

## **UNITED EXCELLENCE: THE NEW GUIDE'S PLATFORM TO DEVELOP HIGH QUALITY UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS FOR ADVANCED CAREERS**

**Arturo Lavalle**

Universities are seen as the repositories of valuable human capital and higher education as a key sector for promoting social and economic development. The accelerating shift to high-technology and information economy forces the higher education system to prepare a competent workforce to meet changing demands for labour. As stated in the *ILO 2010 Global Employment Trends Report*, we are living in a time of rapid technology and labour market change. Employers and industries need people with creative and higher-order thinking skills and, especially those who enter the job market for the first time, have to keep pace with these changes. In this framework it is crucial to provide higher education students with postgraduate courses and programs able to meet the challenges of such evolving professional context.

In order to tackle with this issue and with the aim of continuously promoting a culture of quality and excellence in education, GUIDE Association has decided to launch a *Knowledge Sharing and Content Development Platform* favouring the production of innovative learning contents through the exchange of relevant information, ideas, suggestions, and expertise among international institutions. The platform is based on an efficient and easy-to-use structure made of a private area, dedicated to the new curricula production, and a public area hosting general information about the participating institutions, introductory modules of the courses produced, a comprehensive database of worldwide employment portals and articles and papers on university-enterprise cooperation projects. It intends to broadly address five macro-areas, namely Economics, Arts and Literatures, Science and Environment, ICT, and Social Sciences also offering the possibility of linking the different knowledge in cross-disciplinary programmes.

More specifically, the objectives it aims to achieve are to:

- respond to the increased demand of quality and excellence in education
- create a virtuous environment of educational research and development
- strengthen partnerships and networking among high-quality international institutions

- represent a point of reference and a benchmark model for other universities worldwide so increasing their prestige and reputation
- promote the implementation of innovative results, insights and best practices
- provide academic institutions with a new tool for exchange, research, dissemination and valorization of results and new curricula development
- attract the interest of stakeholders and policy makers at a larger scale towards new programmes and courses better meeting the labour market demand

Through this platform teachers and researchers' community is called to detect and analyze strengths and weaknesses of existing university postgraduate contents, evaluating their effectiveness in terms of generating valid outcomes for students and providing them with the adequate problem solving, critical thinking and multidisciplinary skills necessary to answer the current global labor market requirements.

Hence, on the one hand this new GUIDE-developed tool allows higher education institutions to increase their ability to stay competitive and drive innovation and growth whilst on the other it consents to improve the performance of high-achieving students through a helpful and enlightened approach.