

WP1: Identify respective institutional and, if possible, national policies towards distance education, Open Science and Open Education in each of the five countries.

Egypt and Alexandria University

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1. National level: institutions

EELU

The Egyptian E-Learning University has been established by Republican Decree No. 233 of 2008 as the first Egyptian university that adopts the E-learning concept.

In 2018, The University has been transformed from a private university to a national one due to the Presidential Decree No. 71; aiming to provide all Egypt governorates with High-quality educational services at affordable costs.

The university works to supply the labor market with highly skilled individuals who are able to deal with emerging communications and be aware of the latest scientific developments in our specialized fields.

EELU is the only Egyptian university that has been able to release their students from the obligations of place and time factors while maintaining communication and interaction between lecturers and students, via providing the students with flexible educational opportunities based on (E-learning and self-learning) tools, and with contemporary curricula that are connected with the labor market needs. Since 2008, EELU has been able to graduate hundreds of students who have finished their studies at the bachelor's and master's levels.

EELU Vision: A leading university in providing high-quality education via using E-learning methodologies through building up future leaders who are able to affect positively on their countries socially & economically in Egypt and all over the world.

EELU Mission: EELU seeks to provide high-quality education and training services to supply the labor market with individuals who are able to compete and deal with advanced technologies through creating a sustainable improvement in both teaching and learning environment.

EELU Learning Model: **High-quality educational services Any time, Anywhere. EELU** provides high-quality education and training services to supply labor-market with ready industry workers able to deal with advanced technologies. It creates and continuously improves the teaching and learning environment.

The National Egyptian E-learning University targets all those willing to receive high quality, modern, technology-based education whether young or old, in fact, anyone who is thirsty for knowledge and wishes to secure their future standing in life.

EELU introduces E-University concept based on the following principles:

- Students from different cultures and sectors.
- Availability in all geographical areas and regions.
- Technology in teaching, evaluation, explanation, and education.
- Many specializations and modern sciences.

These principles were propagated throughout Egypt through EELU many Learning Centers established through collaborations with governmental universities:

1. Sohag Center
2. Aswan Center
3. South Valley - Hurghada Center
4. South Vally - Qena Center
5. Beni Suef Center
6. Menoufia Center
7. Alexandria Center
8. Assiut Center
9. Ainshams Center
10. Ismailia Center
11. Sadat Center
12. Fayoum Center

National Egyptian eLearning Center

Within the Information and Communication Technology Project (ICTP) project of the ministry of higher education, and through the National eLearning Center <http://nelc.edu.eg/>, eLearning centers were created in Egyptian Universities (date). The objective of these centers were to:

1. To support with developing electronic content and courses for professors in all Egyptian Universities
2. Provide training for professors and students on eLearning
3. Host eLearning courses for on the National eLearning Center Moodle LMS

<http://lms.nelc.edu.eg/>

These centers still exist in some universities, and they are replaced with other bodies with wider missions in some universities like Alexandria and Ain Shams>

Lifelong Learning and Open/Blended Learning

Lifelong learning is proposed in Egypt without degree granting through the following platforms:

<http://egymoocs.nelc.edu.eg/>

<https://www.ejada.edu.eg/>

<https://www.ekb.eg/>

Some masters degrees offered in blended learning are also approved by the supreme council of universities.

Egyptian National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education

The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education “NAQAAE” was established by the issuing of Law No. 82 for the Year 2006 The Establishment Law of the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) was published in the Official Newspaper – Issue 32 (R) – July 6, 2006. Its executive regulations organized by its corresponding Bylaws were issued in 2007.

NAQAAE is an independent public authority as stipulated by article “1” of the law 82 -year 2006. It reports to the Egyptian President, Prime Minister and Parliament.

A key part of NAQAAE role is to review how providers of higher education, such as universities and colleges, maintain the quality of their academic standards.

NAQAAE also produces a range of other guidance to help education providers ensure that students receive a high-quality experience of higher education.

