

Improving the institutional cartographies of non-traditional learning

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Mapping our short courses journey

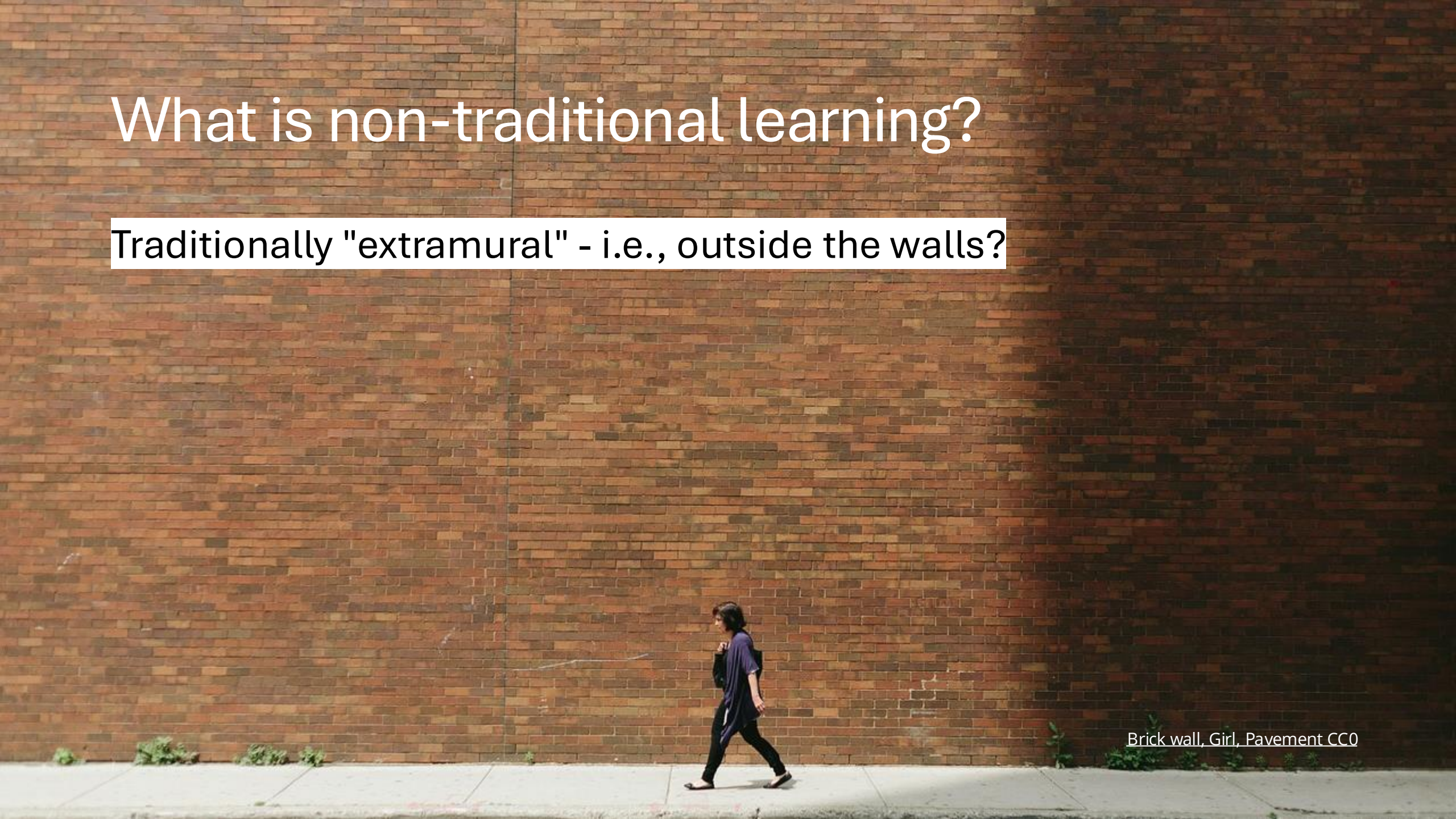


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What is non-traditional learning?

