Terms of Reference for the design, development, implementation and maintenance of an e-learning platform

1/ About UNIMED – the Mediterranean Universities Union

UNIMED, the Mediterranean Universities Union, founded in October 1991, is an association of Universities from the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

It counts 138 Universities coming from 23 countries of both shores of Mediterranean (data updated to March 2021).

UNIMED acts in different scientific fields and its aim is to develop research and education in the Euro-Mediterranean area in order to contribute to scientific, cultural, social and economic cooperation.

The image that better represents our association is that of a *University Without Walls*.

UNIMED carries out the following activities in favour of the associated Universities:

• Promoting the **international dimension of universities**;

• **Planning and fund-raising activities**;

• **Promoting mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean region**, for students, researchers and academic staff;

• Technical assistance for the enhancement of ***quality assurance*** in university education;

• Creating **thematic SubNetworks** to foster the scientific cooperation within specific fields;

• Organising meetings, discussions, seminars and round tables both at a national and international level;

• Training academic and administrative staff of Universities, particularly for the staff of **International Relations Offices.**

Through the many initiatives carried out over the two decades, UNIMED has promoted the collaboration between universities of the Mediterranean, becoming a point of reference of the international university cooperation.

2/ About the Sustainable Tourism Community

Created in November 2016 within the framework of the Interreg MED Programme, the Sustainable Tourism Community has been renewed for a three-year period until June 2022 to make tourism a real driver for inclusive and sustainable growth.

The Community can now rely on 28 territorial cooperation projects and almost 400 organisations (public authorities, private companies, universities, NGOs and international organisations) active in 13 European countries to promote sustainable tourism by capitalizing on tools and good practices developed by its projects. Besides, two Strategic Projects, approved in October 2019, focusing on governance of sustainable tourism will join forces with the Community to make tourism a real driver for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Most notably, the Community's members are leading the development of innovative tools to monitor the tourism industry, they are studying and testing new tourism models and they are actively engaging policy makers and managers in a constant dialogue to make tourism a real driver for inclusive and sustainable development. The main objective of this new phase of the Community is to influence economic and social development strategies to include sustainable tourism policies at regional, national and European level. To attain these renewed objectives the project partnership leading the Community has slightly changed to include a network association of regional policy-makers and to extend the geographical area to the Balkan region.

// Project Partners

The MED Sustainable Tourism community is an Interreg MED Programme initiative coordinated by DIBA - Barcelona Provincial Council (Barcelona, Spain) in partnership with UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union(Rome, Italy), University of Thessaly (Thessaly, Greece), NECSTouR - Network of European Regions or Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (Brussels, Belgium), Plan Bleu UNEP MAP, the Regional Activity Centre of Mediterranean Action Plan (Marseille, France), Adriatic and Ionian Euroregion (Pula, Croatia), RDA Green Karst - Regional Development Agency (Pivka, Slovenia).

3/ The background: the Interreg MED Academy

The Interreg MED Academy is a joint initiative of the eight Interreg MED Programme's Horizontal Projects coordinated by UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union in its capacity of leader of the Communication Work Package of the Sustainable Tourism project.

The Interreg MED Academy main aim is to create an online learning opportunity to contribute shaping the next generation of Mediterranean leaders of sustainable and inclusive development. Therefore, the Interreg MED Academy will tackle the most strategic issues for an inclusive and sustainable future for the Mediterranean area as

they are identified by the EU territorial cohesion strategy and by the Interreg MED projects themselves.

For each of these strategic issues, the horizontal projects will make the knowledge, resources, competences and tools developed by the Interreg MED Projects available in six stand-alone, though interconnected, learning modules. The modules will last between four to six weeks for a total learners' workload of 10-20 hours each module. Modules will be structured around: video lectures, audio podcasts, reading suggestions, interactive exercises, self-directed activities, self-assessments, virtual exchanges, peer-evaluations, tutorship, live events and project works.

Every module will be coordinated by one partner organisation belonging to an Interreg MED thematic community that will take care of the educational coordination, the content production and of appointing the trainers, tutors, guest speakers and facilitators. Besides, UNIMED will provide the e-learning platform to host the courses and will assist the partners in the uploading of the educational contents and eventually it will provide technical assistance during the delivery of the modules.

