcome Télug to EADTU!

"Université TÉLUQ is a Canadian public university located in the province of Quebec. Headquartered in Quebec City, Quebec's capital, it also has offices in Montreal, the province's metropolis. The university was founded in 1972 with a mandate to increase access to higher education. It is the only French-language university in North America modelled exclusively on a distance education approach. The university welcomes around 20 000 students, who particularly appreciate the flexibility offered by its continuous admission system and asynchronous courses.

With over a hundred professors and almost 300 tutors, the university has four departments (Business Administration; Humanities, Languages and Communication; Science and Technology; Education) and offers more than 430 courses and 125 programs. Université TÉLUQ is also a research university. Its main research areas include : Teaching and learning in the age of digital media; Intelligent systems and information science and technology; Social functioning, life courses, human thinking and interpersonal relations; Social, organizational and professional change in a context of internationalization, computerization and multiculturalism"



CLINICS & MENTORSHIPS

EUROPEAN DIGITAL EDUCATION HUB

The European Digital Education Hub (EDEH) is an initiative of the European Commission, funded by the Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027) and operated by a consortium of eleven organisations.

EADTU is actively participating in the hub by organizing free expert support to digital education professionals through online clinics and mentorship programmes.

During an online clinic, hub members can discuss with a high-level European expert about the challenges they or their organisation are facing.

The expert will provide tailormade guidance on topics like:

- micro-credentials
- hybrid, blended and online distance course design
- international collaboration and virtual mobility
- online assessment
- diversity, inclusion and equity

Beyond the online clinic sessions, the Hub offers mentorships specifically focused on your personal area of interest, goals or actions. Mentorships are organised in 3 hour sessions of 2 hours each.

Mentors are high-level European experts in the field of digital education who will be matched with you based on your needs.

[Register to the European Digital Education Hub](#)

Already a hub member?

[Sign up for a mentorship](#)
[Sign up for an online clinic](#)



BRIDGING BORDERS

EADTU was delighted to be an official event partner of Digital Universities Europe, a conference by Times Higher Education. Held at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya on 23-25 October, this event addressed key challenges and opportunities of digital-first higher education across Europe.

George Ubachs moderated 2 panel sessions on e-assessment and OERS in education where he was joined by educators from across Europe.



From 6-10 November 2023, over 600 delegates gathered at the Costa Rica Convention Centre in San José, Costa Rica for the first ICDE World Conference in four years. EADTU contributed to the event with the contribution 'Small is the new Big! How European HEIs are shaping the future of education by micro-credentials'.

EADTU also contributed to ICDE's Lillehammer Lifelong Learning Conference with a workshop on e-assessment and a panel session on microcredentials.

EADTU delivered a keynote on microcredentials and skills to the 2023 UALL / SCUTREA conference. The Conference was hosted by the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, which was celebrating its 150th anniversary.



I-HE2023 ISTANBUL

From 04 - 06 October 2023, EADTU's Innovating Higher Education Conference was organised, hosted and organised in close cooperation with Anadolu University. Almost 300 experts from the world of online, blended and distance learning shared their expertise.

The conference combined keynotes, paper presentations, panel sessions, workshops and a dedicated research track coordinated by the COER network.

A recording of the plenary sessions on Day 1 is available [here](#).



I-HE2023 PROCEEDINGS

The **Proceedings** of the Innovating Higher Education conference 2023 are now available. The publication, including the message of Istanbul is a reflection of a successful conference.

Topics covered include: Blended Education, Enhancing teachers' competencies, Mobility and Internationalization, Student Engagement, Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning, Online Assessment, Micro-credentials for continuing education, Diversity & Inclusion in open and online education, Widening Participation, Study Progress, Retention and Student Support, Chat GPT, Online and Distance Education.

In total 23 papers were published in the proceedings.

