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University Lifelong Learning to Live a Better Life – Continuing Education for Sustainable Quality of Life in Europe

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Digital skills are needed for all nowadays, it's a fact. How can University contribute to empower citizens?

It is no longer necessary to prove that digital skills are nowadays a "must have" for professionals as well as for citizens. On the point of view of labour market, it is essential to give professionals the necessary competences to adapt and take advantage of the digital transition. On the point of view of civil life, the aim is to give all citizens the necessary competences to actively participate in the democratic debate, fight against 'fake news', use new online administrative services, among other things.

University has an important role to play in the development of these skills. Its action can take several complementary forms among which:

- creating continuing education programmes aiming specifically at acquiring particular digital competences
- positioning digital competences among the transversal skills of the future, identified as indispensables in a digital society and economy
- integrating some of those digital competences as learning outcomes of the programmes in order to make them visible
- isolating, labelling and promoting continuing education programmes that integrate such competences in their curricula (added-value of university continuing education)
- Identifying pedagogical approaches and tools best adapted to acquiring those competences
- training staff
- valorising the acquisition of those competences, either by ECTS or by alternative ways (such as open badges for example)

Several projects on these issues are running at the University of Geneva. The project we present here is contextualised at University of Geneva, focusing on Continuing Education which means programmes with professionals as an audience, very demanding and particularly heterogeneous. It tackles mainly the institutionally adopted Learning Platform Moodle. It addresses two types of actors: students and staff (administrative and teaching staff). On the students' side, a first step is to offer generic training on the way to use institutional tools. Giving them the opportunity to self-evaluate themselves with options to use self-training tools is another important aspect to consider. The same pattern of developing a self-evaluation tool and self-training possibilities has been chosen for the staff.

To know on which competences to focus on, it has been first necessary to work on defining a specific taxonomy as a basis. It has been quickly clear that each type of actor needs a different level of mastery for each identified competence. Different uses of this taxonomy have been highlighted: it can be used either for the staff to evaluate what they need to train, for the director of the programme to evaluate his/her employee level and for the course designer to develop courses on specific competences.