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# EMBEDDING EUROPASS AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY TO SUPPORT STUDENT AND GRADUATE MOBILITY – WORK IN PROGRESS - ABSTRACT

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## **Abstract**

As a key outcome to the JISC funded EPICS regional project<sup>[1-2]</sup>, Newcastle University developed a number of interoperability tools within the ePET portfolio<sup>[3-5]</sup>. These tools included support for IMS-LIP<sup>[6]</sup>, and the ability to export and import data in Europass CV format<sup>[7]</sup>. The EPICS project was seen very much as a pilot, to test what was feasible and to investigate the challenges to ePortfolios from interoperability, pedagogical and legal perspectives. However, the success of the development work has meant that in early 2007 Newcastle University made the work conducted on Europass CV available to more than 2,500 students on Postgraduate research programmes.

## ***Rationale***

The reason behind the decision to embed Europass CV into the postgraduate portfolio was to provide an effective method by which students could continue to store and take advantage of their CV after completing their postgraduate programme. It was anticipated that this would aid mobility for students and graduates, by providing their information in a recognised standard supported across Europe. The support for Europass in ePET has been conducted in parallel with additional standards including IMS (LIP and EP), UKLEAP<sup>[8]</sup> and HR-XML<sup>[9]</sup>. This is in recognition that different standards are being taken up in different sectors and support different purposes.

## ***What is Europass?***

Europass has been established by the Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single transparency framework for qualifications and competences. It provides a standardised way to make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe (European Union, EFTA/EEA and candidate countries).

There are two self-completed documents:

1. Europass curriculum vitae (CV)
2. Europass Language Passport

and three other documents issued by competent organisations:

3. Europass Certificate Supplement
4. Europass Diploma Supplement
5. Europass Mobility

The two self-completed documents can be created online at the Europass site. The data is not stored centrally but the CV can be saved in a range of formats - including XML and PDF with an embedded XML file, which can then be uploaded for further editing.

## ***Applying Europass-CV and Language Passport in the ePET portfolio***

Significant changes were made to the ePET database to accommodate the Europass schema, not least because ePET had been designed very much from a British education perspective, which traditionally does not put emphasis on such key elements of Europass as languages.

Although our focus during EPICS was on the CV element of Europass, we have also developed support for the Europass Language Passport. This is crucial for enabling mobility across Europe, providing more rounded detail of the language competencies of the learner than is present in the

Europass CV. This will be made available to students at the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year.

To date the Europass CV is available to around 2,500 postgraduate research students at Newcastle University. Comprehensive statistics and user evaluation data will be gathered towards the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, and will therefore be covered in the final paper. We are also gathering qualitative data from students in order to ascertain how useful the addition of Europass CV has been, along with addressing usability and accessibility considerations.

In the 2007-2008 academic year the work conducted on Europass CV will be rolled out to undergraduate students studying Medicine and Dentistry at Newcastle University. It will also be made available to seven other partner institutions using ePET. This will include the full extent of the developments made with regards to Europass and HR-XML.

### ***Developments in HR-XML***

As a supplement to the work on Europass, we have enabled a small degree of support for HR-XML within the ePortfolio, and while this does not currently meet the full extent of the HR-XML schema, it does allow data to be downloaded in this format. This is a key consideration for the future, and we are currently awaiting developments in HR-XML<sup>[10]</sup> before continuing this work, to ensure that our developments are fully compliant with the latest versions of the HR-XML schema. The final paper will cover work conducted on HR-XML.

### ***Summary***

In this paper, we will be discussing our work in progress with regards to the challenges to embedding the Europass CV and Language Passport into ePET, alongside the ongoing work and future developments. Our experiences and evaluation data will be of interest to those using Europass and other standards. The work aims to enhance the transferability of learners' data across different systems and will ultimately assist with the mobility of people and skills across Europe. The scope and purposes of Europass CV does not cover the entire range of portfolio content, so it is therefore important to support other international standards (particularly IMS LIP/EP)<sup>[11]</sup>. The institutionally owned sections of Europass (linked with the Europass Diploma Supplement) will raise new challenges but will further boost mobility and potentially support more personalised learning pathways.

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