Enhancing Quality of Technology-Enhanced Learning at Jordanian Universities
eQTel
Technology Enhanced Learning Centre
Sustainability Plan

1. Introduction

The sustainability of eQTeL will be achieved through several actions that will all be centralised and channelled through the TEL Centre. The sustainability plan that is presented here will guarantee several actions that will contribute to extend the impact of the EQTEL project beyond the lifecycle of the project itself. The measures that will be undertaken will tackle a variety of issues. First, they will provide academic and institutional support by formalising and institutionalising links with other universities in the higher education Jordanian system, to bring about official accreditation of new online curricula and online programmes.

The actions undertaken will also grant that there is an equal and substantial participation from the partner institutions currently involved in the project, that will each contribute in their area of expertise and will guarantee an active participation of all the project stakeholders.

An effective management and leadership will consider the needs of those stakeholders at different stages in time and will care for making sure that the needed resources are allocated and made available at each point in time to facilitate the emergence and progress and of online curricula, courses and programmes. These will be accomplished, among other ways, by exploiting and replicating the good practices achieved during the project's activities: elearning methodologies used in pilot courses, accreditation procedures, and quality assurance methods.

In the present proposal measurable medium and long term actions will be provided that will positively influence the Jordanian higher education institutions and ultimately their student bodies. The measures and actions laid out in this document are inextricably connected to the overarching objective of improving learning and teaching in Jordanian higher education.

2. Mission and Vision

Vision: Platform to achieve excellence in eLearning in Jordanian Higher Education. The TEL Centre will be a joint initiative by Jordanian universities, bundling their collective expertise on the issue, presenting their interests towards ministry and QA bodies.

Mission: Guarantee to continuously provide adequate resources and put in place the necessary measures and procedures in order to facilitate the accreditation process of online programmes in Jordanian higher education institutions which ultimately contribute to enhance teaching and learning and which will also improve access to a higher education degree for a greater number of young people in Jordan.

Objectives: The Technology Enhanced Learning Centre (TEL Centre) will have the following initial objectives that will be presented as a starting point to the advisory committee for them to build upon. The TEL centre will serve as:

Immediate needs[1]

• A national point giving recommendations and working with the Ministry of Higher Education and the Higher Education Accreditation Commission together with the European Quality Assurance Agency to ensure these recommendations can be approved and implemented.

---

[1] Identified in the Jordanian state of the art report: Deliverable 2.1 of the EQTeL project.

• A national point to foster innovation and transfer of successful TEL projects, including the outputs and best practices of the present project.
• A national point for training staff in TEL and the use of ICT for education accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education.
• A national point of research to push the agenda on the development and integrations of new technologies and methodologies: producing guidelines and evaluation criteria for these purposes.
Long-term needs
• A coordination centre for joint initiatives such as remote labs, MOOCs, or to devise and develop online courses or programmes common to all universities in the country such as EFL.
• A reference point for future initiatives related to educational technology and TEL taking place in Jordan and the region.

3. Organizational Structure
• Location
The TEL Centre will be hosted and managed by Princess Sumaya University for Technology (henceforth PSUT) and will include the Jordanian partners of the consortium who are interested in the continuation of the consortium activities beyond the project, leaving open the option for other universities/companies to join in.

• Management
PSUT will manage the TEL Centre and its main role will be to elect a Managing Director who will manage and coordinate the different actors and make sure the short-term and mid-term goals and objectives of the Centre are achieved. To this end, the Managing Director and its team will manage of the institution's funding, they will decide and execute the allocation of the budget according to the actions to be accomplished, and will be the main responsible for managing the centre's finances.
The TEL Centre's management team, lead by its Director with the aid of the National Board and the Network, will periodically assess and make an estimate of needs of the TEL Centre and its stakeholders according to which future activities will be deviced.
The TEL Centre will be in charge of establishing communication procedures with the governing bodies of the different Jordanian universities, the Higher Education Quality Agency and the Ministry of Higher Education regarding certification and accreditation processes for individual online courses as well as online study programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
Its main mission is to facilitate the adoption and integration of elearning methodologies in the Jordanian higher education landscape and as such its awareness-raising campaigns will have to reach every university in the country. Independently, there will be continuous conversations and periodical meetings happening between the higher management of the different universities where these questions will be addressed. In this sense, the cooperation and guidance from the side of HEAC and the Ministry of Higher Education will become an essential component.

