

**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY NETWORK
FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION
(EUNITE)**

Memorandum of Understanding

20 October 2000

For agreement with this Memorandum of Understanding,

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Prof. dr. Universidad de Granada

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Prof. dr. ir. A. Oosterlinck, Rector Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

For Prof. dr. B. Flodgren ,Rektor,
Prof. dr. A. Ardeberg, Pro-Rektor Lunds Universitet

For Prof. dr. Sir J. Arbuthnott; Principal and Vice-Chancellor,
Dr. S. Brough, Director Information Technology Services,
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Prof. dr. F. A. van Vught, Rector Universiteit Twente

The European Network for Information Technology in Education (EUNITE) is a strategic alliance between the following universities:

Aalborg Universitet	Denmark
Universidad de Granada	Spain
FernUniversität Hagen	Germany
Teknillinen Korkeakoulu Helsinki	Finland
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	Belgium
Lunds Universitet	Sweden
University of Strathclyde	Scotland
Universiteit Twente	The Netherlands

Introduction

The objective of EUNITE is to promote and support the implementation of ICT (information and communication technologies) in teaching and learning in higher education. An important aim is to create a “European Virtual Campus” (EVC), a co-operative network of universities for exchange of courses, sharing of joint courses, and joint development of programmes and courses. EUNITE will provide a forum for creating, designing and offering of courses and

programmes to the European and global market. In specific activities of EUNITE also non-member universities may take part.

General Goals

The general strategic goals of EUNITE are:

- to promote the use of ICT as tools for improving teaching and learning in higher education,
- to capture the market for life-long learning on a university level,
- to enhance and develop the co-operation of the EUNITE universities in these fields.

In achieving these goals EUNITE wants to develop the following opportunities for co-operation:

- the innovation potential of ICT for on-campus higher education,
- new ways for open and distance learning,
- the internationalisation of learning programmes,
- enhanced inter-university networking in the provision of courses and programmes/curricula, and the production of learning materials.

Governance

Governance is taken up by a Steering Committee. This consists of one representative of each university appointed by the university (each university being allowed to bring additional people to the meetings). The Steering Committee elects a chairperson among its members. The Steering Committee will create, implement and maintain bylaws.

The Steering Committee monitors the activities of EUNITE. It evaluates the working and financial plans of project proposals and reviews the project and task force results.

Each participating university covers its own costs connected to the operations where it is involved, including costs connected to the tasks that are taken up within the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may apply for additional funding.

On the basis of the reports from the Task Forces and the proposals from the EUNITE member institutions the Steering Committee will develop an activity plan for each year.

The activity plan describes the projects and joint activities to pursue the goals of EUNITE as described in this Memorandum of Understanding.

Courses and Programmes

One of the main thrusts of EUNITE is the development of joint European courses and programmes for teaching and learning. EUNITE therefore aims to develop models for European courses on the basis of (modular) developments at each of the partnering universities.

A main consideration is the course language. In Europe we are dealing with different national languages and it is realised that this will remain so, in particular for bachelor's or equivalent courses. When partners collaborate in the joint development of courses, it is proposed that English will be adopted as common course language for master texts, and that courses will be translated into the national language from this master text if such a need is felt.

Productive exchange and sharing of courseware, in general and in particular among the EUNITE institutions, is only feasible if the courseware will be platform independent. It is a primary interest of EUNITE to promote such platform independence. EUNITE should act as an interest group to promote interoperability between different platforms.

Also on the basis of the above considerations course development will, initially, be focused on Masters, PhD and specialised post-graduate programmes, and courses for continuing professional development.

In connection to the development and exploitation of courses special attention will be given to the issue of intellectual property rights. It is generally felt that copyright issues are becoming more and more critical to the international co-operation in courseware development. It is in the firm interest of EUNITE to create a joint pool of expertise, also to take different national legislation on copyright issues into account, with the aim to emphasise the importance of access to educational material on the Internet and to develop a set of rules concerning the use of copyrighted material within the EUNITE network.