// Key points to note

_ The purpose of this initiative is to deliver training to a large number of mid-level or top-level professionals from public and private sector spread over different regions of the Mediterranean area, both North and South shores.

_ As the Academy is a joint initiative gathering more than 10 partner organisations, the e-learning platform might be eventually transferred to a dedicated online space owned by the Interreg MED Programme, its interoperability needs to be ensured, in order to be easily transferable to other platforms operating with the same software, namely Moodle.

_ The Interreg MED Academy is based, even though not exclusively, on Open Educational Resources (OER), defined as teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

_ Several partner organisations and trainers will need to have access to the platform to upload the contents, to monitor the student engagement and to communicate with them. Therefore, the user interface on the backend must be intuitive and easy-to-use without any specific training.

4/ Scope of Work

In the framework of its role as Communication Work Package leader, UNIMED is looking for a provider to design, develop, implement and maintain an e-learning platform to host the Interreg MED Academy from October 2021 to May 2022. The e-learning platform should be based on the latest stable version of Moodle software with possible integration with WordPress or Drupal as needed to improve the user experience both

for the learners and admin/trainers. The platform should be designed to be responsive and fully accessible on mobile devices and it should also ensure the maximum security of the system against data breach and it should be compliant with the GDPR.

Besides, the User Interface (UI) for both Admins and Learners should be intuitive and easy-to-use and it should enable them to accomplish their tasks without a deep learning of the platform.

// Admin/trainer

The platform should be designed to let **admin and trainers** accomplish the following tasks:

_ creating and managing new users of the platform's backend with the possibility of granting and revoking to the different users' profiles levels of access to certain functionalities and data

_ sending automatically and upon users' request to its email account the "Learner Data Report" with all the data stored by the Interreg MED Academy about their account to comply with the GDPR

_ uploading of the education contents: video lectures, audio podcasts and reading suggestions

_ setting up and managing interactive activities: exercises, self-assessment activities, tutorship, live events and project activities

_ setting up course and activities completion criteria, including tracking progresses for video/audio lessons

_ monitoring the learners' performance and activities via an insightful, easy-to-use and customizable learning analytics dashboard

_ facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges and evaluation between learners through a discussion forum

_ granting badges and/or certificates to learners according to their progresses in the course and the accomplishment of certain tasks and assignments

_ communicate directly with the learners to motivate them in keeping on the learning process and to provide them with further information and updates about the courses

_ setting up and manage a help desk and a tutorship to answer to learners' questions about the education program, the issues treated as well as some minor technical issues

// Learners

Besides, the platform should be designed to let the **learners** accomplish the following tasks (see the annex #03 and #04 for some examples):

_ to create and personalise its own user profile and choosing which personal data to share with the other registered participants and to easily delete its own account

_ to get at any time at its own email address the "Learner Data Report" with all the data stored by the Interreg MED Academy about their account

_ to access the platform via third parties, such as Facebook, Gmail, LinkedIn or OpenID accounts

_ to keep track of the progresses in the learning process and their achievements (see the example of the OpenUniversity and Coursera in annex #01 and #02)

_ to easily communicate via a discussion forum with the trainers, tutors and other learners

_ to get and share digital badges gained on the Interreg MED Academy on social media

_ to navigate across the different lessons and modules easily and painlessly but by always knowing where they are in the process

_ to attend the lessons and to interact with the trainers, tutors and other learners also on mobile devices

5/ Deliverables and deadlines

1/ SETTING UP OF THE TEAM AND CREATIVE BRIEFING

Deadline: Week +1

Deliverables:

_ Setting up of the coordination team client/provider.

_ Creative briefing.

Actions:

_ Creation of the coordination team working on this contract: one representative of the client + one representative of the appointed provider. The coordination team will ensure the proper communication of the two parties and it will enable the provider to have all the information they need and the client to better clarify its needs and requirements. The coordination team will have a crucial role in the reviewing and testing processes.