Accreditation Procedures
The Higher Education Accreditation Commission and the Quality Assurance Agency will device the accreditation procedures that the all universities who want to run online courses will have to follow to guarantee its quality through an external evaluation and monitoring system.
They will produce guidelines on how to accredit existing and future curricula, courses and programmes as well as Quality Assurance manual for equivalence of degrees and recognition of institutions that will be produced in collaboration with ENQA and the Ministry of Higher Education.
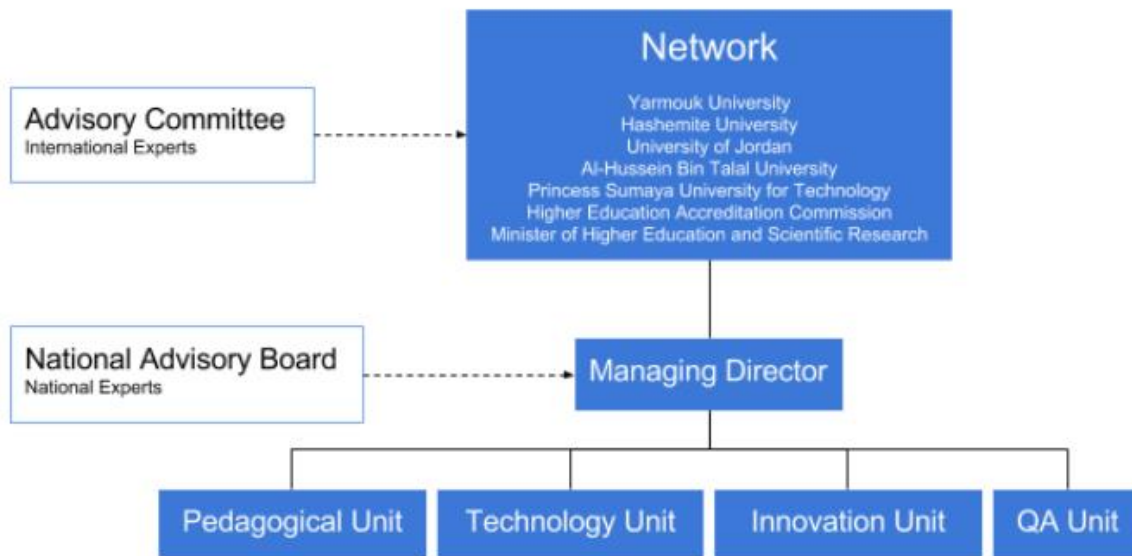
The liaison with HEAC and the Ministry are of paramount importance to guarantee that the policy areas are covered both in terms of developing and putting the procedures and guidelines in place for accreditation of programmes and courses as well as providing training certificates that will contain a quality seal assuring its validity.

Structure

Managing Director

The leadership of the TEL Centre will be on the part of PSUT and its Managing Director will be designated before the end of EQTEL project. The director ought to be a representative of the university. The Managing Director will also be the person in charge of calling periodical meetings with the board and the network and deciding on the center's future strategy. He will serve a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 years appointment.

The Managing Director and his/her team will form a team that will help him/her manage the centre and coordinate the main activities that the centre will host. The Managing Director will be in charge of deciding on agendas and coordinating the personnel, execute the strategy for the TEL Center, and producing the meetings outputs in the shape of minutes or working documents that will serve as inputs for annual reports. For transparency and transferability purposes, part of these reports should be made available to the entire Jordanian higher education community. The Managing Director will provide the means to facilitate that each member of the Network conducts the tasks that they are:

Network

The TEL Centre will be constituted by a network of the universities in the consortium and it will be open to all Jordanian Universities. In addition, it will include a representative from the HEAC and the Ministry.

It will consensuate the role and responsibilities of each partner according to its preferences and strengths. The different partners can become responsibles of a committee or an area where they'll have to act as managers. The areas and responsibilities can be decided during the kick-off meeting of the

TEL Centre, but some ideas will be already laid out in advance to give room for negotiation with a more specific idea of the areas where extra resources and effort need to be allocated.

The possible areas are the following while others can be added or specified at later stages:

- setting up the different training programmes (managerial, staff, technical and faculty training)
- maintaining the technical infrastructure (platform and TEL Centre's website)
- outcomes assessment
- certification and accreditation processes and procedures

The network will contribute together with the National Board and the Advisory Committee to setting measurable medium and long term objectives, goals and milestones. The amount and extent to which these impact the project stakeholders and the beneficiaries of the project will have to be measurable by indicators. Likewise, the impact of the activities conducted will have to be considered and detailed in the TEL Centre report[2].

National Advisory Board

The TEL Center will have three committees with a coordinator for each of them from the different universities in the consortium and should be open for other Jordanian universities to join in the future. The board will be in charge of ensuring the accomplishment of some of the centre's strategic objectives and to designate experts on Pedagogy, Technology, QA and Innovation that will form each unit and will advise the managing director.

1) Pedagogical Unit

It will be in charge of the training programme, the course design and of providing quality and accreditation support. They will specify the tools, the virtual learning environments and course's methodologies. In addition, they will be involved in their implementation and outcomes assessment in order to enhance them.