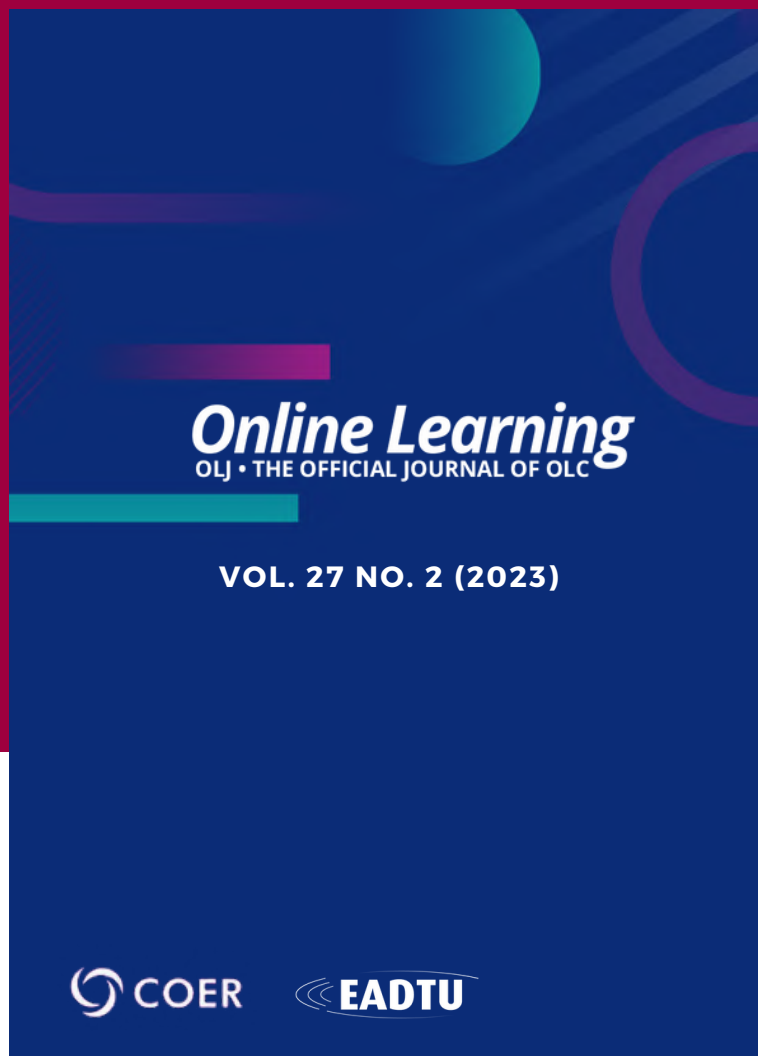
4 papers were selected for a selection procedure of the Online Learning Journal (publication foreseen in June 2024).



In **June 2023**, a **special issue** was published as outcome of a cooperation between the Online Learning Journal (OLJ), the Center for Open Education Research (COER) and the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) at the Innovating Higher Education Conference 2022 (I-HE 2022) held in Athens.

Themed "Digital Reset: European Universities Transforming for a Changing World", the conference highlighted the ongoing transformation in higher education due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The selected studies in this special issue explore various facets of this transformation.

The papers address the use of MOOCs to boost digital confidence, the impact of online exams on distance learners, a capabilitarian engagement model for refugees in online higher education, and ethical considerations in big data research related to MOOCs. These studies provide diverse insights into key aspects of digital transformation in higher education.



ENCORE

The Erasmus+ project ENCORE is an innovative project that brings together cutting-edge data-driven techniques, and a qualitative pedagogical approach to foster the use of OERs and existing taxonomy of skills- ESCO to produce resources for teachers

In 2023, the ENCORE project made significant strides in reshaping education through its cutting-edge Educational Platform. The project hosted a webinar on December 11, showcasing features such as personalized, collaborative, and learner-centric experiences, adaptive learning paths, and gamification for interactive learning. In a two-day partner meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, ENCORE partners discussed their progress and announced an upcoming international conference, offering a preview of their innovative tool designed to assist educators in developing courses with meaningful learning outcomes, focusing on essential skills in the digital post-COVID era.