_ Creative briefing: meeting with the client to understand the client's needs and expectations and to gather all the needed information and materials to kick start the set-up of the e-learning platform.

2/ DESIGN

Deadline: Week +2

Deliverables:

_ Wireframe and e-learning platform architecture.

_ Mock-up of the home page, learners and admin backend's pages.

Actions:

_ Platform architecture: based on the needs and expectations of the client, the appointed provider should design the most appropriate architecture of the e-learning platform's frontend (for users/learners) and backend (for trainers/facilitators/organisers).

_ Wireframe: the appointed provider should realise a wireframe for both interfaces (frontend and backend) to be submitted to the client for discussion and approval.

_ Mock-up: the appointed provider will realise a mock-up version of the platform (frontend and backend) with the visuals provided by the client and based on the wireframe discussed and approved. The mock-up to be implemented will be discussed and approved by the client.

3/ DEVELOPMENT

Deadline: Week +4

Deliverable:

_ Full functioning e-learning platform with the visuals and graphic design that fulfil the communication guidelines and the visual identity for the Interreg MED Academy.

Actions:

+ The client, following also the advices of the appointed provider, will buy the hosting service and the domain for the Interreg MED Academy and provide the provider with full access to it in order to set up and develop the platform.

+ The client will also provide the provider with all the visuals and the communication guidelines for the design of the platform.

_ The appointed provider will adapt the latest stable version of Moodle to develop the platform that will satisfy the needs and expectations of the clients as they have been represented in the wireframe and mock-up discussed and approved by the client.

_ The integration of Moodle with a CMS – Content Management System like WordPress or Drupal, should be considered to improve the user interface and experience.

4/ TESTING

Deadline: Week +5

Deliverable:

_ Clients report on the corrections and improvements.

_ E-learning platform review by the provider.

Actions:

_ Once the development is completed and some test contents uploaded, the provider will create a test course with all the different typologies of contents to test the good functioning of the platform and to eventually adjust some features.

_ After the test the client will make a report with all the required corrections and changes that the provider will implement. A second round of discussions should be foreseen while further changes will be considered for a separate tender.

5/ UPLOADING OF THE CONTENTS AND LAUNCH

Deadline: Week +8

Deliverable: Technical assistance

Actions

_ Once the testing phase is concluded successfully the provider will train the client and the Interreg MED Academy technical staff on how to upload the contents and on how to manage the courses.

_ The appointed provider will provide technical assistance in the uploading of the contents and the delivery of the first learning module foreseen on October/November 2021.

6/ MAINTENANCE

Deadline: November 2021 - June 2022

Deliverable:

_ Creation of a technical assistance team and intervention protocols.

Actions:

_ The appointed provider will ensure technical assistance for the whole duration of the Interreg MED Academy: from October 2021 to June 2022.

6/ Experience

a/ The provider appointee's team must be comprised of qualified experts, with a demonstrated track record in developing quality online learning platform. Overall experience of firm should be more than 5 years.

b/ It is expected that the team have experience in developing online learning projects with Moodle and experience of CMS integration.

c/ The firm should have a strong project management ability and excellent communication skills.

d/ References and examples of past work are required and should be included in the proposal.

7/ General requirements

/ As UNIMED is always interested in delivering products of the highest quality, the vendor is requested to present any suggestions or comments on how to improve the course design as well as the presentation of content through dynamic tools, interactive concept maps, functionality and/or aesthetic touches.

/ All materials developed or included in the online learning program will be under Creative Commons and the contents under the Open Education Resources conditions except for third party materials and otherwise stated. All source materials for the

developed products must be delivered to the project sponsor upon completion of the project.

8/ Contract Period

The contract shall be carried out during the eligibility period of the project (01 November 2019 – 30 June 2022).

Starting date of the assignment: 15 September 2021

Finishing date of the assignment: 30 May 2022

9/ Form of Contract

Goods or services ordered by the Sustainable Tourism consortium as a result of the bid shall be in accordance with the Sustainable Tourism project's conditions of contract. The Terms and Conditions are those of the contractor, which is UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union.

