



TEMPUS PROJECT

“Strategic Support on establishment and development of sustainable structures on quality assurance, international relations and student support services at the newly founded public University of Haxhi Zeka”

543801-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-UK-TEMPUS-JPGR

STATUS QUO REPORT ON QA SYSTEM AND PROCEDURES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF “HAXHI ZEKA”

May, 2014

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Author:

Alfred Marleku, PhD cand.

Editors:

Prof. Dr. Tina Harrison
Prof. Ass. Dr. But Dedaj

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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The TEMPUS project: “Strategic support on establishment and development of sustainable structures on quality assurance, international relations and student support services at the newly founded Public University Hazhi Zeka in Kosova” (No. 543801-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-UK-TEMPUS-JPGR) aims to support the University of “Haxhi Zeka” to achieve the objectives of the “Bologna Process”, “Strategy of Higher Education in Kosova for 2005-2015”, “Kosova Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016”, “Europe 2020 Strategy”, the “Strategic framework for European Cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)”, in order to increase the quality of teaching and research at UHZ and, as a final result, to facilitate the integration of Kosovo into the European Higher Education area.

The project SD@UHZ is in full compliance with the TEMPUS national priorities for Kosova; with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and with all the above mentioned strategic documents and priorities. In this regard, the compliance can be measured through development and implementation of the Quality Assurance Strategy and by the establishment of the QA Office, International Relations Office (IRO) and Student Support Services (SSS).

II. PROJECT WIDER AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

This project is funded by the European Commission through the TEMPUS programme which supports the modernization of higher education in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans, and the Mediterranean region.

2.1 Project wider objective

The wider project objective is to provide strategic support to the newly established public University in Kosova, University Haxhi Zeka, in the following areas: quality assurance, international relations and student support services.

2.2 Project specific objectives

The project is comprised of the following specific objectives:

- To support the university management structures;
- To establish/support the University’s quality assurance structures;
- To establish/strengthen the office for international cooperation;
- To support student support services, via the introduction of new services to students;
- To modernize the information system of the University.

III. PROJECT OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

The Project is divided in five (5) development work packages (WP1-WP5). A further four work packages assure optimal management and quality of project development, implementation, results as well as dissemination and sustainability. In total, the project comprises 9 work packages as detailed in the following table.

WP 1: Establish/support the quality assurance structures
WP 2: Training for teaching and administrative staff
WP 3: Establish/strengthen International Relations Office
WP 4: Strengthening of student support services
WP 5: Digitalization of the University information system
WP 6: Project Management
WP 7: Quality Control
WP 8: Dissemination
WP 9: Sustainability

IV. PROJECT PARTNERS

The project is comprised of eight partners: three international universities and five national institutions. The main beneficiary of the project is University of Haxhi Zeka in Peja.

The project partners of the project are:

1. University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom (project grant-holder);
2. University of Alicante, Spain;
3. Università Degli Studi “G. d’Annunzio” di Chieti – Pescara, Italy;
4. University of “Haxhi Zeka”, Kosova;
5. World University Service Kosova – WUS Kosova;
6. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology – Higher Education Department (HED);
7. Kosovo Center for International Cooperation in Higher Education – K-CIRT, Kosova and
8. Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Kosova

V. AIM OF THE STATUS QUO REPORT

The aim of this Status Quo Report is to exam the current situation, needs and capacities of the University of Haxhi Zeka in the field of quality assurance. In addition to this, the Report will serve as a solid groundwork for developing the Quality Assurance strategy for UHZ.

Quality Assurance represents a key element of higher education and includes the establishment, implementation, enhancement and monitoring of standards and guidelines. It contributes to the

credibility and to the scientific as well as professional value of higher education institutions and, at the same time, aims to ensure delivery of high quality study programs and research activities. The Status Quo Report consists of four main parts:

- The introduction, which addresses the purpose of the project and its objectives.
- The methodology, which provides the methods and data for the sample used in the survey.
- The results of the survey are presented in the third part, and
- In the last part, are given conclusions of Report.

5.1 Description of the methodology used to gather the results

This report is developed based on the Survey method. Firstly, in coordination with the partner universities mentioned above, a questionnaire was designed. This questionnaire was distributed to the University of Haxhi Zeka, where it was completed by their officials and the management. In addition to this, results derived from the survey were presented in the Kick-off meeting and first workshop on quality assurance strategy development which was held at University of Haxhi Zeka in Peja from 10-12 March, 2014.

