



Online Platform for Academic TEaching and Learning in Iraq and Iran/ OPATEL

Issue # 1
Newsletter arranged by IN@E and IAUSD
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WHAT IS OPATEL PROJECT

OPATEL is a three years project started on October 15, 2016, and funded by the European Union through Erasmus+ programme that concentrates on providing Iraqi and Iranian students and teachers with competencies and skills needed by using Learning Management Systems in Education.

The aim of OPATEL consists in establishment and development of E-Learning center to train staff and students in Iraqi and Iranian universities by using online platform for teaching and learning to be as a hub for using best practices in ICT in education, as well as raising competencies of lecturers and teachers by enhancing the learning processes of students.

This project will focus on development of online platform for teaching and learning by constructing of E-Learning training center in Iraqi and Iranian universities by:

- Developing the abilities of the staff in the universities to use ICT
- Training and following up with staff and students on how to develop, share learning objects, and collaborate their courses, presentations and exercises on online platform.
- Improve quality of teaching and learning by building capacity of universities in how to evaluate, develop and design e-courses.
- Enhancing cooperation with EU partners through mutual visits to develop strategies in how to move from teaching to learning and developing scalable sustainable solutions.

The use of online Platform will steer the education, technical ICT in the right direction. Training of staff to enhance and develop their abilities, will promote reform and modernization of higher education in both countries.

Through this platform partner universities will have a new vision in education systems and these will enhance quality and relevance of higher education

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PROJECT TIMELINE

Work package	Title	Delivery Date
Preparation	Review, State of the art and Network between partner	March-Aug. 2017
Development	Assessment studies for the needs of teachers, lecturers and administrators	May-Aug. 2017
	Purchase of teaching equipment and bibliographic material	July 2017, March 2018
	Make E-Learning System an integrated part in education and teaching	Nov. 2017-Oct. 2018
Quality	Quality control and monitoring	Oct. 2016-Oct. 2018
Dissemination	Project Dissemination	Oct. 2016-Oct. 2018
	Exploitation of results and sustainability	Mar. 2019
Management	Project Management	Oct. 2016-Oct. 2018



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KICK OFF MEETING 13th – 16th March, 2017

The OPATEL kick off meeting has been organized by Leipzig University of Applied Sciences. The meeting was held at HTWK Leipzig, University of Applied Sciences in Leipzig, in (Germany), on 13th-17th March. More than 30 participants from 5 Countries attended the kick off meeting. A detailed list of the Participants is enclosed in this report. Managers, administrative and technical staff of HTWK, UK, IR, PT and GR partners have been involved for the organization and management of the meeting.



First day of the kick-off meeting

During the first day of the kick-off meeting, 13 of March 2017, all participants were transferred to the campus of HTWK in Leipzig. Some of the activities in this day:

1. Meeting with the Staff at HTWK Leipzig
2. Presentation of participating Partners
3. Presentations on the main aim of the project



Second day of the kick-off meeting

During the second day of the kick-off meeting, 14th March 2017, a plenary session with an overview of the whole project structure and objectives, the presentations of each partner and each WPs (task and deliverables) have been outlined. During this day there were presented, discussed and specified all WPs.



Third and fourth days of the kick-off meeting

During the third and fourth day of the kick-off meeting, 15th and 16th March 2017, WPs coordination and management of the project was presented and discussed. HTWK Leipzig as a coordinator for the OPATEL has introduced this WP. Prof.K.Händgen and Dr.R.Qasbi from HTWK clarified the conditions and the subsequence of solutions of OPATEL project as well as the obligations, which all partners have from their position in the project. Some of the activities in this day:

1. Presentation from EU Project Officer Lucia Giannini
2. Extensive discussions on the WPs.
3. Determination of specific deadlines for the implementation of WPs
4. Discussions the process of the project work packages and tasks.



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The First Seminar on Internationalization of Higher Education TUMS

The First Seminar on Internationalization of Higher Education was held with national and international speakers at the central building of TUMS.

April 29-30

Audience: More than 500 people from all over the country and neighbor countries as well as representatives of embassies of several countries

Internationalization of Higher Education Seminar (IHE Seminar) got started with the Recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by National Anthem and continued with the speech of Dr. Ali Jafarian, president of IHE seminar and the chancellor of Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) as the first speaker of this event.

The first day of IHE Seminar was led by Mobility/ Innovation panel in which speakers from Iran and Canada gave lectures on certain subjects.

