

**PhD FCT Program #PD/173/2013
Technology Enhanced Learning and Societal Challenges
External Advisory Committee Report 2016**

The External Advisory Committee of the Technology Enhanced Learning and Societal Challenges (TELSC) PhD Program was requested to examine the 2016 self-evaluation report and provide a report evaluating the activity and outcomes of the program in 2016, including recommendations for improvement.

Before meeting online, the members of the committee exchanged views and requested additional information from the Program Director, who provided an extensive response, later complemented with a comprehensive list of the publications and presentations produced by the students until February 2017.

The meeting of the External Advisory Committee was held online of March 13, 2017, with the presence of all its members.

Analysis

The analysis of the activities and outcomes of the program covered a wide range of aspects, including: the added value resulting from the consortium over its two years of existence; the mechanisms established to stimulate, improve and track the synergy between the three institutions; the organization of the materials produced within the program (papers, theses, presentations and other documents); the existence of an online community linking the students and staff of the various consortium members; the more informal cross meetings to facilitate relationships, social exchange and extended counseling; the joint supervision of the theses; the recommendations, incentives and schedules given to the students regarding the publication of their results; the participation of the students in doctoral consortia, as well as other introductory and supportive challenges to their scientific production; the recommended destinations for the publications of the students; the agreed internal standards on quality and impact; the existence of regular joint

seminars; the consolidation of the less established dimensions of the program, such as its coverage of the corporate and training contexts; the consolidation of the internal and external brand image; and the prospects for the internationalization of the program.

The appreciation of all these aspects by the Advisory Committee was very positive, and the answers provided by the Program Director very stimulating. In particular, the Committee noted:

- The excellent progress made on the plans and deadlines of the process.
- The value of the program for the institutions in the consortium, including administration, transparency, added value and ability to overcome challenges at all levels, whilst allowing each institution to forefront its own values and mission.
- The fullest use of digital collaboration, in addition to the annual symposium.
- The extensive list of potential publications for dissemination.

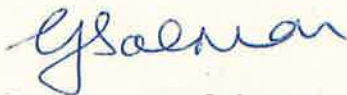
Recommendations

Given the excellent progress of the program, the recommendations of the Committee are mainly directed towards improving performance even further, namely looking ahead to impact and how to enhance it for all the stakeholders in the widest sense. In addition, the Committee suggests that:

- efforts are made to offer joint supervision across the three universities, or at least to invite some process of feedback to students from another member of the consortium to enhance cross fertilisation of academic ideas;
- efforts are made towards an even better organization of the materials produced;
- additional care is put into raising the level of quality and international impact of the destinations chosen for publication;
- further consolidation is sought regarding the strategy for the corporate and training contexts;
- additional effort is put into strengthening of the internal and external brand image of the program; and

- now that some successes can be demonstrated in these challenging areas, an attempt is made to raise the profile of the programme internationally.


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