Traditionally "extramural" - i.e., outside the walls?



Brick wall, Girl, Pavement CC0

Who are our non-traditional learners?

"Lifelong learners" - all of us (including 'traditional' learners)!



Lifelong Learning - 2008
2008 Mayor's Program
Mayor's Office, Council, Community
Partnership, and the Mayor's Office
of the Mayor's Office

Why is it important that we improve this?

Trying to remove barriers to our educational offerings.



Learning Platform Strategy

Matching the right platforms to your learning activities

People and Money Learning Platform



Course type

Online or in-person training courses and resources for staff, including mandatory and compliance training and digital skills.



Who learns here?

University of Edinburgh staff only.

Benefits to staff

- All HR-related functions, including training, in one place.
- Can link to HR record.
- Easy access via People & Money.



Benefits to University

- Automatic recording of course completion and update to staff member's HR record.
- Managers can push relevant courses to employees.
- Effective reporting on training, including mandatory and compliance training.



Size and scale

One-stop shop for staff learning, with 800+ courses delivered by our Learning Providers (including Digital Skills).



Short Courses Platform



Course type

A University-run service for all lifelong learning and continuing professional development courses with multiple delivery modes.



Who learns here?

Local or global learners seeking non-credited courses.



Benefits to learners

- One-stop shop for all short courses.
- Learners can search, create an account, enrol and pay.
- Purpose-built platform for non-credited courses.



Benefits to University

- No visitor account required for non-matriculated learners, reducing the administrative burden.
- Platform enables reporting on this area of business.
- Income retained in-house



Size and scale

500+ existing short courses will move to this new platform from 2025 and any new courses will be added here in the future.

MOOC Platforms

Coursera, edX and FutureLearn



Course type

Online not-for-credit courses designed for learning at scale. Open-licensed and strategically-aligned. Provided in partnership with external providers.



Who learns here?

Global online learners.



Benefits to learners

- Some course content free to learners, with option to upgrade for a certificate.
- Study anywhere in the world.
- Learners can engage with and learn from a global community.



Benefits to University

- Global marketing reach of partner platform.
- Wide reach, knowledge dissemination and impact.
- Scale - facilitates delivering learning to large numbers of learners at one time.



Size and scale

A growing learner base of over 5 million learners on 100+ courses, across Coursera, edX and FutureLearn.

Learn VLE



Course type

All credited and co-curricular courses that are part of University undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (on campus, blended, online and fusion).



Who learns here?

Matriculated University of Edinburgh students only.



Benefits to students

- Designed specifically for matriculated students.
- Integrated with core teaching and learning tools.
- Extensive and dedicated academic and technical support.



Benefits to University

- Integrated with core student systems such as timetabling and lecture recording.
- Courses automatically created and students, course organiser and secretary automatically enrolled.
- A hub for teaching credited courses at the University.