Mobility/ Research panel, the second panel of the first day of IHE Seminar, was run by the speakers from Australia, Switzerland, Spain and Czech Republic and the first day of the IHE Seminar was ended by three panel discussions on "The German Research Landscape and Funding Opportunities", "Mobility and Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications" and "Importance of Strategic Thinking in Internationalization of Higher Education". The second day of the Seminar was started with the Mobility/ Education panel and four speakers from Iran, Ukraine, Spain and Bulgaria shared their experiences with the audience in the field of internationalization of higher education. The second panel which was the last panel of IHE Seminar, aimed to discuss the Strategic Thinking in internationalization of higher education by speakers from Iran, France, Spain and Australia.

Due to the demand of Iranian universities for getting more information about international ranking and accreditation, two round tables were held to meet the demands of audience in the fields of International Ranking and Accreditation of universities.



The Second Management Meeting in SU-Erbil-Iraq

Management Meeting in SU, Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq
June 15, 2017

The Second steering committee meeting took place on Erbil 15th June in Erbil, Iraq, with the participation of all Jordanian partners.

Participant: Dr. Riyadh Qashi the coordinator of OPATEL and the representatives of Salahaddin University, University of Dohuk, Dohuk Polytechnic University and University of Basra

Description On Thursday, June 15th, 2017 Erasmus Plus meeting was held at Salahaddin University guest house meeting hall. The meeting was conducted by Professor Dr. Riyadh Qashi, the coordinator of the project from Leipzig University of Applied sciences, Leipzig-Germany. The representatives of the Iraqi partner Universities (Salahaddin University, University of Dohuk, Dohuk Polytechnic University and University of Basra) are participated in the meeting. In the meeting the following titles are tackled and discussed:

- 1- How to buy Equipment for establishing e-learning centers at partners Universities.
- 2- Staff convention that is the paper work for the staff payment working days.
- 3- Staff and students survey on e-learning system applications.
- 4- The coming trainings on e-learning needs of partner universities were discussed. The training will be at UPAT-Patras in Greece in the period Nov. 19-26th, 2017. Each partner University will share by three participants.

Dr. Riyadh Qashi conducted the seminar presentation and gave valuable information on the subjects mentioned above.



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Third Management Meeting in Tehran at TUMS

Third Management Meeting in Tehran at TUMS

July 2, 2017

Audience: TUMS OPATEL team and Vice-chancellor for Global Strategies and International Affairs

On July 2, 2017, Dr. Arabkheradmand, TUMS Vice-Chancellor for Global Strategies and International Affairs, had a meeting with Dr. Riyadh Qashi, representative of Leipzig University as the European coordinator of OPATEL Project. At this meeting, some facts and figures were provided by Dr. Qashi regarding the Online Platform for Academic Teaching and Learning in Iran and Iraq (OPATEL). He also added some explanation about funding regulations of this program. Furthermore, TUMS officials emphasized the importance of OPATEL and stated that the outcome of this project will benefit a grand number of educational institutes.



EU-Iran Higher Education and Research Event and the OPATEL Project Management Meeting with IAUSDJ and UTH Representatives

EU-Iran higher education and research meeting and OPATEL project management meeting with IAUSDJ and UTH representatives

July 3-4

Several workshops on EU-Iran scientific-research cooperation were held by the effort of European Union and Iranian officials workgroup of scientific collaborations at Negarestan Garden, Tehran, Iran on July 3-4, 2017. This event was held with the presence of representatives from Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS), University of Torbat-e Heydarieh (UTH) and Sanandaj Branch, Islamic Azad University (IAUSDJ) as the Iranian partners and also Leipzig University of Applied Sciences (HTWK) as the coordinator of OPATEL program.

Common interest subjects such as hygiene and education, technology and innovation, and academic cooperation for the purpose of student exchange were discussed in the workshops. Potential fields of collaboration in Iran's 2020 perspective and Erasmus Plus programs were also among the discussed issues between two parties.

At this event, it was declared that appropriate dissemination of information to the universities regarding EU-Iran collaboration is of high importance in order to develop this contribution more.

During this event, Dr. Riyadh Qashi discussed the following titles to IAUSDJ and UTH representatives:

- 1- Buying Equipment for establishing E-learning and E-Teaching centers.
- 2- Staff convention that is the paper work for the staff payment working days.
- 3- Staff and students survey on e-learning system applications.
- 4- The coming trainings on e-learning needs of partner universities.



