



Sepideh Nikounejad

ABOUT ME Currently a researcher at the University of Verona, with over 7 years of experience in higher education teaching and training using active learning methods. Passionate about pedagogy, higher education, human resources, entrepreneurship, innovation, and university-industry collaboration. Specialized in analyzing and fostering university–industry relations, with strong skills in strategic and educational planning, assessment, and policy analysis. Recognized for excellent problem-solving abilities, strong academic communication in English, and successful engagement with diverse age groups in dynamic educational and professional settings.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE / RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

[10/2025 – current]

Researcher

University of Verona, Department of Culture and Civilization

City: Verona | **Country:** Italy | **Field(s) of study:** Geography and Educational science |

[01/2024 – current]

Research collaborator

University of Trento, Department of Economics and Management

City: Trento | **Country:** Italy | **Field(s) of study:** Economics, Management and Pedagogy | **Thesis:** Challenge-Based Learning as a Catalyst for University-Industry Collaboration

[02/2019 – 12/2019]

Visiting Researcher/ Visiting Doctoral student

Department of Education and Special Education at the University of Gothenburg

City: Gothenburg | **Country:** Sweden | | **Thesis:** Analyzing the Policies of the Industry-University Relations: Developing a New Model
-Conducted half of the Ph.D. thesis in Sweden

EDUCATION

[09/2015 – 02/2021]

Ph. D. Development Planning of Higher Education

University of Kurdistan

City: Sanandaj | **Country:** Iran | | **Final grade:** The overall GPA is 18/38 out of 20. | **Level in EQF:** EQF level 8 | **Thesis:** “Analyzing the Policies of the Industry-University Relations Developing a New Model”
- Demand-driven Ph.D. thesis with Mobarakeh Steel Co.(largest in MENA); highest honors

[09/2011 – 10/2013]

MA Educational Planning/ Educational Science

University of Isfahan

City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran | | **Final grade:** Top student, earned a GPA of 18/72 out of 20 points | **Thesis:** "Study of barriers upon the development of virtual disciplines at Isfahan University”

[09/2007 – 07/2011]

BA Educational Technology/ Educational science

University of Isfahan

City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran | | **Final grade:** Overall, scored 19/20 out of 20 and was the top student. | **Thesis:** “Comparison between Interaction and Social Presence of Students

Enrolled in Actual and Virtual Programs

WORK EXPERIENCE

[06/2017 – 08/2025]

Reviewer

Iranian Journal of Comparative Education and Journal of School Administration

City: Tehran, Sanandaj | **Country:** Iran
- Reviewing articles

- [06/2024 – 07/2024] **Animation creator**
ITALPARS GROUP SRL/Radio Green Eroi
City: Via Maestri del Lavoro, 88, Trento | **Country:** Italy
- Creating animation for children between 3-8 ages
- [11/2022 – 01/2024] **Academic consultant/Educational mentor**
Clinic Parse/ Clinic Rahe Eshgh/Clinic Mehrafarin
City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran
-Helping, advising, and mentoring students from elementary school to university levels.
- [06/2023 – 12/2023] **Human Resource Specialist and Educational Specialist**
Iran Gas Valve Company
City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran
- Recruitment and Salary
- [10/2022 – 12/2023] **Tutor/Translator (Self-employed)**
Self-employed
City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran
- English essay instruction, online translation, and form processing
- [02/2021 – 10/2021] **Chairperson/Mentor/ Reviewer**
ECR 2023 Glasgow – The Emerging Researchers' Conference
ECER 2022 Yerevan – The European Conference on Educational Research
ERC & ECER 2021 Geneva –The European Conference on Educational Research & Emerging Researchers
City: Berlin | **Country:** Germany
- Organizing the meeting for presentations, reviewing articles
- [09/2018 – 03/2019] **Educational expert/ Education specialist**
Esfahan Water and Electricity Industry Higher Educational and Research Complex
City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran
- Supported course selection; needs assessments, job analysis; developed educational content
- [04/2016 – 02/2018] **Lecturer**
Islamic Azad University Isfahan (Khorasgan Branch)
Payame Noor University of Kurdistan Center of Sanandaj
City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran
- Teaching bachelor's courses in Education, Research Methods, Social Activities, and Library Management
- [05/2017 – 05/2017] **Executive Committee**
The 2nd Biennial Conference on Reading (University of Kurdistan Research Week Conference, University of Isfahan)
City: Sanandaj | Iran
- [10/2015 – 03/2016] **Internal Director**
Journal of Organizational Behavior in Education (University of Kurdistan)
City: Sanandaj | **Country:** Iran
- Managed article submission, coordinated peer review, communicated with authors/reviewers
- [01/2015 – 09/2015] **Educational consultant, EQ Examiner, Editor, Marketing**
Mehrafarin Consulting Center
City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran
- Provided academic/career counseling; edited educational guides; conducted EQ assessments.
- [02/2014 – 06/2014] **Trainer (in the role of mother and teacher)**
State Welfare Organization of Isfahan

City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran

- (Kheirie Baharan society, Especially Orphans and children with special needs)

[12/2012 – 12/2012]

Teaching a workshop

Research Week Conference, University of Isfahan

City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran

- Teaching Ulead Video Studio software to bachelor, master and PhD students.