10/ Budget

The total value of the contract (including any taxes and contributions) **shall not exceed 12.000 EUR.**

VAT exemption is applicable. For Italian providers, the VAT exemption is applicable according to the Article 72 of the Italian Law D.P.R. 633/72. Providers based in other countries must refer to the national legislation and indicate the applicable law. Any travel costs incurred while carrying out assignment(s) are covered directly by the provider.

11/ Application procedure

Offers should include:

_ CVs of relevant staff members(s) who will directly design, develop, implement and maintain the e-learning platform;

_ reference projects;

_ a concept note describing the main features of the intervention and tools that will be used to accomplish the tasks described in this Terms of Reference (max 2 pages);

_ detailed financial offer for the implementation of the tasks.

Deadline for receipt of offers: 03 September 2021

Applications should be sent in English to: uni-med@pec.it

12/ Selection Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the bid offering best value for money (best price-quality ratio). The criteria for the selection of applications are:

_ 30% price;

_ 30% professional experience and reference projects;

_ 20% CVs of staff members who will be directly involved in the contract;

_ 20% concept note describing the main features of the intervention and the tools that will be used.

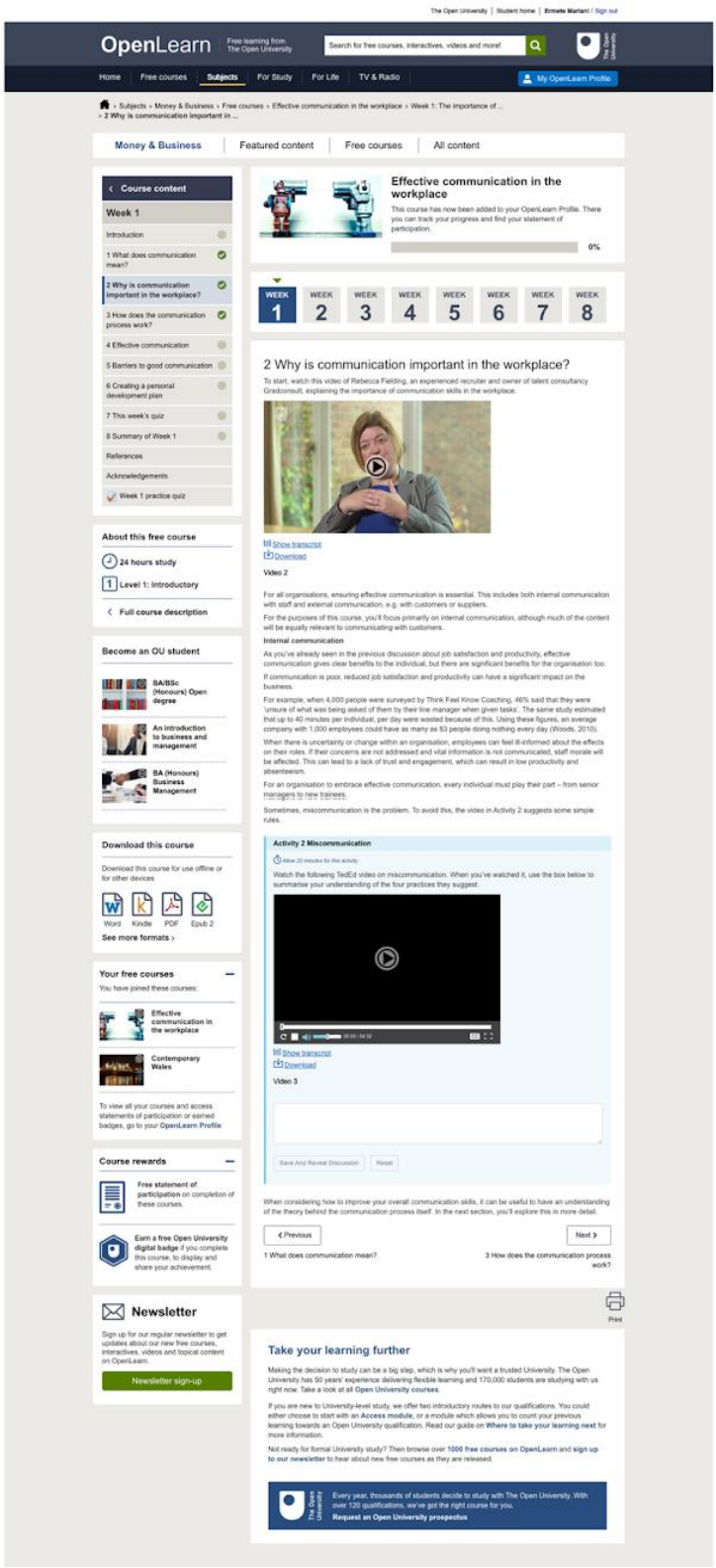
13/ The Debriefing

Both successful and unsuccessful contractors who wish to have the opportunity of debriefing should contact Mr. Marcello Scalisi after award of the contract.

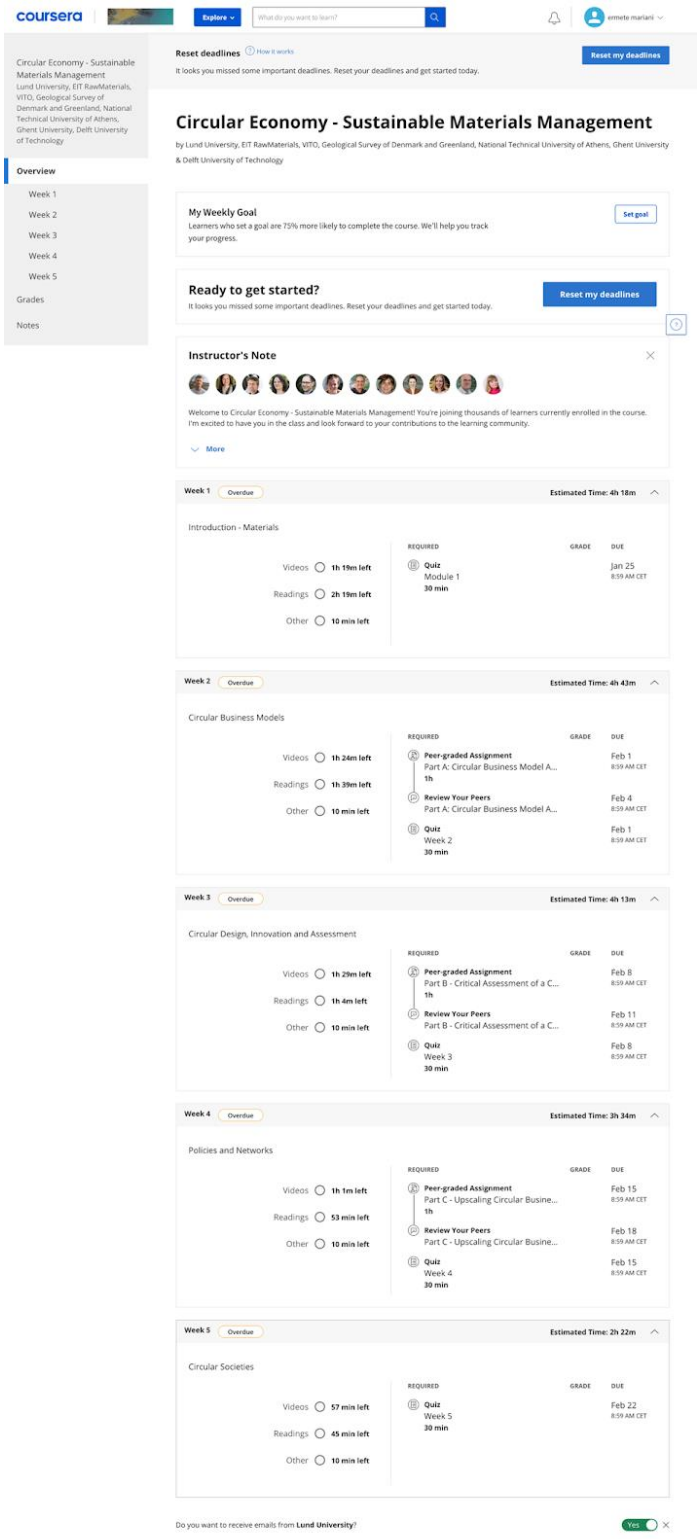
14/ Contact

Marcello Scalisi,
Director UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union
Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 244 | 00186 - Rome - Italy
uni-med@pec.it | Tel. +39 06 68581430

