



GLOSSARY

Adult learner: A person over the age of 25 engaged in learning activities. These include full-time and part-time formal and informal learning, work-related education and training, language and citizenship courses for immigrants, labour market training programmes for job seekers and learning for personal development (based on OECD, 2005, p. 21).

Badge: A visual digital token of achievement, affiliation, authorization or other trust relationship sharable across the web. Open badges represent a more detailed picture than a curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé as they can be combined, creating a constantly evolving picture of a person's lifelong learning (Chakroun & Keevy, 2018, p. 10).

Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) system: A system whereby learners acquire a number of points or credits for the achievement of formally described learning outcomes for part of a course, e.g. units, modules or individual years. In higher education, credit accumulation and transfer is designed so that learners can transfer points from one course or university to another (European Commission, 2010).

Degree-granting programme: Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting that particular learning outcomes have been achieved, normally following the successful completion of a recognized higher education programme of study. Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second-cycle degrees should have various orientations and profiles to accommodate diverse individual, academic and labour market needs. First-cycle degrees should give access to second-cycle programmes and second-cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005, pp. 18, 30).

Distance higher education institution (HEI): An institution offering mainly modes of education in which the student and the teacher are separated in time and space. Modes include online education (with more than 80 per cent of the content delivered online) and blended education (with 30–79 per cent of the content delivered online), as well as printed material delivered by post and/or other tools for bridging the distance (Carlsen et al., 2016).

Flexible learning pathway (FLP): An entry and re-entry point for all ages and educational levels, strengthened links between formal and non-formal structures, and recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education (UNESCO, 2016, p. 33).

Formal, non-formal and informal learning:

- *Formal learning* takes place in education and training institutions, is recognized by relevant national authorities and leads to diplomas and qualifications. Formal learning is structured according to educational arrangements such as curricula, qualifications and teaching-learning requirements.
- *Non-formal learning* is learning that has been acquired in addition or alternatively to formal learning. In some cases, it is also structured according to educational and training arrangements, but more flexible. It usually takes place through activities in community-based settings, the workplace and civil society organizations. With recognition, validation and accreditation, non-formal learning can also lead to qualifications and other recognitions.
- *Informal learning* is learning that occurs during daily life in the family, workplace and communities and through the interests and activities of individuals. With recognition, validation and accreditation, competences gained in informal learning can be made visible and can contribute to qualifications and other recognitions. In some cases, the term 'experiential learning' is used to refer to informal learning that focuses on learning from experience (UIL, 2012).

Full-time equivalent: A full-time equivalent (FTE) is a unit to measure employed persons or students in a way that makes them comparable although they may work or study a different number of hours per week. The unit is obtained by comparing an employee's or student's average number of hours worked to the average number of hours of a full-time worker or student. A full-time person is therefore counted as one FTE, while a part-time worker/student gets a score in proportion to the hours he or she works or studies. For example, a part-time worker employed for 20 hours a week where full-time work consists of 40 hours, is counted as 0.5 FTE (Eurostat, n.d.).

Industry certification: A credential awarded by an industry body or governmental agency for demonstration of skills, typically via examination, based on industry or occupational standards (Van Noy, et al., 2019, p. 3).

Lifelong Learning (LLL): Learning that is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages, in all life-wide contexts (families, schools, community centres, museums, workplaces) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal, and informal), which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands (UIL, n.d.).

In the context of universities, lifelong learning can be implemented by:

1. developing coherent mechanisms to recognize the outcomes of learning undertaken in different contexts and to ensure that credit is transferable within and between institutions, sectors and states;
2. establishing joint university/community research and training partnerships;
3. bringing the services of universities to outside groups;
4. conducting interdisciplinary research on adult learning and education with the participation of adult learners themselves;
5. creating opportunities for adult learning in flexible, open and creative ways, taking individual circumstances into account;

6. providing systematic continuing education for adult educators (UIE, 1997).

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC): An online course available for large-scale enrolment on the open web, where 'Open' largely refers to open registration and not necessarily courses in open licence (Commonwealth of Learning, 2015).