OPATEL Project Team Meeting in TUMS

TUMS coordinators of OPATEL project met at GISA, Tehran

July 15, 2017

Audience: Dr. Mohammad Hossein Nekoofar, Dr. Shabani and Dr. Marashi

Dr. Mohammad Hossein Nekoofar, Director of International Relations, Accreditation and Ranking who acts as the coordinator of Iranian universities at OPATEL project, met the other TUMS representatives, Dr. Enayat Shabani and Dr. Sina Marashi to follow up and also to manage the ongoing and upcoming OPATEL activities on July 15, 2017 at TUMS office of Vice-chancellor for Global Strategies and International Affairs. Issues regarding the contract, different offers for buying equipment and some related matters regarding work plan 1 and work plan 2 of the project were discussed. It was also negotiated to update OPATEL website through publishing the news from other partners of the project in order to disseminate the newest information in an appropriate time.



A Meeting to Discuss the OPATEL website Infrastructure in TUMS

OPATEL website infrastructure discussion

July 16, 2017

Audience: Dr. Hojjat Zeraati, the Director of Statistics and Information Technology of TUMS

Iranian coordinator for OPATEL Project, had a meeting the Director of Statistics and Information Technology of TUMS.

Dr. Nekoofar gave some short explanations about Erasmus+ projects specially OPATEL project. He clarified OPATEL's main goals and its current activities to go on to define the needs that the Project has. During this meeting Dr. Zeraati also mentioned the necessity of making this Infrastructure under the supervision of TUMS, so that the content can be managed and monitored by TUMS officials, having this in mind that this would cost more and bear responsibilities for TUMS. Finally, according to the responsibilities assigned to TUMS, it was declared that publishing the content of the OPATEL website is under supervision of TUMS and this university has this task to receive the news and other type of OPATEL contents from the other partners and manage it in this regard.

To conclude the meeting, decision for reserving server and other necessary arrangements about Infrastructure of the website has been made. And also it was stated that future process about designing a new and independent website for OPATEL project by considering the contents of existed website should start.



Dissemination at 4th National Conference on IT, Computer and Telecommunication (Iran) in UTH

Conference on Information Technology, Computer and Telecommunication

Date: July 13, 2017

The 4th National Conference on Information Technology, Computer and Telecommunication which was held on July 13, 2017 at University of Torbat Heidarieh at Torbat Heidarieh city in Iran, the OPATEL program was explained by Mr. Ehsan Yasrebi, The coordinator of the project at this university. In his speech, the project specifications was introduced, and its aims, what the university should do in this project, the budget of OPATEL project, the other partners and some other things about this project were pointed. In the end, raised questions of the participants were answered by Mr. Yasrebi. He also made more clarification on how universities can start other projects like OPATEL.



Assessment study for the needs of teachers of Islamic Azad University- Sanandaj branch (IAUSDJ) regarding e-learning

Assessment study for the needs of teachers of IAUSDJ
July and August, 2017

Audience: Professors of IAUSDJ

In order to assess the E-teaching and E-learning needs of the professors of IAUSDJ, OPATEL team of IAUSDJ designed a questionnaire during 10 sessions with several hours each. The questionnaire uploaded on google-doc website and then, the OPATEL project was briefly introduced to the professors on social networks and they were asked to respond to the questionnaire. After two weeks, 100 professors answered to the questionnaire. The results were analysed by OPATEL team during 5 sessions. Finally, the report was prepared in 42 pages and submitted to Dr. Riyadh Qashi (the manager of the OPATEL project).



Dissemination of OPATEL and discussion about Erasmus+ projects at IAUSDJ

Info Day for Erasmus+ Projects

Audience: Faculty members and graduate students and those interested in acquiring the needed skills that enable them to translate their ideas into proposals "projects" worthy to compete for.

IAUSDJ OPATEL team held meetings for the professors of several colleges of the university to discuss the OPATEL project and Erasmus Plus and the European Commission possible projects. In the beginning, Dr. Shokrollahi explained the goals and implementation of the OPATEL project and stated that after implementation of the project and establishment of the university's learning management system website, it is expected that a significant number of professors and students will benefit from this system. At the last part of this section questions about the OPATEL project were answered.

In the next section, Dr. Sheikahmadi had a presentation about E-learning and learning management systems and he explained the advantages of using learning management system to improvement the education efficiency for professors and students.

In final section, Dr. Shokrollahi introduced the Erasmus Plus and the horizon 2020 projects on the website of the European Commission to the attendants and professors got acquainted with these projects.



