

December 2021 #1



# *The e-NEWSLETTER*

## ***Modernisation and Internationalisation of Iranian HEIs via collaborative TEL-based curriculum development in engineering and STEM/UNI-TEL***

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



WEBSITE: <https://unitelproject.net/>



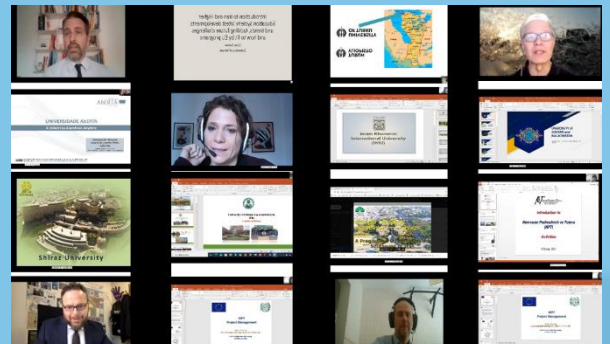
### *Editorial*

The current e-newsletter is related to the “UNI-TEL project” which aims at Modernization and Internationalization of Iranian HEIs via collaborative TEL-based curriculum development in engineering and STEM. This project started with the participation of some EU universities and several leading universities in Iran with the financing of the Erasmus program in 2021. In the project's development, topics such as curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation with the TEL approach forecasted. In this first e-newsletter, we mean to inform the project participants, partners, supporters, and interested actors about the project's progress from the beginning until now and some future events. The e-newsletters will be drawn up in English and Farsi and will also be available on the project website (<https://unitelproject.net/>) to facilitate the dissemination among visitors. These will be distributed electronically, by e-mail, to the partnership 'contacts, stakeholders, potential customers and all interested actors. It will contain several sections: An editorial that will provide a short progress report on the main developments of the project; the “Under the Spotlight” will show in more detail the activities concerning the work plans (WPs). Finally, the “What’s Next” section will summarize some of the future incoming events.

*UNITEL e-newsletters to be produced every 12 months, describing progress on the project and project topics. The e-newsletter contains information related to the project and similar projects and events concerning the main issues.*

### **OVERVIEW:**

- *Editorial*
- *Under the Spotlight*
- *The WP1 Report*
- *Iranian e-learning experiences in Covid-19*
- *Looking into the Future*



## ➡ Under the Spotlight

Here some of the important activities are reviewed:

- **Kick-off meeting**
  - (February 01 – 02, 2020)
- **UNITEL Second project meeting**
  - (September 28 – 29, 2021)
- **UNITEL project meeting**
  - (December 13<sup>rd</sup>, 2021)

### 1. Kick-off meeting (February 01 – 02, 2020)

- **Day 1:**

**Opening and welcome**  
**Introduction of Iran and its Higher Education System**  
**Introduction of the partners' organizations (P2 – P12)**  
**WP7 Project management presentation – Work plan and Logical Framework (leader: USGM)**  
**WP1: Baseline Analysis (leader: SUT, Co-leader UTU)**
- **Day 2:**

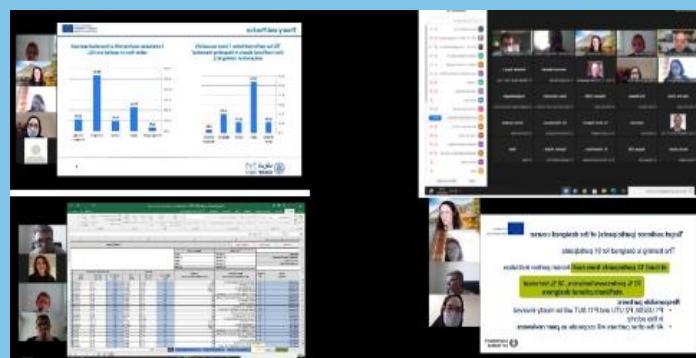
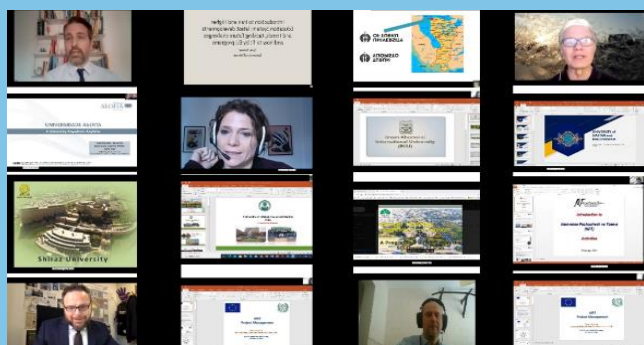
**WP7 Project management presentation**  
**Administrative and Financial arrangements (USGM)**  
**WP1: Baseline analysis**  
**WP2 UNI-TEL Training Path Development (leader: UTU)**  
**WP5: Quality Assurance and Evaluation (leader: UAB)**  
**WP6: Dissemination and Exploitation (leader: Shiraz University)**