Size and scale

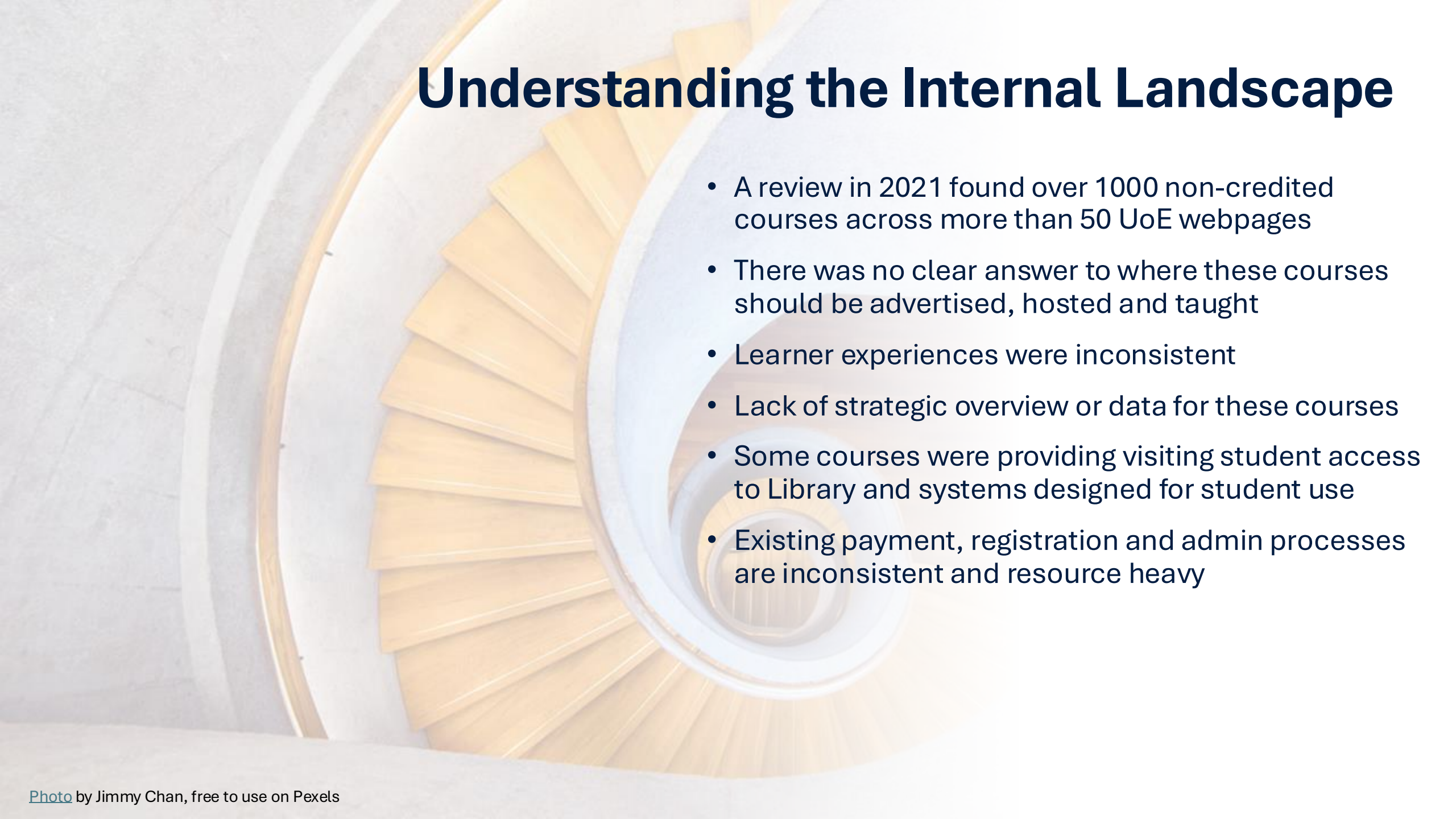
Hosts 6,000 courses with 40,000 daily logins from students engaged in on-campus, online and hybrid studies.

Finding our own path

We'd undertaken trials with existing external partnerships;

- edX
- FutureLearn

but they each required us to follow a predetermined path

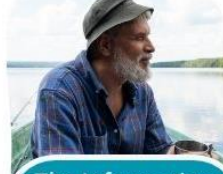


Understanding the Internal Landscape

- A review in 2021 found over 1000 non-credited courses across more than 50 UoE webpages
- There was no clear answer to where these courses should be advertised, hosted and taught
- Learner experiences were inconsistent
- Lack of strategic overview or data for these courses
- Some courses were providing visiting student access to Library and systems designed for student use
- Existing payment, registration and admin processes are inconsistent and resource heavy

What journey do learners want to take?