The inauguration of the OPATEL center in Duhok Polytechnic University (DPU)

Establishment of eLearning center in DPU
22 October 2017

President of Duhok Polytechnic University (Prof. Dr. Adnan Mohsin Abdul Aziz) inaugurated the OPATEL center, which was equipped with the e-learning equipment with the supporting from the European Union EU. Establishing of OPATEL center is one of the stages for OPATEL project in the framework of the Erasmus+ program in cooperation with the EU, and in accordance with the levels of the project to train the teaching staff of the university with the modern methods of the e-learning.

This project will help our university to improve the teaching methods and will positively reflect on the educational process in our university and develop it to be compatible with the international standards of the universities for the educational level.

The ceremony was attended by the Dean of the Technical College of Engineering TCE in Duhok (Dr. Rijab Ibraheem Hameed), and the representative of Duhok Polytechnic University DPU in OPATEL project Dr. Firas Mahmood Mustafa, and a delegation from the Presidency of DPU as well as the teaching staff and the heads of scientific departments at the Technical College of Engineering in Duhok.



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Workshop (Educational Platforms & Modern Technologies in E-learning), University of Baghdad

Establishment of eLearning center in UoB
21 August 2017

Audience: Employees and teachers of the University of Baghdad
The workshop was given to the employees and teachers of the University of Baghdad who are working or interested in the field of e-learning. In this workshop, Dr. Mohamed Sadiq, Director of Avi-Cenna Center for e-learning presented an introduction about Educational Platforms & Modern Technologies in E-learning and its importance in the in e-learning. The workshop also focused on the role of e-learning in communication between teachers and students at University of Baghdad.

The workshop discussed the future plans that proposed by the Center in the field of developing e-learning. Some participants presented some of their perceptions about e-learning. Before the workshop was concluded, open discussions on e-learning were held among the participants. Some questions were posed and answered by Dr. Mohamed Sadiq.



Tehran University of medical Sciences (TUMS), Launching OPATEL Website

Launching OPATEL website

April 2017

Launching the OPATEL website (www.opatel.net and www.opatel.org and www.opatel.ir) in April 2017 was another main activity of TUMS OPATEL team which was continuously followed. Several meetings with participation of IT specialists were held to discuss content and structure of the website. Receiving relevant information from other OPATEL partners and publishing it on the website is an ongoing activity that is constantly tracked.



Dissemination Activities by University of Patras

Internal meeting of OPATEL UPAT team

Audience: More than 2.500 attendees

NoC participated in Researchers Night 2017 presenting OPATEL project. Researcher night is the biggest science and research celebration held annually in more than 300 towns throughout Europe. It is funded by the European Commission under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/about/european-researchers-night_en

The event took place in Camper of Achaia and in pedestrian of R. Fereou Street in the historical center of Patras city where more than 2.500 attendees participated.



Presentation of OPATEL project to students of the Department of Economics

14/10/2017

Dr. Victoria Daskalou presented the OPATEL project to students of the Department of Economics as part of the activities undertaken by the Department for the support of academic studies using e-learning methods. Dr. Daskalou explained to students the possibilities given by online educational material and open courses and suggested repositories where they could access online open educational resources (OER). She presented the projects where the Department has participated for the development of OER, such as the Open Greek Academic Courses and the Erasmus+ "Open-up Entrepreneurship" project and finally she described the scope of the OPATEL project. A google map presenting the geographical distribution of the OPATEL partners was also illustrated, drawing the attention of students to the international nature of the project activities.



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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Survey- TUMS

Assessment of TUMS academic and administrative staff needs

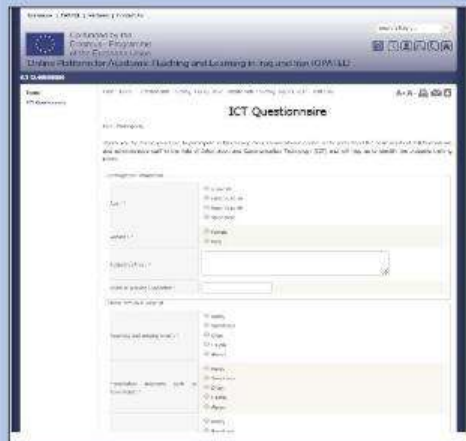
July 2017

Audience: TUMS academic and administrative staff

Based on responses from TUMS academic and administrative staff collected and analyzed on July 2017, the TUMS ICT Survey provides information on the teachers and administrative staff ICT needs. The main objectives of the survey was to

- Obtain the basic ICT knowledge of academic and administrative staff at TUMS;
- Collect the statistical data on the answered received;
- Understand the needs and challenges related to ICT needs;
- Hold relevant training workshops on the extracted ICT needs.