[06/2012 – 09/2012]

Educational planner

Edalat Girl's Elementary School of Isfahan University

City: Esfahan | **Country:** Iran

-Developed school-wide quality improvement and educational planning documents.

PUBLICATIONS

Nikounejad, S., & Gamberoni, E. (2025). Space and memory in education: The role of educational environments in migrants' experience in terms of access and inclusion to education: A case study of Migrantour, Verona, Italy. SSG – XV Giornata di Studio "Oltre la globalizzazione: Traiettorie / Trajectories", Rimini, Italy.

Nikounejad, S., Azizi, N., & Thang, P. (2023). University-Industry Collaboration in Sweden: A Critical Analysis of Swedish Policies and Practices. ECER 2023 – the European Conference on Educational Research, Glasgow, UK.

Nikounejad, S., Moslehi, M. R., Nikounejad, S. (2022). Analysis and improving the management of rural farm network based on IoT and RFID, 6th International Conference on Smart Cities, Internet of Things and Applications (IEEE) September 14-15, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, doi: 10.1109/SCIoT56583.2022.9953674

Azizi, N., Thang, P., & Nikounejad, S. (2021). Connecting Higher Education to Industry: A Critical Reflection on Swedish and Iranian HE Policies and Practices. European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), Geneva, Switzerland. [https:// doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5172321](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5172321)

Nikounejad, S., Ghaderi, M., Azizi, N., Thang, P., Neyestani, M. (2021). University- Industry Relationships in Iran and Sweden: A Critical Comparative Study. Iranian Journal of Comparative Education, 4(4), 1520-1549. doi: 10.22034/ijce.2020.251473.1225

Nikounejad, S., Ghaderi, M., Azizi, N., Thang, P., neyestani, M. (2021). Analyzing the Policies of the Industry and University Relations in Iran: Developing a New Model. Journal of Educational Planning Studies, 9(18), 115-150. doi: 10.22080/eps.2021.19597.1958

Nikounejad, S. Ghaderi, M, Azizi, N, Thang, P. O, Neyestani, M. R. (2019). The University-Industry Relationships in Sweden and Iran: A Critical Comparative Study. ICER 2019 : 21st International Conference on Educational Research on December, Paris, France

Nikounejad, S. Ghaderi, M, Azizi, N, Thang, P. O, Neyestani, M. R. (2019). The policy of University-Industry Relationships in Sweden. Vilår conference, University west, Trollhättan, Sweden

Nikounejad, S. (2016). Comparison of Canada and Iran Policy-Making and Planning of Higher Education System in order to Provide Solutions for Internationalization of Higher Education. 1st National Conference on the Futures Studies of Higher Education in Iran: Internationalization of Universities; Perspectives and Challenges, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran.

Nikounejad, S. (2016). Policies and strategies of Third generation universities and entrepreneur: A Reflection on the status of Iranian universities. 1st National

Conference on the Futures Studies of Higher Education in Iran: Internationalization of Universities; Perspectives and Challenges, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran.

Nikounejad, S., Nili, M.R., & Nasr Esfahani, A.R. (2015). Identifying the Barriers upon Development of Virtual Education in Engineering Majors (Case Study: The University of Isfahan). *journal of education and practice*, 6, (13), 103-111

Nikounejad, S., Nili, M.R., & Nasr Esfahani, A.R. (2015). Study of human Barriers upon Development of Virtual Disciplines at University of Isfahan. *journal of education and practice*, 6, (16), 17-27

Nikounejad, S., Nili, M.R. & Nasr Esfahani, A.R. (2015). An Investigation of Organizational Barriers to Development of Virtual Majors at Isfahan University. *journal of Organizational Behavior in Education*, 2, (1), 21-33.

Nikounejad, S., Nili, M.R. & Nasr Esfahani, A.R. (2016). Study of Physical Sources Barriers Upon Development of Virtual Disciplines at University of Isfahan. 2nd International Conference on Psychology Educational Sciences and Lifestyle, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran.

Nikounejad, S., & Zamani, B. E. (2014). Comparison between Interaction and Social Presence of Students Enrolled in Actual and Virtual Programs in Terms of Demographic Factors and Academic Achievement. *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 55, (3), 119-134.

Nikounejad, S., & Zamani, B. E. (2012). study of relation between Interaction and Social Presence of Students Enrolled in Virtual Programs in Terms of Academic Achievement, The Third International Conference on E-learning and E-teaching, University of Tehran. Tehran, Iran.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English: Fluent (C1)

Italian: Basic (B1)

SKILLS & ABILITIES

Strategic Planning, Educational Planning, Instructional Design, Evaluation, Validation & Educational Assessment, Quality Improvement, Needs Assessment, Working with adults, teenagers, and children, Teaching and online teaching, Research and writing articles, Teamwork, Problem-Solving, Microsoft Office | SPSS | Outlook | Corel VideoStudio | Multimedia builder | Animation Maker | Web easy maker | Filming | taking analog and digital photos

Scholarship: Awarded a Ph.D. research scholarship by Iran's Ministry of Science to conduct research at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

Best presentation award: ICER 2019: 21st International Conference on Educational Research, France.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

[2019]