2) Technology Unit

It will assist both the Pedagogical and the Innovation Committees. Its main function will be to adapt and develop tools, platforms and make other technological developments and improvements according to the needs of the centre.

3) Innovation Unit

It will monitor and identify technology advances to incorporate and experiment them in the online learning courses, curricula and programmes that the centre will put together. Besides implementing them, they will assess their impact and provide a report about its implementation and possible future applications. The experimentations whose implementations succeed should be transferred in such a way that their implementation is mainstreamed and applied as part of the existing training or course design guidelines. The fact that this committee is set aside will make the experimentation safer in case of failure and it will reduce its impact on the normal course of activities.

---

[2] Every year the National board and the managing team will produce an annual report that will detail the work done by the centre over one year period. The report will contain, among other information, a detailed account of the courses, programmes and universities accredited through the center, the training and dissemination activities organized over the course of the year. In addition, the report will give details about important figures, quality issues and possible research, transfer and innovation activities conducted, alongside a revised strategic plan for the following year and an overview of the financial situation of the centre.

4) QA Unit
It will serve as a referents to provide training to the universities' teams with regard to the best practises on quality assurance for existing or new eLearning programs. In addition, they will offer consultation services, on demand, to provide in-deepth analysis on how to improve existing eLearning programmes, or assist other institutions interested in eLearning quality assurance.

The Advisory Committee
The advisory committee is formed by a group of experts with a renowned trajectory in leadership positions and research agendas closely related to distance educational contexts with an intensive use of new technologies. The main role of the committee will be to validate and comment on the   the Centre's strategical vision on global education and to recommend future actions to be undertaken by the TEL Centre. They can also serve as liaison between the Jordanian TEL Centre and similar counterpart centres in their home institutions and countries of residence in order to build strong ties and set the ground for future collaboration for other related projects.

Likewise, the committee (especially its Jordanian members) will ensure that the activities and conceptualization of the TEL Centre are appropriate for the Jordanian context. The committee will aid in devising the initial road-map of the TEL Centre and will contribute to the centre's objectives suggesting milestones, roles and functions of their members, and future strategy among other issues. The committee is expected to validate the above-mentioned issues by responding with comments to the initial document and the annual report that will be put together by the Centre's managing team and board members. The initial founding documents will be further debated with the advisory committee during the conference that will take place during the project's final stages.

The advisory Committee members are:
- **Mark Brown**, Director of the National Institute for Digital Learning, Dublin City University
- **Allison Littlejohn**, Academic Director of Learning and Teaching, Open University UK
- **Manuel Castro**, Vice-director and Academic Affairs Vice-director of the Engineering School, UNED
- **Josep Mª Duart**, Director of the UOC-Unesco Chair in E-Learning and Editor of Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC), UOC
- **Isam Ayoubi**, CEO of The Thinking Company
- **Mohammad Al Majali**, Mutah University, Jordan
- **Sabina Jeschke**, Head of the IMA/ZLW & IfU Institute Cluster of the RWTH, Aachen University, Germany
- **Michael Gaebel**, Head of the Higher Education Policy Unit, European University Association, Belgium

Besides the Board and the Advisory Committee, the TEL Centre can determine the need of including consulting bodies or independent auditors at certain stages and to guarantee an objective evaluation of the centre's activities, reports and financial statements.

Staff and Equipment
The TEL Center will allocate a good amount of its initial budget to setting up the technical facilities that are needed to initially support the design and hosting of the three pilots run during the project. An initial estimate of around 60,000 euros together with a renewable yearly budget of about 30,000 euros will be dedicated to cover the following costs:
1. Hardware
2. Software licensing

3. Multimedia equipment

Funding Sources

The centre will use a combination of public and private funding opportunities to obtain the funding it requires to self-sustain. The services that the center will offer will be available for a nominal fee to be determined in each case: membership fees, training activities and certificates, consultancies, development of courses and programmes.

The centre will establish close ties with the Queen Rania Foundation both to obtain funding and to ask them to participate in the decision-making by a representative joining the National Advisory Board and the Network. The centre will also continuously and actively look for other external funding possibilities.

Services and Products Offered

The TEL Centre will offer several training courses that will provide the essential skills to professionals from several fields so that teams of trained elearning professionals can flourish in different Jordanian universities and can autonomously device online or blended curricula, online courses or online programmes. The ultimate goal is to train university personnel in the different areas that are required to run successful online teaching experiences. The personnel who would need to undergo this training range from content experts, pedagogical experts or course-designers, technical and media experts and instructors, tutors or facilitators.

The Queen Rania Foundation with the aid of the professionals in charge of EDRAAK, an initiative that has already started running the MOOCS could provide some of the experts that would be running these courses.