NAQAAE provides technical support to identify the national priorities and associated capacity-building requirements, raise awareness of opportunities and promote ownership of recommended programs.

Vision: To be recognized, nationally and internationally, as a leading quality assurance and accreditation body and an essential partner in the path of educational reform and development in Egypt .

Mission: To develop the quality of education and its continuous improvement and to accredit educational institutions according to national standards that are independent, impartial and transparent and comply with international standard ” .

Objectives & Core Values:

1. Disseminating culture of quality.
2. Coordinating with Educational Institutes to reach an integrated system of standards & performance assessment mechanisms.
3. Supporting the capacities of Educational Institutes for self-evaluation.
4. Comprehensively evaluating of Educational Institutes / programs against the benchmarks and approved standards.
5. Confirming confidence in the quality of outcomes of the educational process at the national and international level.

Naqaae is currently working of eLearning standards as an important component nowadays.

2. National level: policies

Distance education

Distance education is considered an essential component of the blended learning programs replacing what was traditionally known as open education as will be discussed below.

Open science & Open Access & Open Research Data

Two conferences on Open Science and Open Education were held in Galala and Alexandria Universities in 2021, sharing best practices and experiences, spotlighting trends and exchanging information with focus on Open science and Open Access, in addition to topics related to: Artificial Intelligence, , Clouds, Infrastructures and Science Cooperation. Right now, there is no national policy related to open sciences. However, Egypt is supporting open access publishing through different programs.

<https://www.springernature.com/gp/open-research/institutional-agreements/oaforegypt>

Digital skills

In Egypt, a Certificate in basics of digital transformation was introduced by the supreme council of universities. It is deployed in all universities, and it is a national certification on the digital skills needed by students and faculty members. Since October 2020, it is a requirement for graduate students enabling them to obtain their degree. In parallel to that, Unesco ICDL certification is offered in the different Egyptian Universities and is a requirement for admission in a number of programs. University Centers for Career Development also offer all students different training courses in several IT specialties.

Open education

Open Education has been a long tradition in Egypt. Beginning with the early 2000s, almost in 2004, the open education provided qualifications, and its duration was four years. It was functionally equivalent and was completely like any academic certificate, but admission conditions were flexible. The study in open education system was through the actual attendance (face to face) of the lectures. And open education was attacked by the Supreme Council of Universities because some unions, such as the Bar Association, were refusing to settle job grades for holders of an open education certificate/qualification which led to the suspension of this system almost in 2014 and it was replaced by the blended education system.

The current system offers a professional certificate, not an academic one. It also lasts four years and also accepts students with flexible conditions. But there is a need for blended learning. Not all universities have blended learning programs because there is a committee formed in the Supreme Council of Universities that grants some universities approval for blended learning programs after specific conditions and visits to find out if the infrastructure that allows the programs to be run. The universities that have blended learning programs are the universities of Cairo, Ain Shams and Minya and there are universities that have submitted programs and are in the process of obtaining approvals. Universities that do not have blended learning programs can work in partnership with universities that have programs, and teaching is done at the university that does not have programs according to the requirements of the university that has the program approved because in the end it will be the authority to grant the certificate. And the student in the blended learning is not required to attend in person, but rather the lectures are presented in a mixed form between face-to-face attendance and online study.

3. Institutional level –Alexandria University: Units task forces, working groups

Centre for pedagogical Innovation and distance learning

Adip.alexu.edu.eg

[Facebook.com/adip.alexu](https://www.facebook.com/adip.alexu)

The Alexandria University created in December 2018 a pedagogical innovation and distance learning centre, making it possible to trigger a reflection with different actors (teachers, students, administrative staff, partners from the world socio-economic, etc.) on teaching and

learning methods. In June 2021, the unit was transformed into a centre with units in all faculties and institutes working with to ensure that activities are executed with the targeted quality and speed and also with the specific needs of the different specialities. The vision, mission and general objectives of the centre are :

Centre vision: to be a beacon of knowledge and experience, with regard to educational innovations, and the employment of technology in the service of teaching and learning, in Egyptian and international universities.