Additionally, ENCORE conducted a recognition survey to understand how competencies developed in professional and social practices are recognized and to explore avenues for improvement, aligning with their commitment to using Open Educational Resources for skill development.

Curious to read more?

Visit project-encore.eu



PROJECTS

(1/2)

Besides leading projects such as MCE, EADTU is involved in various innovative projects as full or associate partner. Have a look at the projects below to see some of our work in 2023.

The EU-funded Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities – **LOTUS** project has concluded its work and its final report is now available **online**. The report summarises lessons learnt and key messages from the LOTUS activities which aimed at contributing to capacity building and strategic change management for learning and teaching at higher education institutions (HEIs) across Europe, and explored the potential of various actors (HEIs, ministries, national agencies, university associations, student and staff unions, etc.) to support transformation and innovation in learning and teaching.



The **NEFELE** project proposes a training model, offered online, through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). Moreover, during the MOOC lessons, teachers will be trained to use the NEFELE game, based on the Tangible User Interfaces (TUIs), as a supportive technology they can use in the classroom with their students to enhance career planning. A full paper on NEFELE and the implementation of the training model to support adolescents' career planning is available in the **I-HE2023 Proceedings**.

Blue Arrow concluded in 2023, aiming to improve the teacher education of pre-primary and primary in higher education institutions Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) by providing new tools and new methodologies.



PROJECTS

(2/2)

The **XR2LEARN** project aims at establishing a cross-border innovation community for XR (extended reality) in learning, bringing XR technology providers, application designers, education experts, application developers, endusers and decision makers in direct access to communicate, collaborate and matchmake interests, enabling also bottom-up innovation creation.

Visit the **XR2LEARN website** for recent events and outcomes.



On Thursday 26th of January 2023, the **DigiTel Pro** partnership brought together advanced “schools” in research, innovation, and good practice in synchronous hybrid learning (KU Leuven), blended learning (TU Delft), and online and distance learning (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Open Universiteit (OUNL), UNINETTUNO) in Barcelona, Spain. Have a look at the **eventbrite page** for the presentations and other details.

TUNED promotes a lifelong learning dimension in the HE context in approaching fluid classrooms, providing new and innovative pedagogical tools based on rooted psychological constructs on self-regulation learning.



TASK FORCES

EADTU initiated several **Task Forces** on several topics in 2023, including Green Campus, Extending Student Numbers and Retention.

Publications/outcomes are expected in spring 2024.

GREEN CAMPUS

EADTU's Task Force Green Campus, formed in May 2023, aims to foster sustainability in online and distance universities. It focuses on developing a Green Campus vision, encouraging collaboration and knowledge-sharing among members. The initiative strives to create a reference model for institutional strategies in environmental sustainability, aligning with the European Commission's push for eco-friendly practices in universities.

Extending Student Numbers and Retention & Student Services addresses declining enrollment and high dropout rates in distance education. Its goals include gathering good practices and developing guidelines for institutional strategies, focusing on student numbers, study progress, and agile student services. The task force contributes to strengthening the role of online distance education in the European higher education landscape, and is divided in two working groups: "Extending Student Numbers" and "Retention & Student Services".

EXTENDING STUDENT NUMBERS AND RETENTION & STUDENT SERVICES



2023 SUMMIT

EADTU's annual **EADTU-EU Summit** is a returning opportunity to discuss latest developments and new policy lines in higher education.

The Summit is a unique moment in bringing together European umbrella organisations and stakeholders in Higher Education (HE) as well as the national representatives of national governments.

On the 23 May 2023, **the 11th EADTU-EU Summit** took place in Brussels.

We look back at a successful event with many interesting presentations. A full recording of the on-site event is available below.

We addressed, amongst others, Leveraging digital transformation for innovative higher education and training by Ivana Juraga (Policy Officer, Digital Education Unit, European Commission); Generative AI and LLM in Digital Education, Chat GPT by Mike Sharples (Open University, UK); Quality perspectives on Microcredentials by Anna Gover (Director of ENQA); and Inclusion and Digital Accessibility by Ada Pellert (Vice-President EADTU, Rector FernUniversität in Hagen).

