



2021 Asia-Pacific IIOE Mid-Year Consultation Meeting

Digital Transformation for Inclusive
and Quality Higher Education:
Mapping the Core Competencies
of the Higher Education Workforce

Concept Note





Teacher is the core to continuing education during the pandemic as **Leading in crisis, reimagining the future.**



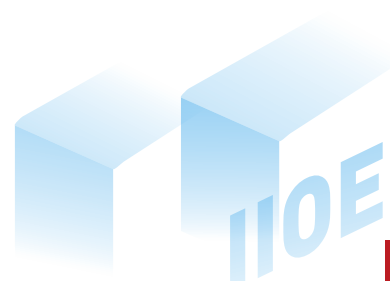
—From UNESCO, 2020 World Teacher's Day



Background

Over the past years, higher education in the Asia-Pacific has experienced rapid growth in advancing towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education. Due to the increasing demand of digital competencies and skills in global market, 84% Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the region have regenerated the new strategies in talent cultivation and started to prepare for the digital transformation. In the same manner, HEIs also attempted to address the challenges of quality assurance and graduate's employment due to the fast expansion. However, the unprecedented global health crisis since 2020 has disrupted its progress. Although UNESCO and its partners have quickly responded by promoting and adopting an online and blended approach in planning and conducting educational activities, challenges persist and tend to exacerbate. For example, during the pandemic, less than 60% of the HEIs in the region manage to continue some of their academic activities online, while the remaining are still struggling to find solutions to resume (IAU, 2020). The pace of catching up and adapting to the new normal is concerning for developing countries in the region .

Meanwhile, recent educational discourses have picked up the critical role played by teachers as leaders in reshaping the future of education. Teachers need to embrace this shift to online and blended approach by enhancing their pedagogical and technological capacities. Nevertheless, this process will still require joint efforts from the entire Higher Education Workforce (HEW) including leaders and support staff. Leaders offer support at the institutional level by devising holistic policies, while support staff provide relevant and necessary assistance to facilitate teachers' engagement in such an approach. Therefore, **Continuing and Professional Development (CPD)** for teachers and **Supportive University Ecosystem** are of critical importance under the current context. These two complement each other and form a strong drive, prompting higher education to swiftly undergo the stages from building readiness, applying and infusing, to achieving transformation eventually.

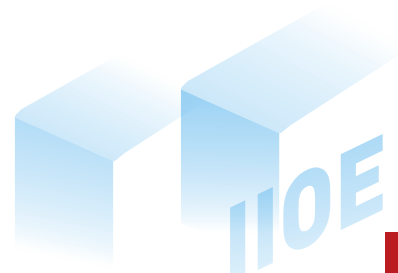




International Institute of Online Education in the Asia-Pacific

Launched in April 2020, International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) is a collaborative effort of UNESCO, UNESCO-ICHEI, its partner HEIs, enterprises and international organizations to accelerate the progress to achieve SDG4. IIOE is an **educational platform** providing tailored online professional teacher development programmes/courses for partner HEIs with both pedagogical and infrastructural support through the Smart Classroom project. It serves as an **advisory body** to facilitate institutional digital transformation and quality enhancement through its comprehensive ICT Competency Framework and its quality assurance mechanism for partner HEIs. IIOE is also a network to facilitate the IIOE implementation at scale in developing countries and build an active partnership **network** for sharing resources and experiences and facilitating knowledge exchange.

Since its official launch, HEIs from six countries - namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - have actively participated in promoting quality higher education through IIOE activities. In 2021, the University of Engineering and Technology Lahore (UET Lahore), Pakistan, has been elected as IIOE Rotating Presidency Unit, to lead the capacity building programmes and partnership development among HEIs. At the same time, more HEIs have expressed willingness in co-ownership of IIOE's valuable resources and are joining this active network. It is based on these new developments, IIOE has decided to further scale up its efforts in the Asia-Pacific.