Centre mission: developing teaching and learning practices and excellence in them, by establishing a system that supports faculty members, students, and the university community as a whole, and relies on qualified human cadres and employs and manages appropriate technology in order to consolidate the thought of educational innovation at Alexandria University; Contribute to the internationalization of the university. The centre is also concerned with organizing activities that support the development of teaching and learning, such as projects, conferences, seminars, workshops, competitions, and incubation of innovations and applications that support the teaching and learning processes.

Centre values:

Development - innovation – internationalization

Centre objectives:

The Centre for Educational Innovations and Distance Learning aims to provide scientific, training and research services and consultations and educational support for the purpose of developing direct education and distance learning practices, in addition to community service and environmental development, in coordination and cooperation with the various stakeholders. It also aims to:

1. Supporting the university in performing its mission, whether in the field of education, training or research.
2. Supporting the internationalization of the university by reaching a student segment outside Egypt through high-quality distance learning systems.
3. Provide accompanying service for teachers and those in charge of teaching in the field of educational innovations.
4. Raising the abilities of faculty members in digital technology to develop educational contents independently.
5. Developing professional e-learning content for faculty members by specialists.:
6. Incubating educational innovations based on technology.
7. Providing technical advice regarding the development of regulations and study programs that are approved for offering educational innovations and the use of technology.
8. Holding various awareness activities in order to contribute to changing the educational culture.
9. Developing mechanisms that regulate the teaching and learning processes in accordance with local and international quality standards approved in light of the digital transformation in education.
10. Enhancing cooperation with national and international educational and training institutions to participate in various experiences in the fields of educational innovations.
11. Supporting initiatives and practices of educational innovations based on collaborative learning, simulation, serious games, etc.
12. Supporting and producing scientific research in the field of educational innovations and distance learning.

13. Holding scientific seminars, trainings and workshops for faculty members and those concerned with the educational process, which are concerned with educational innovations and teaching and learning technology.
14. Produce and support the development of MOOCs
15. Developing and implementing research and education development projects funded by donors in the field of educational innovations and distance learning.
16. Contribute to the implementation of the projects of the university and its affiliated colleges by meeting their needs in the field of specialization of the center.
17. Supporting closer cultural and scientific ties with other universities inside and outside Egypt.

Centre sub-entities :

Pilot Incubator

The field of work of the incubator covers two categories. The first concerns the Pedagogical Innovation Practices and the second concerns the Applications serving Learning Objectives and Teaching in the University. The main focus is Information Technology applications. However, the proposal of tools, apparatus, devices that can be used in the educational process are also a possibility.

1.1. Pedagogical Innovation Practices

For this first field of work of the incubator, the emphasis will be on experimenting teaching and learning practices and working with the promoter on their deployment at a large scale. Examples include peer learning strategies, open learning, competency-based learning, debating and the like.

1.2. Applications serving Learning Objectives and Teaching

This field involves basically the development of Information Technology applications for computers or smart phones that facilitate the process of teaching and learning. Examples include simulation models that make it easier for students to understand the educational content and that increases the efficiency of learning. Prototypes for applications, innovative devices and educational technologies in general embedding virtual and augmented reality, IOT and virtual laboratories constitute a special focus of this activity. Prototypes considering immersive experience and accessibility concerns for disables and people with impairment constitute an important avenue for activities of this incubator.

The incubator is hence baptized PILOT; a name that also refers to the role it plays guiding new ideas until they become artifacts that guide on their turn teaching and learning practices in the university.

