

MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION VOCATIONAL COURSES (CTeSP)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The World Health Organisation considered on January 30, 2020 that the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic caused an international public health emergency, and on 11 March 2020 characterised the spread of the virus as a pandemic due to the high number of affected countries.

In this sense, on 12 and 13 March 2020, the Council of Ministers approved a set of extraordinary and urgent measures in response to the epidemiological situation, of which we highlight the suspension of all face-to-face teaching, non-teaching and training activities in public, private and cooperative educational establishments and in the social and charity sector of pre-school, basic, secondary and higher education and in childhood education or disabled persons establishments. As part of this process, the Office of the Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education called on to promote all efforts to stimulate distance learning processes, maintaining school activities through digital interaction between students and teachers.

On 18 March 2020, after consulting the Government and obtaining the necessary authorisation from the Assembly of the Republic through Resolution no. 15-A/2020 of 18 March, the President of the Republic declared a state of emergency on the basis of a situation of public calamity - Decree of the President of the Republic no. 14-A/2020 of 18 March whose enforcement was established by Decree no. 2-A/2020 of 20 March.

On 2 April the authorisation of the state of emergency was renewed by Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic no. 22-A/2020 of 2 April, as well as the declaration of a state of emergency by Decree of the President of the Republic no. 17-A/2020 of 2 April, the respective extension being regulated by Decree no. 2-B/2020 of 2 April of the Council of Ministers.

The current state of emergency requires:

- a. Home confinement of all citizens
- b. Mandatory teleworking arrangements wherever possible
- c. Closure of facilities and establishments relating to some activities and the suspension of other activities

Now all these measures have a direct impact on higher education vocational courses (CTeSP), not only in what concerns the general and scientific training component (of a markedly theoretical or theoretical-practical nature), but also practice-oriented technical training components such as laboratory, workshop and project, and above all the on-the-job component, a mandatory component with 30 ECTS credits in the form of an internship, mostly carried out in the last semester of the course.

In this sense, in accordance with the call made by the MCTES and within the scope of its scientific and pedagogical autonomy, most higher education institutions have been adopting alternative teaching and learning methodologies mainly based on distance learning or even remote simulation environments.

The Monitoring Committee of the CTeSP courses thus believes that it is necessary to understand and encourage the use of these different types of distance learning processes to deliver CTeSP courses during the period of crisis Portugal is undergoing and that each higher education institution, through its own competent bodies, should evaluate and decide on the adoption of strategies, methodologies and techniques best suited to the objectives of each training component i.e. general, scientific, technical and on-the-job, so that each student acquires the required skills and competencies.

The Chairman of the Monitoring Committee,

**João António de
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