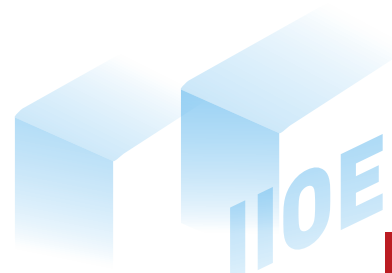




IIOE Competency Framework for Higher Education Workforce in the Asia-Pacific

To better reflect the changes, the IIOE Competency Framework for Teachers will need to be updated in regard to its inclusiveness, practicality and relevance to the existing national standards of teachers' professional development in each country. In this regard, UNESCO-ICHEI and UET Lahore jointly call for meetings in July 2021 to identify core competencies of the Higher Education Workforce. Considering the vast differences among countries in its network, the meeting will be divided into two stages, with pre-consultation meetings grouped by sub-regions on July 15th, 2021, and a consultation meeting on July 27th, 2021.

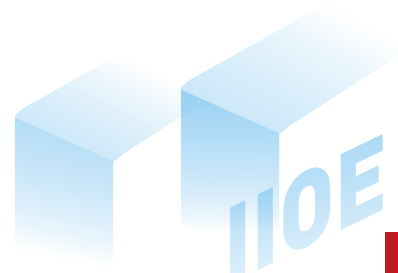
Both sessions will synthesize significant insights into an updated ICT Competency Framework for the Higher Education Workforce. This framework will not only articulate the competency standards for the Higher Education Workforce, but also informs the professional development programmes that IIOE has in stock, which together can be applied to the digitalization of education in the foreseeable future.





Objectives and Outcomes

- Showcase good practices of IIOE among partners from different perspectives and compile into ***Regional Case Studies of IIOE*** in the Asia-Pacific.
- Identify **challenges and enabling factors** to ensure that teachers can take lead and engage in online and blended learning with support from the university ecosystem.
- Adopt an updated ***IIOE Competency Framework for Higher Education Workforce*** which can better reflect and integrate to existing national teachers' competency frameworks and actual needs across countries in Asia-Pacific.
- Initiate a **Policy Brief** centering Continuing and Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and competencies of higher education workforce, for the upcoming UNESCO World Higher Education Conference in 2022.





When and where

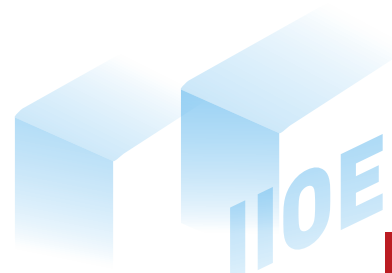
The meeting will be divided into **two stages**:

Pre-consultation meetings on **July 15th (Thursday)** and Consultation meeting on **July 27th (Tuesday)**. Both will be held online and in-person simultaneously. The venue will be at International Convention Center, the Southern University of Science and Technology, Shenzhen, China. Due to International travel bans, some speakers overseas will participate in the meeting via **Tencent Voov**. A rehearsal with detailed guide will be conducted prior to the meetings.



Participation

All partner universities, enterprises and other key stakeholders in the IIOE network in the Asia-Pacific will be invited to attend the meeting. Since the meeting will be held virtually, there will be no limits to the number of participants. However, only specific guests will be invited to speak.





Organizers

The event will be co-organized by International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI) in partnership with University of Engineering and Technology Lahore, Pakistan. Asia-Pacific Programme Office of UNESCO-ICHEI will serve as coordinator of the meeting.



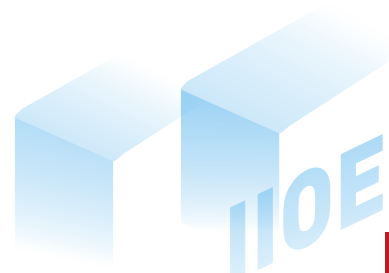
Language

The working language of the meeting will be **English** and **Chinese**.



Contact

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