ACCELERATING
TOWARDS A **DIGITAL**
AND **INCLUSIVE** CAMPUS

**EADTU-EU
SUMMIT 2023**

BRUSSELS // **TUESDAY 23 MAY**



SHARING EXPERTISE

We look back at a successful gathering of **EADTU Deans**, hosted by the Open Universiteit (OUNL) in Heerlen, the Netherlands. On the 21st of June, Deans of the faculties of Law, Psychology, Management and Educational Innovation and Technology got together in a hybrid setting to explore joint initiatives for mobility and digital course & curriculum collaboration. The Deans discussed innovative partnerships, ranging from traditional avenues like student exchange and teacher mobility to more contemporary approaches such as mobility windows in curriculum networks, blended intensive programs, microcredentials, and the development of joint degree programs.

We eagerly anticipate the results that will emerge from the joint initiatives envisioned during the upcoming meetings in 2024, as we strive to advance mobility and digital course & curriculum collaboration.



The Open University of Cyprus (OUC) and EADTU co-organized a **Staff Support Event** on 9-10 March 2023, with the aim of building the capacity of conventional and distance teaching universities in open and distance education, and exchanging ideas, know-how and best practices between the participating institutions.

Participants from EADTU and member Universities [Uninettuno, Open Universiteit Netherlands, Bifröst University, Open University of Catalonia (UOC)] participated with physical presence in the event that was hosted at the OUC premises in Nicosia/Cyprus, while colleagues from UNED, Jyväskylä University and Universidade Aberta and other participating universities contributed online.



ENVISIONING REPORT 2023

In 2023, EADTU published the seventh edition of the **Envisioning report** for Empowering Universities, by the expert pools of the Empower programme.

In this 7th edition we cover initiatives related to: Digital Education and Skills (Chapter 1), Microcredentials-based Qualifications (Chapter 2) and Innovating Higher Education (Chapter 3).



QUALITY TIME

Quality assurance approaches in higher education are well-established, but it is important to develop quality assurance and enhancement methods which apply to new modes of teaching and learning. EADTU is supporting high quality, engaging education by various publications, events, projects and methods.

EADTU has been re-appointed as **ICDE** Focal Point on Quality, representing Europe and as member of the ICDE Quality Network (2023 - 2024). **This 2023 report** summarises the ICDE Quality Network's analysis of quality issues in the field of open, distance and online learning, from each world region. EADTU contributed with a chapter on the European Region.

GLOBAL QUALITY PERSPECTIVES ON OPEN, FLEXIBLE AND DISTANCE LEARNING 2023

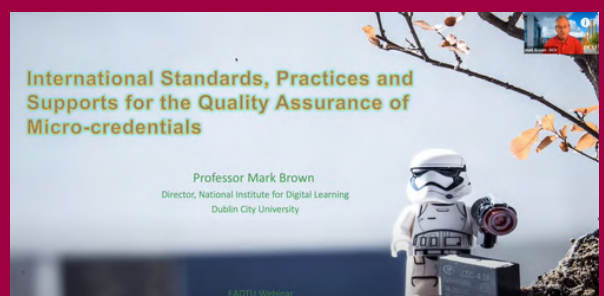
Editor: Souma Alhaj Ali



EADTU awards the E-xcellence Quality Label to the University of Nicosia (UNIC), renewing it for the period 2023-2026.

The review meeting, led by E-xcellence reviewers Ebba Ossiannilsson and Jon Rosewell, provided valuable opportunities to share experiences about quality assurance and the improvement of e-learning.

On July 5th, we organized a webinar on the analysis of international standards and practices related to the quality assurance of micro-credentials. How have QA agencies responded to the growth of microcredentials? What defines quality of microcredentials? What are the key issues for the internal and external QA of microcredentials?