Higher Management

There will be a few training sessions directed at the higher management actors from the universities who are willing to run online or blended degrees. These sessions will be based on the experience the higher management from the project gathered over the course of the project. The training will be organized around several sessions that will discuss the importance of changing mindsets and making organizational adjustments to allow for online components to emerge in the universities that are interested in offering them. These training sessions can help make a needs assessment the kind of further training the university needs in order to achieve their goals. According to these needs, further training sessions or pathways will be organized by the TEL Centre around the following areas: teacher training, technical staff training, accreditation guidance.

Teacher Training

The TEL Centre will also be responsible for training faculty in the design and implementation of online curricula and courses. There will be two main target audiences that can undergo this type of training which is aimed at providing the different people involved in online teaching the set of skills they'll need.

Course Design

Instructional designers will be in charge of training faculty so that they reflect on how to design learning experiences to meet the learning objectives that students need to obtain after taking the course. They will not only work with course content-experts (university professors) on setting up the appropriate learning materials but also on how to device meaningful learning activities around those materials so that the learning objectives of the course are met. They will also train faculty on the best ways and tools

to adapt current face-to-face courses to online or blended ones and will make them reflect on possible ways of assessing through different means the learning outcomes produced by students.

Facilitators, Tutors and Instructors
The coordinated job of the course facilitators, tutors and instructors is essential to run successful online courses, especially when thinking of an easy to scale up model for online courses that takes one course and duplicates it so that more students can learn from the same course. This involves the work of one or several course facilitators or instructors and often also online tutors or counselors that help the faculty members run the course and provide the students with constant guidance and feedback, especially in the communication spaces where day-to-day interaction is needed without putting excessive burden on the part of the content-experts.

Technical Staff Training
There is also a need to train technical staff in issues related to the possible online Virtual Learning Environment existing platforms and tools/add-ons that can be integrated in them. The training module for technical staff would need to go over the following topics, among others:
● VLE platforms
　○ Use and features of the different platforms
　○ Adaptability of each platforms to different students' needs
● Hosting services and scalability possibilities

Accreditation Guidance
The TEL Centre will provide tailor-made courses for universities seeking to adopt online or blended education delivery models for a fee and it will also provide guidance and feedback for other universities wanting to prepare any of the following:

i.　Online or Blended Curricula

A group of experts in the different components of the online courses will review existing curricula and will make an initial set of recommendations on how to adapt it for an online or blended mode of delivery.

ii.　Online Courses

The procedure to create online courses will be similar to the one above if the online course at stake is an adaptation of an existing face-to-face course or a brand-new course. In the case of new courses, the entire coaching process will take longer time because it generally involves several more people and it requires a longer decision-making process and the involvement of a content-expert.

iii.　Online or Blended Programmes or Degrees
Devising online or blended programmes or degrees (at the undergraduate or graduate level) requires the participation of higher management or actors involved in governing bodies (presidents, rectors, deans) of the given university as it usually involves strategic decision-making at the university level. In the accompanying training therefore, the experts in the field from the TEL Centre's board may have to become involved at some point.

Future Strategy
- **Activities**

The activities that will be organized from the TEL Centre will begin by promoting the results and outputs of the EQTEL project, especially the three model online courses that were piloted during the project and that served to contribute to and actively promote curriculum reform in TEL and leave a long term legacy for Jordan and Middle East at large.

Some of the future activities will be dedicated to disseminate the outcomes of the project and the experience obtained organizing the pilot courses. The dissemination activities regarding these pilot courses have a two-fold objective: to first showcase the project's outputs and second to raise awareness about the feasibility of organizing and running blended and online education in the Jordanian higher education setting.

- **Conferences and Seminars**

The TEL Centre will actively organize an annual international peer-reviewed conference in Jordan and will encourage its associate members to participate in renowned international events in the fields of Technology Enhanced Learning, Distance and Online Education, Quality Assurance in online learning and teaching and Accreditation. This would improve the capabilities of the Jordanian TEL Centre and will help foster innovative international developments in eLearning in Jordan and in turn contribute to generate knowledge in the field, thus positioning the TEL Centre and Jordan as experts in the field of the eLearning.

Seminars will be organized on a regular basis to assess the national and state of elearning in Jordan.

Awards will be issued by Queen Rania Foundation with the support of other sponsors and will be awarded on a yearly basis. The Awards Ceremony will take place during the annual conference organized by the Centre.

- **Alliances with other TEL centres**

The Advisory Committee will aid in shaping alliances and joint initiatives related to TEL and QA with other TEL Centres outside Jordan. These alliances will help the TEL Centre enhance its organizational structure and future strategy.

The TEL Center will encourage knowledge exchange and generate joint projects to allow to incorporate the structure, vision, and actual workflows and solutions that similar centers worldwide have in place into the Jordanian TEL Centre.