

The EASA 2027 Conference Webinar Series

The Education Association of South Africa in collaboration with the Unisa-College of Education present:

GUEST SPEAKER: Prof Jako Olivier

DATE: Wednesday, 14 October, 14:00 - 15:00 SAST - Microsoft Teams

TOPIC: Beyond the degree: Micro-credentials, employability and lifelong learning

DR JAKO OLIVIER

An adviser Higher Education at the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada and Adjunct Professor of Open Education at the University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. He works with Commonwealth ministries and universities on open and distance learning, authentic assessment, graduate employability, micro-credentials, open educational resources, quality assurance and recognition of prior learning.

He leads a Commonwealth-wide initiative to strengthen the quality, recognition and portability of micro-credentials. Previously, as Professor of Multimodal Learning at North-West University, he held its inaugural UNESCO Chair on Multimodal Learning and Open Educational Resources. He is rated as a C2 established researcher by the National Research Foundation, and he received the Education Association of South Africa's Emerging Researcher Medal in 2018.

He has published 75 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and edited ten books. His research is focused on micro-credentials, open and distance learning, self-directed learning, open educational resources, and multilingualism in education.



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Theme 3: Reimagining Education in a Changing World: Innovation, Inclusion and Impact

Topic: Beyond the degree - Micro-credentials, employability and lifelong learning

Abstract:

Higher education is being reshaped by changing labour markets, technological disruption and growing demand for flexible and lifelong learning opportunities. This presentation examines how micro-credentials can complement traditional qualifications by creating more responsive pathways between learning, skills development and employment. Drawing on emerging Commonwealth Framework and implementation practices, this presentation considers the role of micro-credentials in recognising shorter, targeted learning experiences that respond to learner and employer needs across diverse contexts. Particular attention is given to employability, credit recognition, and the importance of building trusted systems that enable learners to move between formal education, professional development and work.

The presentation also considers the risks of fragmentation, uneven standards and limited recognition, arguing that micro-credentials should be embedded within coherent qualification, credit transfer and lifelong learning ecosystems rather than developed as isolated badges. By moving beyond the degree as the sole marker of educational achievement, institutions can create more inclusive, flexible and stackable learning pathways. The presentation concludes by identifying practical principles for designing micro-credential systems that support learner mobility, employability and meaningful lifelong learning.