PILOT is even more than an EdTech. It is designed to enhance learning and improve students' education outcomes and achievements. It hence focuses on IT as well as educational practices. It aims at reinventing the approaches to learning and to advance relationships between educators and students. Driven by working towards goal 4 in the SDGs, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

PILOT Vision:

To be a centre of excellence and a hub for entrepreneurial best practices in the Egyptian governmental universities and in the Middle East and North Africa in areas of Pedagogical Innovation Practices and applications serving Learning Objectives and Teaching.

PILOT Mission:

PILOT aims to empower a generation of startups, that can dynamically support basically the Egyptian Educational System and consequently support the economic growth of the nation

and the MENA region. It will work towards the achievement of Egyptian Development Strategy 2030 as well as a catalyst to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Incubator three basic areas of activities are Awareness, Incubation Program, and Consultancy Services.

Learning Lab

Digital and innovation competencies are nowadays highly required for students and faculty members in higher education institutions. We therefore need environments that incubate innovative learning scenarios to develop these competencies. We conducted design-based research with the dual objective to develop learning labs in four universities and to document the design and implementation process and the addressed challenges. A learning lab is defined as a physical, digital and human space for observation, experimentation and evaluation, to rethink and enrich learning and teaching attitudes and practices at the university. A learning lab is an incubator of pedagogical innovation and digital learning structured on three dimensions: spaces, activities and communities. A network of four learning labs in Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia and Switzerland has been established.

<https://letslearninglab.org/>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-021-10783-x>

Participation in UNESCO Open Science Advisory Committee

Alexandria University represented by Professor Essam Khamis, its former vice president participated in the Unesco Open Science Advisory Committee that led to the Open Science Unesco Recommendation. Prof. Essam Khamis led and participated in many specialized committees and councils at the level of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Alexandria University. He was the representative of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in many international and local conferences, forums and ministerial meetings, including the Open Science Advisory committee of UNESCO. More through https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/5th_advisory_committee_report.pdf

4. Institutional level – Alexandria University policies

According the strategic orientation of Alexandria university, as per its published strategy, it supports all actions related to pedagogical innovation and educational development. Alexu.edu.eg

Training of Trainers in Open Education

The ADIP Centre (Pedagogical Innovation and Distance Learning Centre) in Alexandria University, has established many ToT related to Open education. This was done through regular training activities of the ADIP Centre where the sessions were around the topic of Open Education. Some of the webinars held on the international education day were also around the topic. Finally, Alexandria University organises in every open education week a training activity around open education.

Project OERwiki@MENA

As a pioneer in pedagogical innovation in the Mena Region, Alexandria University is conscious of the importance of adopting OER practices. It launched a joint initiative with Sousse

University, Tunisia through the Centers of Pedagogical Innovation in both universities. The initiative aimed to:

- trigger a movement among the university community at the level of these two universities, as well as in other universities in the MENA region around open educational resources.
- encourage collaboration and sharing through the co-creation of educational material and the freedom to use, personalize, improve, and redistribute it.
- launch a WIKI environment for sharing free educational resources, allowing the university community to create and collaborate on free content, and to share them as free educational resources under a Creative Commons license.- produce and share at least 100 OERs in 100 Days.
- promote awareness on OER and creative commons licenses through information seminars.
- promote the production of Arabic OERs.
- position the MENA universities in the global OER communities.
- disseminate the initiative results in international events.

As part of a partnership with Open Education Global Francophone and with the objective of increasing access to education and improving its quality (UNESCO SDG no. 4), the OERWiki@Mena initiative was launched for the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) in MENA region. The initiative was launched with complete auto financing by the two universities. The initiative was led by Prof. Lilia Cheniti from Sousse University, Tunisia and Prof. Ghada El Khayat from the Alexandria University, Egypt. Awareness and dissemination took place starting the 24th of January 2021 where the initiative was publicly announced. To this end, a WIKI environment for sharing free educational resources was launched on the 27th of May 2021 in an event organized by OER Global Francophone allowing the university community to create and collaborate on content, and to publish it under a Creative Commons license.

http://ictlearn.org/oerwiki/en/home_en/

5. Visual representation