MOOCS & MICROCREDENTIALS

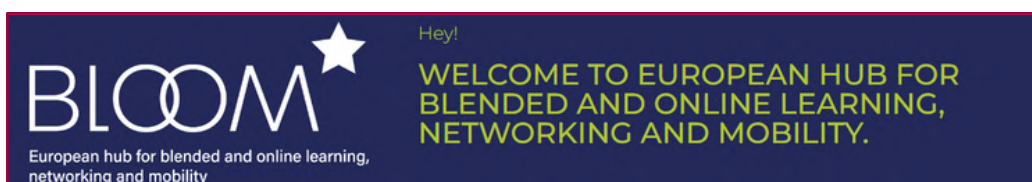
EADTU member institutions are actively involved in MOOCs as well as European and national discussions about microcredentials. In 2023, EADTU has contributed to several relevant **reports & events** and launched the 'Microcredential' Monitor.



EADTU's **OpenupEd** is a community of European universities that offer MOOCs to 'open up' education to the benefit of individual learners and wider society. OpenupEd is a member of EMC, also coordinated by EADTU. A growing number of the courses on the OpenupEd portal offer microcredentials.



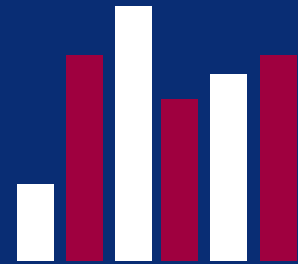
EADTU, in collaboration with the European MOOC Consortium (EMC) and the MCE project (Modularisation of Continuing Education and professionalisation by Micro-credentials), launched the **Microcredential Monitor** in 2023, aimed to observe the microcredential landscape within Europe. Visit the Monitor for the latest updates on important reports, policy initiatives, and research publications related to the growth of micro-credentials in higher education and lifelong learning.



On the **BLOOM hub**, 5 publications were made available on the design and development of: (1) joint micro-credential programme, (2) joint master's programmes, (3) joint micro-credential courses and microlearning units in higher education, (4) digital collaboration and mobility in European higher education, (5) teaching and learning in digital higher education.