- Commissioned external market research
- Non-credited courses = Learners
- Created Learner Personas
- Undertook our own UX testing

	Skills (Application of understanding, practical)	Knowledge (Acquisition, theoretical)
Employment or Professional Development	 The Career Changer  The Career Developer & Compulsory CPD  The Business Leader, HR Professional (and PAs)	 The Pathway to a Credited Course
Enjoyment or Personal Development	 The On-campus Hobbyist  The Online Hobbyist	 The Information Gatherer & Sampler  The Self-improver

A web catalogue for visualising short courses

- Improved sign posting - single entry point for learners to find non-credited standalone courses
- Agreed terminology and approach to describing all courses
- Consistent enrolment helps us understand our learners' demographics and numbers



SCAN ME



A consistent learning journey

- Template for all courses
- Guidance and placeholders
- Branding and visual identity
- Embed accessibility



File name: 'Blog or writing icon'
Alt-text: 'Journal activity icon'



File name: 'Homework icon'
Alt-text: 'Additional reading icon'



File name: 'Portfolio icon'
Alt-text: 'Art materials icon'



A right to roam

- All courses should be Open by Default
- OER Policy underpins short courses platform
- Equity for all learners to engage with courses and access learning materials without barriers to licenses and subscriptions to learning materials.
- Support from OER and Library Teams.