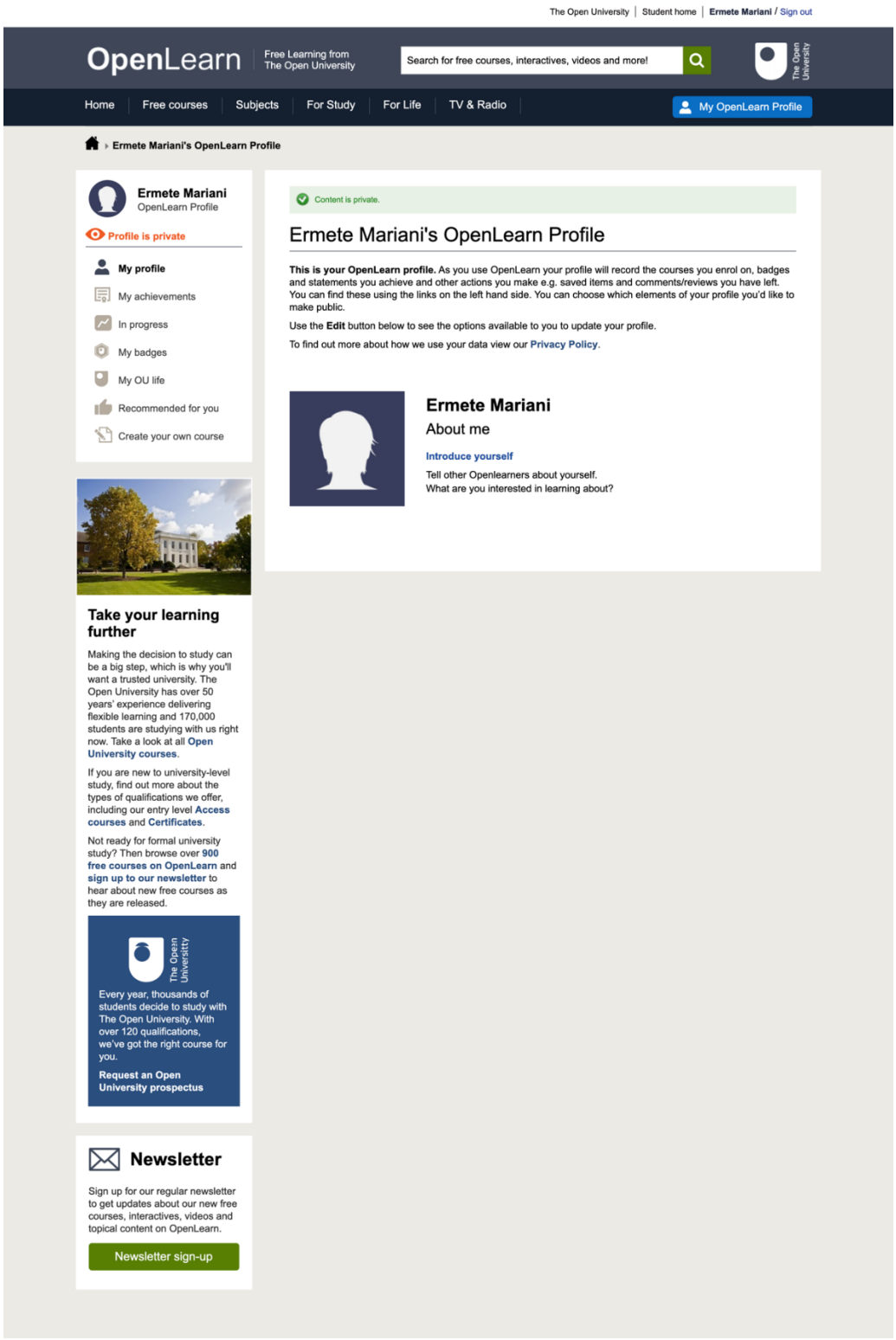
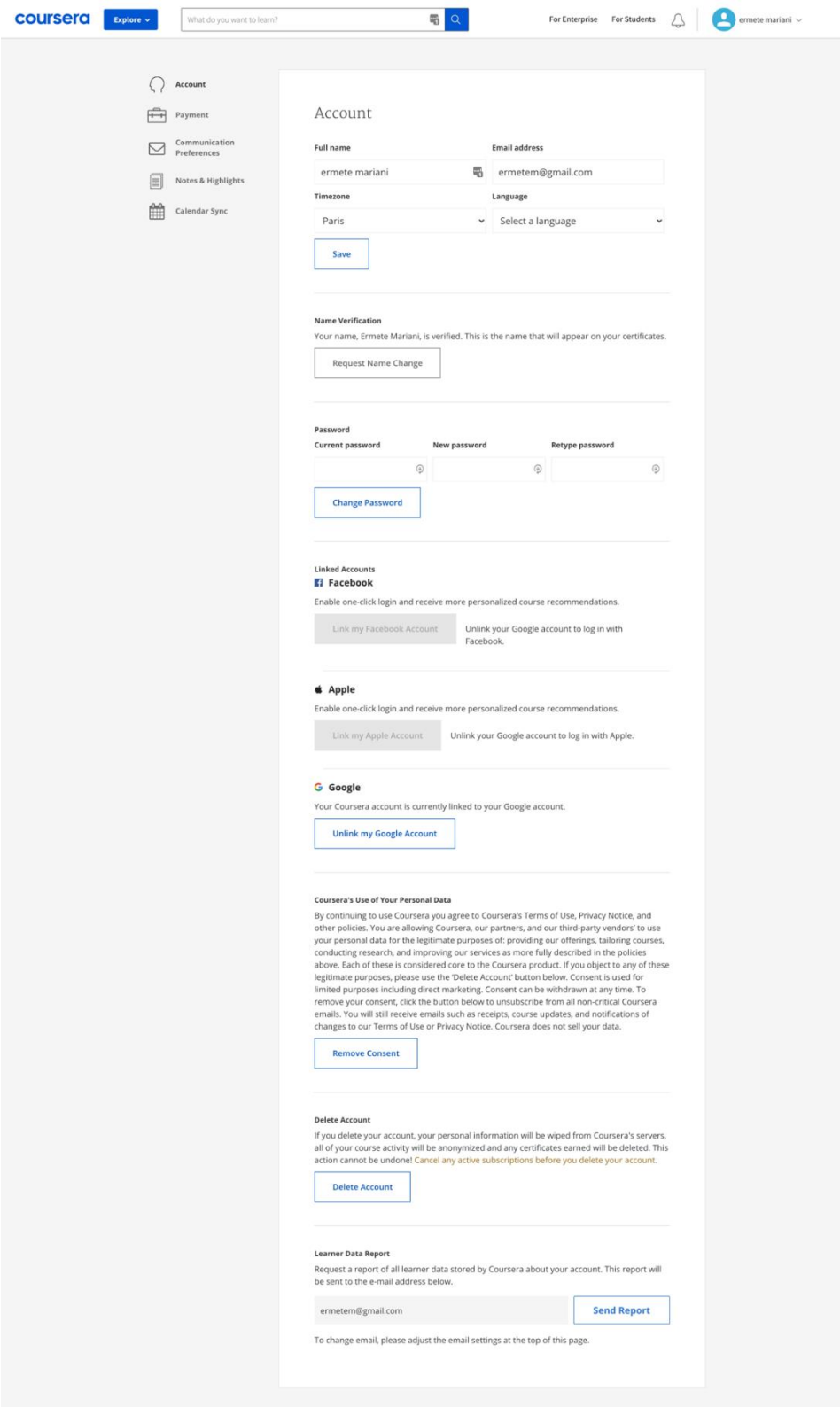
Annex #01: Open University



Annex #02: Coursera



Annex #03: Open University users' account



Annex #04: Coursera users' account