

# ENTREPRENEURIAL ASSESSMENT AND TRANSITION TO WORK: PERSPECTIVES OF POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION FINALISTS

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## Abstract

The creation of polytechnic education in Portugal is positioned to respond to the labour market expectations in terms of human resources. From a developmental perspective, it intends to reinforce equality in access to higher education, adapts the contents and practices to different population groups, and encourage continuous training and recurrent education. Entrepreneurship Education is today a polytechnic goal that covers this higher education institution national network, which has a recognised methodology for entrepreneurship teaching and learning education, shared in terms of methods, contents and coordination. It reaches a wide range of students in different areas of specialisation to develop their skills and abilities, create their own business, or register new patents. The analysis presented is the result of a study carried out on the training paths of students at the Polytechnics of Guarda, Leiria and Viseu. As self-employment is one of the mechanisms that promote the transition to the labour market, it was intended to observe the extent to which it is referred to as an option for accessing higher education. At the same time, it was envisioned to verify how entrepreneurial skills were learned and perceived by the finalists during their academic careers, bearing in mind the assessment made to the courses attended.

Keywords: Polytechnic Education; Transition to Work; Entrepreneurial assessment.

## 1 POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO WORK

Currently, the need for knowledge represents an important factor in the social integration movement, invariably linked to the exercise of work (OECD, 2007)[1]. We are thus witnessing a transposition of a higher education model "(...) from elite to the mass system has had a fundamental impact on the labour supply and occupational structure, challenging employers' and graduates' perceptions of the relationship between Higher Education and employment." (Purcell et al, 2007: 57 and 58)[2].

The dynamisation of the binomial university education and polytechnic education in the higher education system is one of the most important reforms of the 70s of the 20th century in Portugal, expressing a need for regional development, given the global economic development.

At the end of the 20th century and especially in the 1st decade of the 21st century, there was a significant increase in the training offered by the higher education network. In the central geographic region of the country, this process is fundamentally visible in the largest urban centres, with the institution and progressive consolidation of five polytechnic institutes (Viseu, Guarda, Coimbra, Leiria and Castelo Branco), with a diversified offer and a movement of ascendant demand.

*Table 1 - Evolution of the number of graduates and 1st cycle vacancies  
in Portuguese higher education system by nature and type*

<b>NUMBER OF GRADUATES</b>	<b>1996/97</b>	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Public higher education system	26 152	37 870	48 487	56 309	60 876	66 407
University education	16 572	18 719	25 618	37 013	42 082	43 023
Polytechnic education	9 580	19 151	22 869	19 296	18 794	23 384
Private higher education system	16 031	22 221	20 722	19 173	12 210	14 731
University education	10 219	11 927	10 697	12 156	8 986	10 001
Polytechnic education	5 812	10 294	10 025	7 017	3 224	4 730
Total	42 183	60 091	69 209	75 482	73 086	81 138