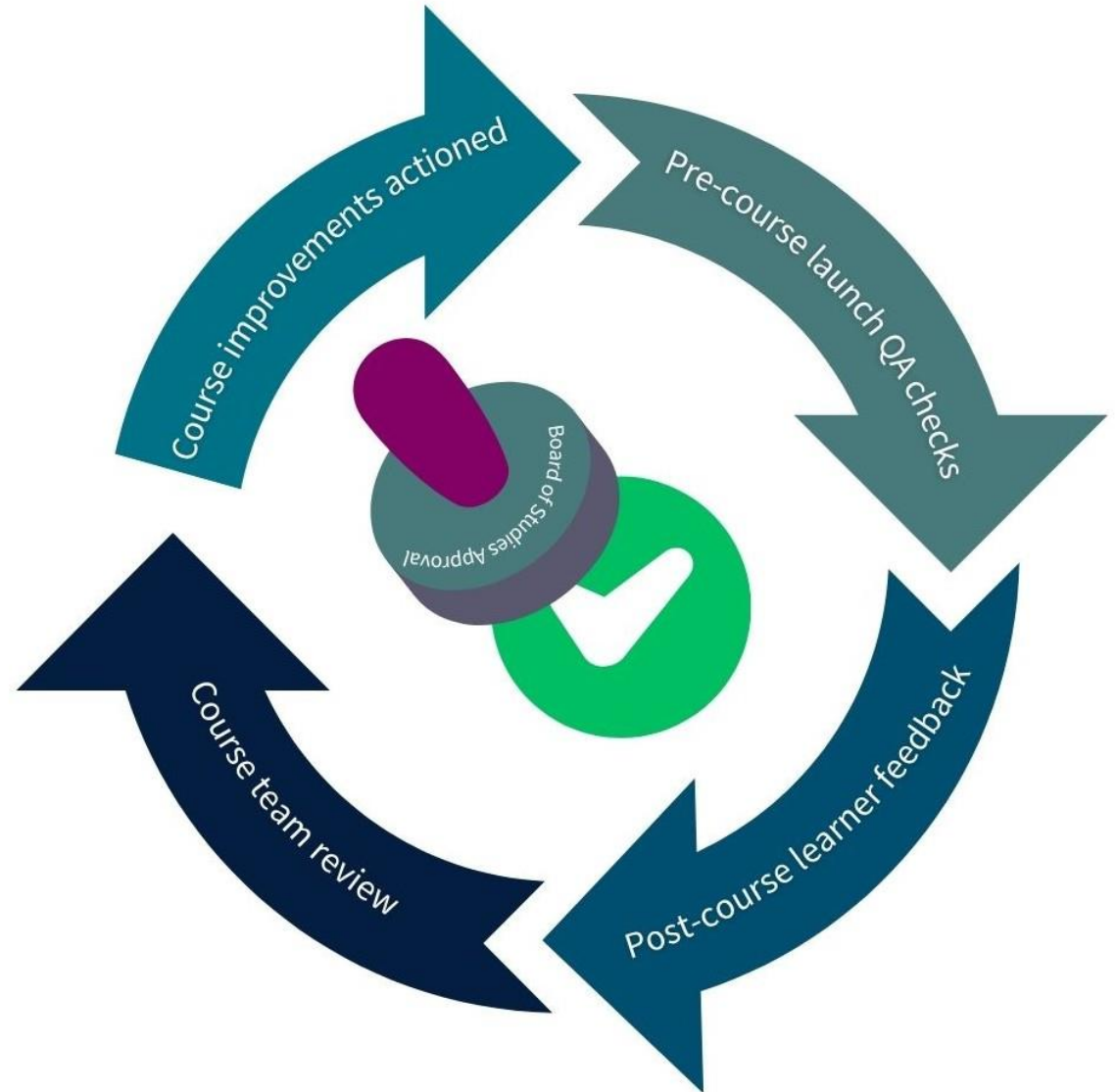


Quality Assurance Processes

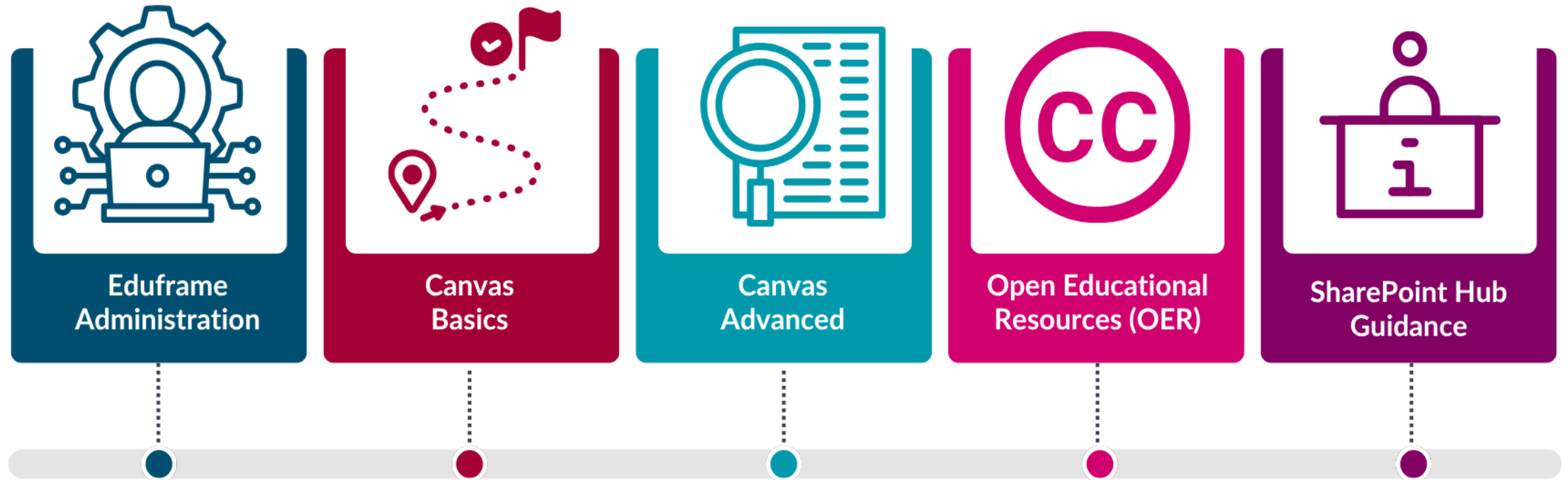
**Short Course
approval process**

**Standardised QA checklists
SME's and technical**

**QA cycle
Continual process of review and
improvement**



Training and Support





BadgEd Service

A service for all staff at the University of Edinburgh, enabling you to create and award digital badges.