Micro-credentials: A term that encompasses various forms of credentials including 'nano-degrees', 'micro-masters credentials', 'certificates', 'badges', 'licences' and 'endorsements'. As the name implies, micro-credentials focus on modules of learning much smaller than those covered in conventional academic awards. They allow learners to complete the requisite work over a shorter period. In their most developed form, micro-credentials also form part of a digital credentialing ecosystem that uses communications technologies to establish networks of interest through which people can share information about what a learner knows and can do (Chakroun & Keevy, 2018, p.10).

Mixed-mode HEI: A HEI that provides both traditional face-to-face study frameworks and online courses for on-campus and distant students. For the purpose of this survey, a higher education institution is considered mixed-mode if at least 25 per cent of its content is delivered at distance (including online and blended education) (IGI Global, n.d.b).

Mobile learning: Learning that involves the use of mobile technology, either alone or combined with other information and communication technology (ICT) to enable learning anytime and anywhere. Learning can unfold in a variety of ways: people can use mobile devices to access educational resources, connect with others or create content, both inside and outside classrooms. Mobile learning also encompasses efforts to support broad educational goals such as the effective administration of school systems and improved communication between schools and families (West & Vosloo, 2013, p. 6).

National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs): A classification of qualifications relating to a set of nationally agreed standards/criteria developed by competent public authorities. NQFs recognize learning outcomes and competences from all forms of learning (Cedefop, 2016).

Non-credit certificate: A credential awarded by an institution (educational or workplace) for completion of a non-credit educational program. This includes boot camps and military and employer training programmes with clearly articulated learning outcomes (Van Noy, et al., 2019, p. 3).

Occupational or professional licensure: A credential awarded by a state or federal governmental agency for demonstration of skills in a specific occupation. Sometimes awarded for completion of an educational programme. Often requires work experience in an occupation (Van Noy, et al., 2019, p. 3).

Open Educational Resources (OER): Learning, teaching and research materials in any format or medium that reside in the public domain or that have been released from copyright under an open licence. The open licence permits no-cost access, use, repurposing, adaptation and redistribution (UNESCO, 2019, p. 2).

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Open HEI: A HEI that offers flexibility in terms of entry requirements, learning media and approaches, course selection, time and place of study. The degree of openness may vary based on the nature of the studies and the legal contexts of operation (Commonwealth of Learning, 2015, p. 3).

Quality management/quality assurance: Quality management is an aggregate of measures taken regularly at system or institutional level to assure the quality of higher education with an emphasis on improving quality as a whole. Quality management is an institutional function, whereas quality assurance is the set of mechanisms (policies, procedures and practices) used (Martin & Parikh, 2017, p. 18).

Recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA): Recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of all forms of learning outcomes is a practice that acknowledges and values the full range of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that individuals have obtained.

- *Recognition* is a process of granting official status to learning outcomes and/or competences, which can lead to the acknowledgement of their value in society.
- *Validation* is confirmation by an officially approved body that learning outcomes or competences acquired by an individual have been assessed against reference points or standards through pre-defined assessment methodologies.
- *Accreditation* is a process by which an officially approved body awards qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles), grants equivalences, credit units or exemptions, or issues documents such as portfolios of competences after having assessed learning outcomes and/or competences. In some cases, the term 'accreditation' applies to the evaluation of the quality of an institution or a programme as a whole (UIL, 2012).

Recognition of prior learning (RPL): A process that assesses an individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning or competency outcomes. RPL may also be referred to as accreditation of prior learning or validation of informal/non-formal learning (MacKenzie and Polvere, 2009).

Reskilling: Training that enables individuals to acquire new skills, giving access either to a new occupation or to new professional activities (Cedefop, 2008, p. 155).

Skills: The ability to carry out a manual or mental activity that has been acquired through learning and practice (ILO, 2018, p. 107).

Stackable credits: Part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs. The phrase 'levelling up' is often used in the context of starting with one credential achievement and working up to higher level credential achievements by building skills (IGI Global, n.d.a).

Upskilling: Short-term targeted training typically provided following initial education or training, aimed at supplementing, improving or updating knowledge, skills and/or competences acquired during previous training (Cedefop, 2008, p. 198).

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