

Press Release

28th September 2005, University of Malta, Malta.

Launch of the Mediterranean Virtual University in Malta

Introduction

The University of Malta (UoM) announces the launch of the Mediterranean Virtual University (MVU), a European Union Euro-Mediterranean Information Society (EUMEDIS) funded initiative which brings together 11 Universities and Institutions from across Europe and the Mediterranean Region to provide high-quality online courses employing cutting-edge pedagogy and e-learning techniques all within the framework of a collaborative effort and administrative centralisation. In a world where effective and relevant education is increasingly important but at the same time not equally accessible, students from different countries can benefit from the expertise of each MVU partner Institution and follow appealing online courses without commute or relocation effort, at their own pace, in full collaboration with other students, and under the auspices of a centralised accredit-able entity towards which MVU aspires.

MVU partners include prestigious Institutions from the Denmark, Malta, Cyprus, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan, under the directorship of the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK.

Funding

MVU, is an approximately 4 million Euro funded EUMEDIS project for which the UoM budget is around €180,000 in salaries, administration expenses, equipment and furniture. Considerable additional funds are also allocated to the UoM for travel to workshops, meetings and training courses. The MVU Maltese team consists of a project coordinator, 2 content experts, 2 content developers, and clerical support personnel.

The Role of the University of Malta

The UoM is participating in the MVU project through the Department of Computer Science and AI, of the Faculty of Science, in particular through the effort of Dr. Ernest Cachia as the Maltese MVU Project Coordinator and one of the MVU Content Experts, and through the Department of Manufacturing Engineering, of the Faculty of Engineering, in particular through the effort of Dr. Ing. Jonathan C. Borg as the Maltese MVU Steering Group representative and second MVU Content Expert. Through these departments, the UoM is responsible for the development of 5 online courses. This project is also a clear example of how beneficial inter-faculty collaborative activities can be for the UoM.

Courses Developed in Malta

Although MVU will eventually offer degree courses in a number of areas, during its initial piloting phase, only Computer Science and some I.T. related courses are being offered. A number of courses have already been developed and are entering their evaluation phase. In this respect, the UoM is currently evaluating two pilot courses: **LINUX Operating Systems Principles** and **Computer Integrated Manufacturing**. Participation in pilot courses is free of charge and students also have the option of participating in courses offered by any other MVU partner Institution. If anyone is interested in evaluating these pilot courses please contact Dr. Ernest Cachia on telephone 2340 2519 or ernest.cachia@um.edu.mt. For further information please refer to <http://mvu.cs.um.edu.mt>.