ONLINE TRAFFIC, SOURCES & SOCIAL SHARING 2023



39 presentations added
by EADTU to Slideshare

EADTU uploaded **44 videos**
to Youtube



EADTU sent **26 newsletters & alerts**
to (roughly) 55.000 subscribers

1.508 followers on
Twitter in 2022

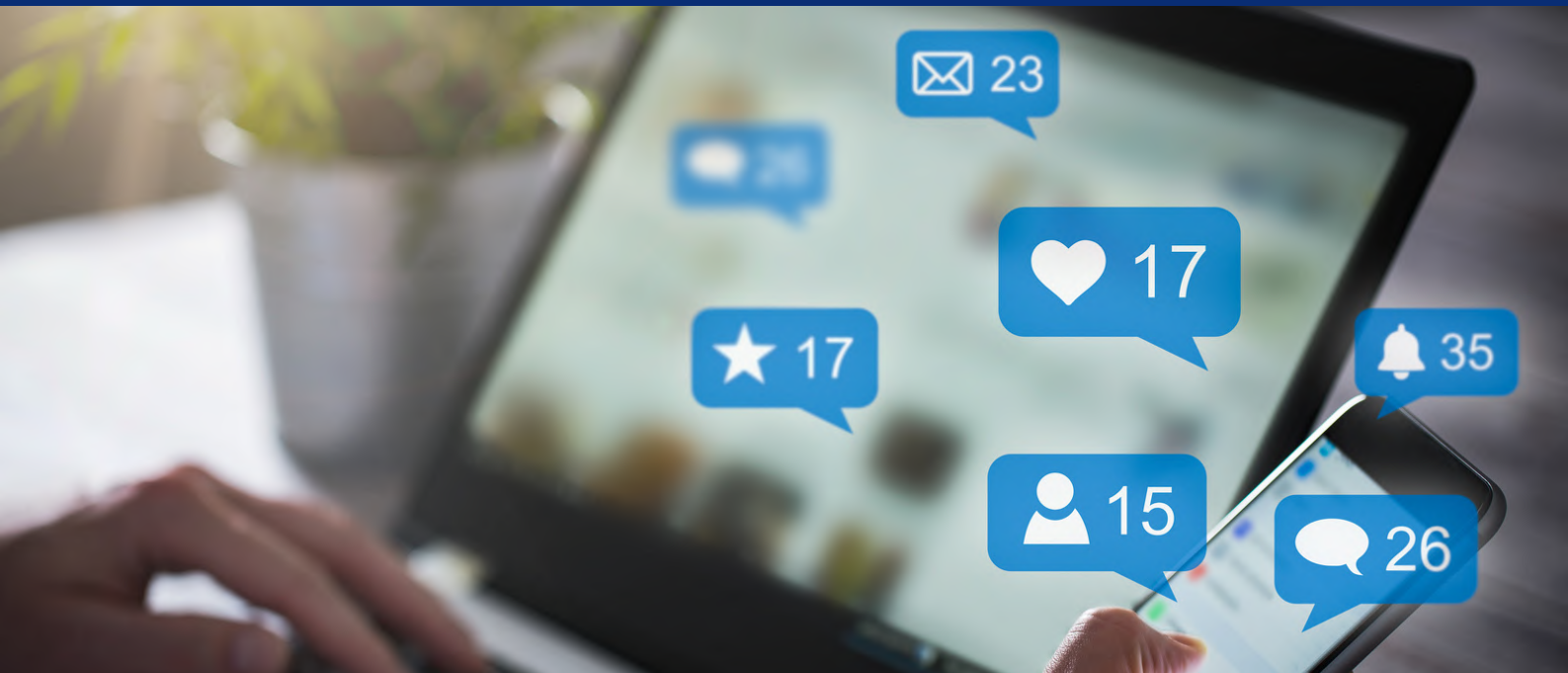


**1.044 followers on
LinkedIn in 2023**



17 public events hosted by
EADTU with **850+** registrations

**809 followers on
Facebook in 2022**



EADTU TEAM



GEORGE UBACHS
MANAGING DIRECTOR



ALESSANDRA ANTONACI
PROGRAMME MANAGER



STEFAN MEULEMAN
ACADEMIC SERVICES



BEAU NIJSTEN
PROJECT MANAGEMENT



MIRIAM DE BIE
FINANCIAL OFFICER



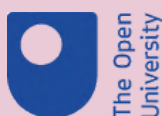
JULIA EZCURDIA
ACADEMIC SERVICES OFFICER

EADTU MEMBERS

EADTU and its members have built up a long experience and in-depth expertise in the field of online, open and distance higher education. Our activities are set up in permanent interaction with our member institutes and their experts. More about EADTU's members can be read on the dedicated [page](#) on our website.



ANADOLU UNIVERSITY



DISTANCE EDUCATION CENTRE OF LATVIA



COMING SOON...

ADMIT PROJECT

The ADMIT cooperation partnership is navigating the transformative wave of Large Language Models like ChatGPT in education. The goal? To create an enriching and ethical educational environment utilizing AI. The consortium is led by EADTU and composed of: UNED; Universitat Oberta de Catalunya; FernUniversität in Hagen; Open Universiteit; Open University of Cyprus; Uninettuno; JYU Open; Hellenic Open University; Anadolu University; The Open University (UK); UniDistance Suisse. ADMIT is supported by the following Associated Partners: Stifterverband Für Die Deutsche Wissenschaft; University of Pisa; Dublin City University; KU Leuven.

TASK FORCES 2024

Besides continuation of several Task Forces, EADTU will launch Task Forces on the Knowledge Squara as well as on the topic of Personalisation of Education.

Keep an eye on our dedicated **webpage**.

WEBINARS

Follow us on **Eventbrite** to receive notifications on upcoming webinars by EADTU, such as the upcoming ENCORE webinar on '**Unlocking the Future of Education**'.