Research and Development

The advancement of ICT in teaching and learning is one of the cornerstones of EUNITE. Therefore EUNITE is firmly committed to co-operation in research projects and experiments in these areas, and will promote exchange of experience by taking an active role in organising EUNITE and international conferences and seminars.

The objective is to co-ordinate the activities of the consortium partners and to create in this way stable and strong research of sufficient depth and width to be active at the research frontier in this area. The aim is to reduce and prevent possible duplicate efforts at the partnering institutions.

Support Network

A crucial parameter of support is an international support network at the disposal of the partner universities, built upon local support centres or networks for the application of ICT in teaching and learning. Such a European support network will aim at bundling existing resources and pooling together existing expertise. The aim is to be and to remain at the frontier of developments in ICT in teaching and learning, and by doing so to be able to train and enhance the skills of the teachers of the partnering institutions.

Appendix: Taskforces

From its start EUNITE has set up the following taskforces:

- Digital learning platforms and digital campus (technical and pedagogical aspects),
- European Virtual Campus: concept and policies of co-operation
- Pilot programmes and courses,
- EUNITE web site implementation,
- Research and development.

Each university nominates members of his/her university to at least three different taskforces. In this way sufficient spread over the taskforces from the different universities was secured. Intermediate taskforce reports are delivered, and a full report of each taskforce is requested by the end of 2000. It should specify an action plan and budget proposal for 2001.

The taskforces have the following tasks:

a. DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL CAMPUS (technical and pedagogical aspects)

- to make an inventory of digital learning platforms, being developed or in use at the partner universities, and define the conditions of their compatibility in view of a joint but distributed digital campus (EVC). This inventory should also collect relevant information on international developments, with emphasis on open standards;
- to develop a proposal for EUNITE policy/ies on digital learning platforms within the partner universities as well as for the network (EVC);
- to provide a list of prioritised technical requirements for EVC (e.g. minimal bandwidth, different concepts according to expected evolutions in bandwidth, solutions for the problem of maintaining quality, databases with reusable materials,...);
- to define conditions and restrictions for using each other's platforms;
- to develop concepts for technical support to teachers and learners;
- to provide an inventory of the contribution that partners are willing to take up in the framework of a support network;
- to establish where needed contacts with relevant organisations (PROMETEUS, TERENA, ENPG, DANTE etc.).

b. EUROPEAN VIRTUAL CAMPUS: CONCEPT AND POLICIES FOR CO-OPERATION

- to clarify the concept and models of a European Virtual Campus, as a digital teaching and learning environment, and a distributed database of teaching and learning materials;
- to investigate the partners' needs towards EVC;
- to define (internal and external) target groups for EVC programmes and courses;
- to define policies and develop guidelines for course development and delivery;
- to discuss access conditions and policies (e.g. towards external target groups and towards non partner universities that participate in course development);
- to discuss accreditation of courses and quality standards;
- to develop a set of rules concerning the use of copyrighted web-based material within the EUNITE network.

c. PILOT PROGRAMMES AND COURSES

- to provide an overview of programmes, courses and teaching and learning materials that are available or under construction in partner universities as input to the database and to joint programme and course development;
- to investigate the partners' interests and priorities for joint programme and course development, delivery and exchange;
- to identify and exploit concrete opportunities for exchanging and sharing programmes, courses and/or course materials;
- to design and develop concrete pilots of joint development of programmes and courses.

d. WEB SITE IMPLEMENTATION

- to define the overall design and structure of the EUNITE website (including the website for the European Virtual Campus) as a source of information about the network, and as a portal to the partners' websites;
- to define the main areas to be covered (information on EUNITE and its ongoing activities, general information on ICT in education, links to relevant sites);
- to provide content for the web site;
- to define accessibility rules and guidelines.

The web site should contain world-wide information on ICT initiatives in particular in relation to teaching and learning and other relevant activities in education.

This web site will be created in close co-operation with EuroPACE 2000 for design and subsequent maintenance.

e. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- to make an inventory of relevant research within the EUNITE partner universities on the use of ICT in teaching and learning, paying specific attention to "ICT pedagogy";
- to investigate possible co-operation in research projects and practical experiments in this field;
- to organise workshops and seminars for exchange of experience.