

# WORK RISKS IN PANDEMIC TIMES

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The difficulties in finding regular and stable employment and the resulting social consequences have reached worrying dimensions in recent years. The growing demand for education and the hierarchy and regulation of employment continue to show increasingly obvious difficulties in absorbing a growing skilled workforce. In this context, the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic has brought new challenges worldwide: the establishment of telework and the intense decline in economic activity were some of the most evident cross-cutting changes, with direct consequences for the emergence of new forms and policies to support the employment. In this context, we try, here, to reflect how young graduates of polytechnic higher education in Portugal project the future employment risks, particularly in terms of unemployment, new forms and conditions of the exercise of work, adaptations and changes in terms of content, contracts and timetables, keeping in mind their gender, age, academic training areas. This knowledge is crucial to the content and pedagogies adaption in academia to help develop the needed competences of the future work labour force. It will also be possible to observe how the entrepreneurial skills or the entrepreneurship path is in their future.

Keywords: Work risks, youth graduates, polytechnic higher education, covid-19.

## 1 NEW CHALLENGES BETWEEN ACADEMIC TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The emergence of a global pandemic at the end of 2019, led to several consequences, profoundly changing habits, perceptions, ways of life and the functioning of the socioeconomic fabric of societies. The lockdowns, caused by this process, brought several challenges, in terms of work (Eurofound, 2021)<sup>[1]</sup>, and, for example, teleworking emerged as an inevitability in the professions that effectively allowed it. This question gave rise to new debates on the relationship between academic training and employment, with more qualified professions adapting better to these new needs and circumstances (Eurofound, 2022)<sup>[2]</sup>. There is no mechanical connection between academic training and employment (Rose, 1998)<sup>[3]</sup>, but rather the possibility of an adaptation, which objectively derives from people occupying a job that is adequate to their training and if the educational system, namely the courses provided, are suited to the needs (Rose, 2005)<sup>[4]</sup>. This relationship can emerge as an instantaneous perspective (between initial training and first job) or in a procedural dynamic form (measuring the adequacy between further training and professional trajectories). Consequently, the connection between training and employment will continue to contribute to the quality of the process of transition to work (Rose, 1998)<sup>[3]</sup>. A possible inadequacy between training and employment can be caused by several factors. It may be a simple observation (the job held is not adequate for the training obtained), a norm of behavior (it is necessary to find a job in the learned specialty and train people to prepare them for employment), a “social gâchis” (the inadequacy is costly in terms of unemployment and adaptation to employment) or, simply, represent an opportunity (it favors mobility and innovation). Today, there is recognition of the importance and need to develop entrepreneurial skills in higher education, regardless of the students' scientific area (Saraiva & Paiva, 2019)<sup>[5]</sup>. However, with the pandemic, higher education suffered the need to adapt teaching methodologies and their pedagogies (Ratten, 2020)<sup>[6]</sup>. The need to introduce new technologies and distance learning changed the way in which entrepreneurship education began to be thought about, analyzing the experience of the pandemic and the needs for socialization that it brought with the end of the isolation in which we all had subjects (Raten, 2020)<sup>[6]</sup>. Thus, new modes of learning, which include blended and asynchronous learning, emphasize the enduring legacy of online learning (Raten, 2020)<sup>[6]</sup> that the