### 2. UNITEL Second project meeting (September 28 – 29, 2021)

- **Day 1:**

**Opening and welcome**  
**WP1: Baseline Analysis (leader: P11 SUT, Co-leader P2 UTU) WP1 Findings**  
**WP1: Baseline Analysis Roadmap on industry-relevant Skills and competences (P4 PRISMA and P12 Namvaran)**  
**WP2: UNI-TEL Training path development (leader: P2 UTU)**  
**WP5: Quality assurance and evaluation (leader: P3 UAb)**
- **Day 2:**

**WP 2.2 Development of the virtual learning environment (VLE) prototype (P4 PRISMA and P2 UTU) Briefing about plan and discussion on possibilities**  
**WP 7 Financial and administrative – equipment (P1 USGM)**  
**WP3: UNI-TEL training delivery and WP4 UNI-TEL curriculum modernisation (P4 PRISMA and P1 USGM)**  
**WP6 Dissemination and exploitation (leader: P7 SU)**  
**WP1 Management (leader: USGM)**



### 3. UNITEL project meeting (December 13<sup>rd</sup>, 2021)

**Registration and welcome, overview of the agenda (USGM)**

**WP1: Baseline Analysis** (leader: P10 SCU, Co-leader P2 UTU)

Presentation of the WP1 research findings, draft of the Comparative analysis, in particular presentation of the data related to the e-learning infrastructure, the list of used hardware and software for the distance learning, the remote/virtual lab, or the e-learning platform.

Presentation of the Shiraz University Lab's experience (Prof. Ali Akbar Safavi, Ph.D.)

**Discussion on the final Equipment list** (All Iranian partners – P1 USGM)

**Activity.1.4 Addendum for Skills and competences** (P2 UTU)

Presentation of the draft document

**WP2: UNI-TEL Training path development** (leader: P2 UTU)

Presentation of a proposal on e-course modules and next action plan

Discussion with all partners

**WP 7 Financial and administrative – issues and remarks** (leader: P1 USGM)

### ➤ **WP1: State of the Art of higher education for technology-enhanced learning TEL** (*National Report of Iranian Universities*)

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz was responsible for WP1 on reporting state of the art of Iranian higher education(HE) institutes for TEL with the aid of partner universities. The first report draft has already been submitted to the project office for review.

The partners and participants of this project were from 6 Iranian universities, including Sistan and Baluchistan University, University of Isfahan, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, University of Tehran, Imam Khomeini International University, and Shiraz University. Students, professors, and business actors who had experience using TEL courses participated in the project in each of these universities. The research method was mixed and included quantitative and qualitative approaches. To collect data, 3 main steps were followed. In the first step, the data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. In the second step, data were analyzed, and in the last step, they were validated. The report covered the following major aspects:

- Existing practices for curriculum planning
- Designing and implementing a TEL course
- Industry relevance
- TEL quality practices and support
- Opportunities and challenges for adoption of TEL practices

### ➤ **Iranian e-learning experiences in Covid-19 pandemic**



By:

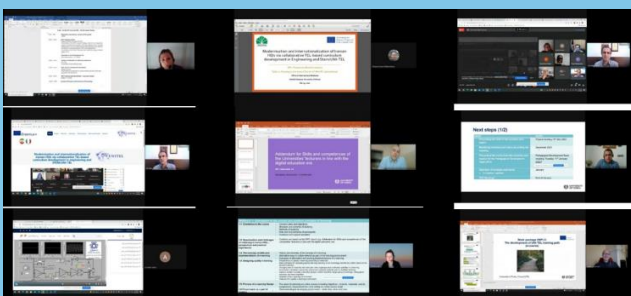
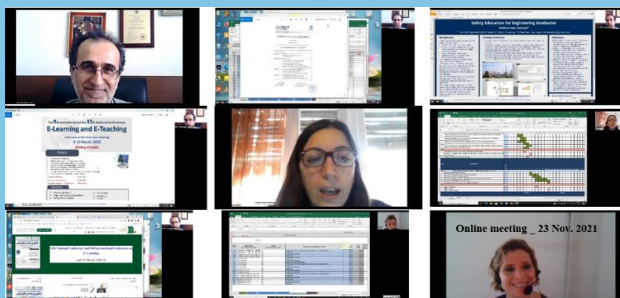
**Prof. Ali Akbar Safavi**

*The Head, The E-Learning Committee of the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology (MSRT)*

*The Chairman, the Iranian Association of e-Learning (YADA)*

In the following, short explanations will be provided on

- A Historical View
- The First Reactions by the Ministry
- The Variety of Iranian Universities: small and large!
- The Issue of Practical Courses
- Looking into the Future
- Concluding Remarks



## A Historical View

- Since Feb. 2004, some Iranian universities started some e-Learning university programs as full degree programs (more than 30 universities with almost 10 % of degrees and students were fully online).
- In a few years, some fully e-Learning Universities were also established (7 Virtual Institutes).
- Annual e-Learning conferences and Iranian Association of e-Learning were stated thereafter (in Feb 2021 the 14th Conference on e-Learning and e-Teaching was held.)
- Iranian e-Learning Association was established 10 years ago.