Results of this study was transferred to the Leipzig University of Applied Sciences (HTWK), the project coordinator, for further considerations.



Supplying Equipment-TUMS

OPATEL website infrastructure discussion

June 2017

Negotiating with domestic vendors of electronic devices to buy OPATEL equipment was another activity of TUMS OPATEL team. Reviewing the market and different RFPs received from various vendors at different meetings to choose from the best proposal at the best price took place during the very early announcement of this action in June 2017. After choosing the right vendor, equipment including an IBOARD, a server, 25 PCs, two color printers, eight laptops, two video projectors, two LED TVs, 25 head phones and network equipment were purchased with the budget received from the European Union.

Management Meetings-TUMS

Management meetings

As one of the partners of OPATEL project, TUMS has started its activities from the beginning stages in 2016. Various internal meeting with relevant managers and staff were held to discuss and distribute the information of the project. Different tasks were defined and different people from administrative and academic staff were assigned to do and follow up. We had a small group of five people but with high potential in distance learning and information technology including three members of our international relations office and two academic members from our virtual school. Academic Members of TUMS OPATEL team also attended the kick off meeting at the Leipzig University of Applied Sciences, Germany which was held on March 13-16, 2017. In this meeting, in addition to familiarizing with the details of the program, they got to know other contributors and talked face to face and shared ideas.



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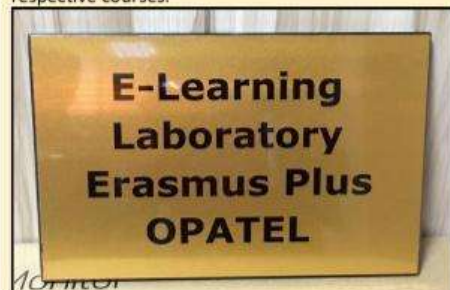
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E-learning Laboratory at Salahaddin University-Erbil

OPATEL Center in SU

The advance in modern technology has a great impact on various aspects of human life in general since innovations have facilitated our daily activities. In order to continue the progress of science, we have to come up with novel approaches in the field of education. Nowadays, the educators of many academic institutions around the world have adopted new gadgets in their classes, such as using PowerPoint presentations, Projectors, Learning Management systems (Moodle) and iClickers. Recent technological advancements have also left impact on the education system. For instance, electronic learning (e-learning) has widely embraced and exploited in modern education system

Therefore, Salahaddin University-Erbil (SU) has recently established an E-learning Laboratory, with the support of Erasmus+ programme of the European Union under the supervision of Leipzig University of Applied Sciences (led by Prof. Dr. Riyadh Qashi), at the SU Research Center. This Laboratory, which is furnished with a carpet, twenty computer desks, and twenty rotary chairs, has twenty hp desktop computers, which are connected with each other through a server. There is one Cannon brand color laser printer, which can be used to print handouts for the prospective workshop participants. In addition, this lab is equipped with a Sony Brand data show projector that can be employed during the workshops to present interactive data to participants. Also, there is a Lenovo laptop for the instructors to use it during lecture times. This laboratory has been established to train the instructors at the SU on how to use Learning Management System (LMS), such as Moodle. They can upload lecture slides, videos, quizzes onto the server that is located in the SU Research Center. Afterwards, students can have their own log in and passwords to be able to access to the materials of respective courses.



Opening Ceremony, July 2017

Audience: University assistant professor Dr.Ahmed Anwar Dezaye and the deans of some 13 colleges

On October 10th, 2017 the president of Salahaddin University assistant professor Dr.Ahmed Anwar Dezaye has hold opening ceremony of the e-learning laboratory mentioned above after its completion by the technicians. The University council (The deans of some 13 colleges) at Salahaddin University participated in the opening of the lab. The lab is now ready for practice by the university academics and students. A team of 3 university academics will supervise the practicing of the academics and students starting from December 2017 onwards. Assistant professor Dr.Mohammed Azeez Saeed the project focal point at Salahaddin University had a great role in establishing the lab. He also participated in the opening ceremony.



Internal meetings in University of Duhok

Internal meetings in UoD

04/06/2017, 25/05/2017, 25/10/2017

Audience: OPATEL team in UoD

UoD OPATEL project team meets at the University of Duhok to discuss the requirements of the eLearning Lab. in term of the equipment.