Digital badges offer a way to recognise verified extra-curricular skills and achievements and a secure way to share them.

Benefits to learners

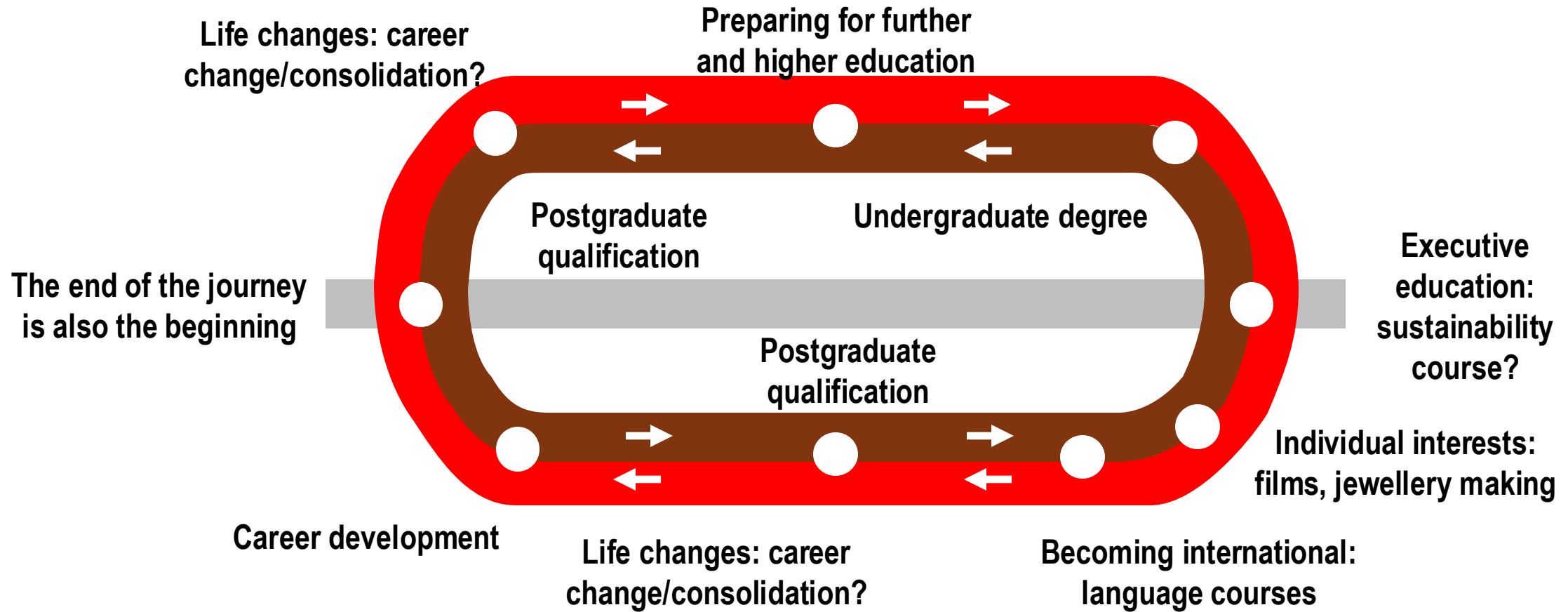
- An easy way to share validated skills and achievements with potential employers, clients or higher education programmes across different formats and platforms, such as LinkedIn.
- Verified by the University of Edinburgh.



Benefits to the University

- A way to motivate earners to engage in extra-curricular activities.
- Demonstration of the value that the University places on achievements, academic and beyond.

Mapping our lifelong learning journeys



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UoE short courses catalogue shortcourses.ed.ac.uk

UoE guidance on where to put courses [Learning Platform Strategy](#)

UoE Digital Badge [guidance and catalogue](#)



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