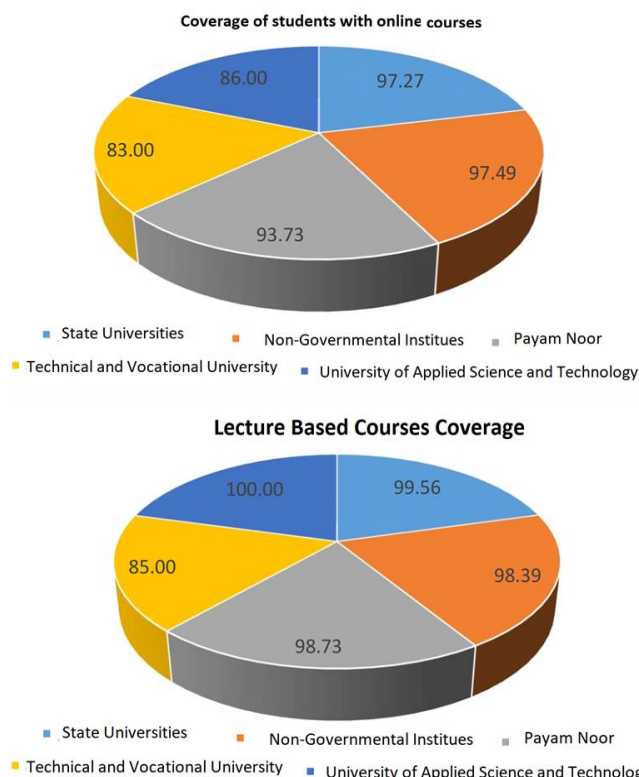
## The First Reactions by the Ministry in COVID-19 Pandemic:

- With almost two decades of successful experiences and with the closure of traditional face to face lectures in Iranian universities from February 2020, a fast decision was announced by the Ministry to go online. This was followed by:
  - Establishing an expert committee to follow the situation and provide solutions, advices, and help training others.
  - Establishing a portal for all guides and news on e-Learning
  - Re-defining the common regulations which did now allow more than 10% online course for normal programs.
  - Transferring more power to universities for decision making by the universities to be able to act fast and more flexible depending on their condition.
  - Helping to provide free Internet to students.

## The Iranian Universities Performances:

- With the aforementioned action plan, almost 90% of large universities could change their lectures to on-line or virtual classes in about two weeks.

- In Iran we have more than 2500 higher education centers. This includes some universities with several hundreds of small branches throughout the country, like Payam-Noor University (more than 400 branches), University of Applied Science and Technology (more than 600 branches), Technical and Vocational University (more than 170 branches). Now one can realize the complication in helping all to turn into online programs.
- The statistics in the first 6 months of COVID-19 pandemic and their success are depicted here:



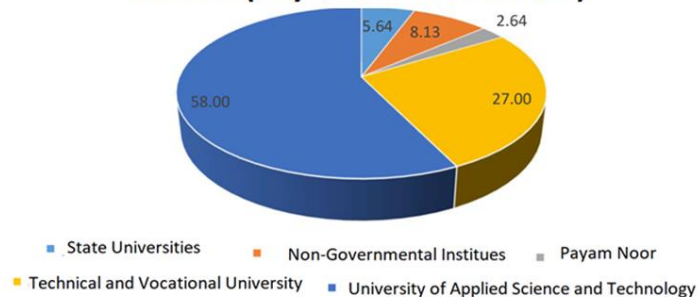
To know more about the activities of the E-Learning Committee of MSRT please see:

<https://elearning.msrt.ir/>

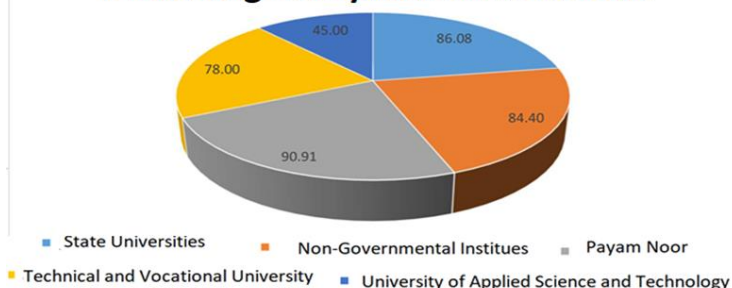
To know more about the activities of the Iranian Association of e-Learning (YADA) please see:

<http://elearningassociation.ir/>

### Off-line (Asynchronous Classes)

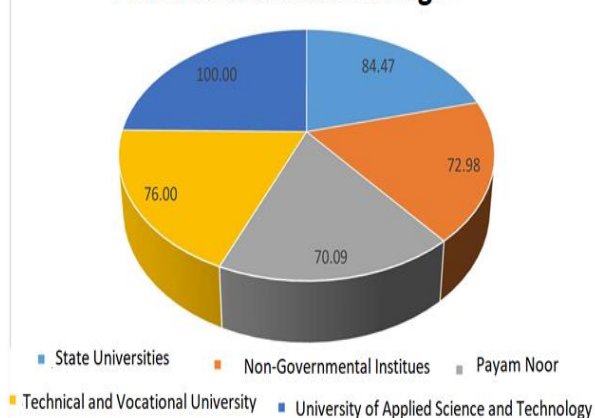


### Percentage of Synchronous Classes



Based on receiving feedbacks from students, the majority in last and well facilitated universities are reasonably satisfying with the online lectures and contents, while missing the face-face on campus activities. Nevertheless, the main concern was the issue of practical courses (Labs, workshops, etc.) for most universities, particularly those which are more workshop and lab oriented.

### Practical Courses Coverage



## Looking into the Future

Currently, in the universities partnering with the UNI-TEL project, curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation with the TEL approach is in progress. The teams are working, and the content of the workshops will be ready soon. In the following issues, other dimensions of related activities will be presented.

The following table depicts the assigned contributions of each partner.

### Demo of some Virtual and Remote Labs:

Recently, we have been establishing some national virtual and remote laboratories to let all to contribute and/or enjoy the related tools and facilities. Some typical examples are shown in: <https://vlab.hubshiraz.ir/>

ID	Action	Responsible	Deadline
<b>WP1. BASELINE ANALYSIS</b>			
1	Providing an online form and distributing the tasks	P11 and P2	15/02/2021
2	Providing the guidelines and questionnaires	P11 and P2	25/02/2021
3	State of the art of HEIs (institutional level)	P5 – P11	15/05/2021
4	State of the art of HEIs (national level)	P11	15/05/2021
5	State of the art of HEIs EU level	P1, P2 and P3	15/05/2021
<b>WP3 UNITEL TRAINING DELIVERY</b>			
6	Send the updated list of equipment (at least the hardware) to the coordinator	Partner countries	30/04/2021
<b>WP5. QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>			
7	Delivery of questionnaire for evaluating the kick off meeting	UAb	17/02/2021
8	Filling the questionnaire	All partners	22/02/2021
9	QA plan definition	UAb	15/03/2021 (M2)
<b>WP6. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION</b>			
7	Valorisation plan definition	SU	15/03/2021
8	Feedback on project logo proposal	All partners	22/02/2021
9	Pictures of meeting for dissemination materials to upload in the Drive	All partners	22/02/2021
10	UNI-TEL Website (draft) UNI-TEL Website (Final)	SU	01/03/2021 15/03/2021
11	UNI-TEL Social Accounts (facebook, LinkedIn,)	SU	15/03/2021
12	Paper products (brochure (B) (draft)	SU	01/03/2021 15/03/2021
<b>WP7. MANAGEMENT</b>			
13	Minutes of the kick off meeting	USGM	15/02/2021
14	Partnership Agreement	USGM	15/03/2021
15	Project management handbook and reporting tools	USGM	15/03/2021
16	Project teams building	All partners	25/02/2021

## PARTNERS



Università degli Studi  
Guglielmo Marconi - USGM



University of Turku (UTU)



Universidade Aberta (UAb)



PRISMA ELECTRONICS SA  
(PRISMA)



Imam Khomeini  
International University  
(IKIU)



University of Sistan and  
Baluchestan (USB)



Shiraz University (SU)



University of Isfahan (UI)



University of Teheran (UT)



Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz  
(SCU)



Namvaran Pazhouhesh va Tose'a  
(NPT)

## VALORIZATION TEAM SETTING UP

The Valorization team has been setting up as follows:

Prof. Ali Akbar Safavi (SU)

A/Prof. Ghasem Salimi (SU)

A/Prof. Mohammadsaber Khaghaninejad (SU)

Ms. Mehrnoosh Soltanian (SU)

Ms. Fatemeh Rezaeian (SU)

Ms. Fatemeh Mirghafari (SU)