Also UoD OPATEL project team meet at the University of Duhok to study the report needed for analyzing current eLearning situation at UoD at 25/10/2017



Inauguration of E-learning center-UoD

Establishment of OPATEL center

12/10/2017

E-Learning center has been launched at UoD officially. The center was inaugurated by the University board members and UoD OPATEL team with the attendance of a group of local media. During the ceremony, the project and its objectives were explained to the audience by the President of University Dr. Moslih Duhok and the Director of the International Relations Dr. Rund A. Hammoudi



Inauguration of E-Teaching and E-Learning center-IAUSDJ

Establishment of E-Teaching and E-Learning center

10/10/2017

E-Teaching and E-Learning center of IAUSDJ was established. This center is situated in central complex of IAUSDJ. The center has been furnished and ready to use for the OPATEL project implementation in IAUSDJ. Dr. Borhan Shokrollahi had the main role in all related affairs regarding the establishment of the center.



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Moodle; E-learning System in Basrah Medical College

Moodle, LMS in Basrah medical college

24/09/2017

Audience: Students and staffs of the college

On September 24th, Basrah Medical College held an education activity in the field of E learning aimed to improve the way of delivering knowledge and information to the student, in addition, enhance the interaction between teacher and student and convert from teacher learning center to student learning center. Toward achievement of this objective, Basrah Medical College held a lecture on how to use Moodle for teaching staff trying to enhance the ability of the teacher staff, the lecture Assistant Professor Nazar Haddad Vice dean for scientific affairs, local coordinator of Erasmus + OPATEL project in the university address to the participant on how to use their own login in detail to upload their lectures and discussion made with staff to discuss the main obstacle they face in accessing the system. The lecture presents a stepwise fashion of uploading the lectures in different format whether ' pdf, ppt, pptx, ' in addition show important tools in the system which is Quiz.The lecture also present the way how Quiz created, the format available in the system to create your quiz through multiple choice questions. The attendance to this lectures where interesting staff from 11 departments in the college attend the lecture in an unexpected interest of staff toward in cooperation of more technology in delivering lectures to their students, the activity happening in the E learning Hall established with the help of Erasmus+ OPATEL Project.

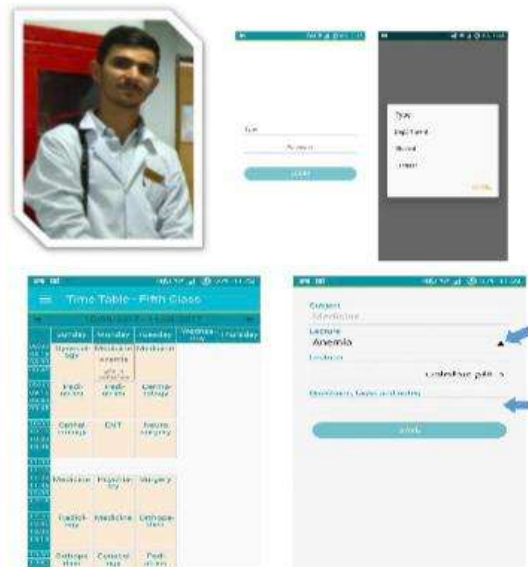


An application for E-learning created by a student in University of Basrah

An application for ELearning

The application is useful for lecturers and students who would like to use in ELearning

22 years old, Muntadher MH Al Waeli, 5th year Medical Student program a simple applications both Mobile and Computer tools to facilitate the eLearning system in the college, with the support of the Deanery of Basrah Medical College, and with inspiration of OPATEL project, 5th year medical student "Muntadher" try to find more friendly tool to present the lecture through uploading them by mobile application, in addition he add a tool for formative assessment in the lecture by creating a mobile application for voting to MCQ and desktop app that enable the lecturer to and his/her Questions. The application now in the Apple Store and steps toward development of Android Application. Basrah Medical College try to evaluate that system to be used in the near future.





PROJECT COORDINATOR



Leipzig University of Applied Science

PARTNERS



Instituto Superior de Paços de Brandão



University of Patras



Int@E UG



UNIVERSITY OF DUHOK



TEHRAN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES



University of Baghdad

University of Duhok

Tehran University of Medical Sciences



Duhok Polytechnic University



University of Basrah



Sanandaj branch, Islamic Azad University



Salahaddin University



Consultores Associados



University of Torbat Heydarieh

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Website: www.opatel.net

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Erasmus-Opatel-1781204268856465/>

Newsletter arranged by INTEL and UNICEF

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