

**PhD FCT Program #PD/173/2013**  
**Technology Enhanced Learning and Societal Challenges**  
**External Advisory Committee Report 2017**

The External Advisory Committee of the Technology Enhanced Learning and Societal Challenges (TELSC) PhD Program was requested to examine the 2017 self-evaluation report and provide a report evaluating the activity and outcomes of the program in 2017, including recommendations for improvement.

The success and continuity of the programme in 2017 aligns with a growing need for high quality research to enhance educational provisions of all kinds and serves to provide leading edge research in a highly demanding area for Portugal. There is no doubt that advanced competences and transformation practices across disciplines, contexts and professions are occurring

This view of technology enhanced learning puts an emphasis on the human, applied and interdisciplinary aspects of learning, and highlights the need to consider the educational values that underpin the use of technology. It questions the simplistic view of technological determinism and understands technology and learning as each shaping the other. As such it undertakes a key view of the future for learning across the country that has the potential to provide scalable impact and over time on learners' experiences and contribute to the national economy and educational policies.

### **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 three 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. 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 face-to-face workshops.
- The extensive list of potential publications for dissemination.

The External Advisory Committee commends the team in the Technology Enhanced Learning and Societal Challenges TELSC PhD Program and the PhD candidates for their networking and achievements in this very fast-changing impactful discipline and approach.

### **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 towards an even better organization of the materials produced;
- continuing 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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