VI. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

All data gathered from the questionnaire and the kick-off meeting and 1st workshop on quality assurance strategy development, were processed in the database. The process lasted about two weeks. In the following section, the analysis of the results and findings that emerged from the survey is presented.

6.1 Quality of teaching and learning

The “Haxhi Zeka” Public University, the descendant of the Faculty of Applied Sciences in Business (FSHAB) in Peja, which was established in 1960, although established in 2012, is dedicated to continuously revise its study programs (curriculum), so that they have adaptability to the needs of Kosovo society, economy, trends in higher education and the world economy.

The University of Haxhi Zeka is composed by 5 faculties with the following study programs which are offered:

Faculty of Business:

- Business Administration, BA
- Accounting and Finance, BA
- Business Administration in Bosnian, BA

Accredited programs, Master Level:

- Business Administration, MA
- Accounting and Finance, MA

- Business Administration in Bosnian, MA
- Human Resource Management, (MSc)

Faculty of Law:

- The General Law BLL

Management Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment:

- Management of Tourism, Hospitality BA
- Tourism Management Bosnian,

Faculty of Agribusiness:

- Plant Production Technology, Bsc
- Agroekology and agro-environment, Bsc

Faculty of Fine Arts:

- General Education in Music, BA
- Education in Music, BA

6.1.1 Curricula structured according to Bologna process

According to the survey, around 80% of the existing curricula of the UHZ are comparable with EU universities. Studies are organized according to the Bologna system 3+2+3, where a Bachelor's degree requires accumulating 180 ECTS credits, except for the Law Faculty which requires 240 ECTS, and the Master's degree requires accumulating 120 ECTS. Currently UHZ does not offer PhD studies. For each course the ECTS system is applied.

In addition to this, the survey shows that the UHZ curricula are expected to be comparable with EU universities, and are in compliance with the needs and requirements of the labor market in Kosovo, particularly focused in the region of Peja. The questionnaire reveals that prior to the development of new study programs, UHZ organizes meetings and workshops with the management of companies and other experts of the specific fields to ensure that the developed programs meet the needs of the labor market.

6.1.2 Teaching personnel

At University of Haxhi Zeka around 40% of the teaching positions are permanent and 60% are temporary positions. To become a teaching assistant at UHZ a candidate must have a minimum of a Masters Degree; to become a Professor, a candidate must have a minimum of a PhD degree, scientific papers published in scientific journals and other relevant academic achievements. All the criteria and requirements for recruitment of teaching staff are defined in the Statute of the university: <http://unhz.eu/Statuti-i-UHZ.pdf>

All vacant positions for teaching and administrative staff are advertised by public announcement. Usually the announcement is published on the University webpage (www.unhz.eu) and in

Kosovo daily newspapers. During the selection process of new teaching staff, if there are no experts of that field in Kosovo, then external experts are hired by the selection panel.

University of Haxhi Zeka continually monitors the quality of teaching in relation to the educational objectives. Tools which are used for this purpose are questionnaires which are filled out by students to evaluate the performance of professors and self evaluation questionnaires are filled by the professors.

6.1.3 Students

Students that want to enroll in UHZ must have finished high school and passed the Matura exam. Those students will have to enter into a specific exam at the university. All the entry criteria and requirements are announced publicly in the university webpage and in the Kosovo daily newspapers.

Students of UHZ are actively involved in the evaluation process of their professors for each course in each semester.

Some of the services that University of Haxhi Zeka offers for its students include:

- IT services – all of the students have an e-mails account at the university. All the announcements for students are published in the University webpage.
- Office for International Relations – offers information regarding the various scholarship opportunities (Erasmus Mundus, Basileus etc.).

VII. QUALITY OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Regarding the issue of quality of research and development, University of Haxhi Zeka as a new institution, is not engaged intensively in research and development activities. Nevertheless, teaching staff of UHZ, based mainly in individual initiatives, are engaged in different research projects and activities. The Research activities that are being implemented at the University of Haxhi Zeka are financed mainly from the university budget, different international projects and private companies.

University of Haxhi Zeka has solid facilities to conduct scientific research activities. The research infrastructure at UHZ is composed of:

- Laboratories in Agribusiness department,
- Libraries
- Study rooms and
- Computer rooms.

VIII. QUALITY OF ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The administration and student support services of the University of Haxhi Zeka provide the following services for the students:

- Assisting them during the application process for enrollment
- Organizing the entrance exam for new potential students
- Providing confirmation for personal needs for students

All of these services are evaluated by the management of the University through different means: questionnaires, reviews, personal discussions, interviews etc.

As for the quality of the University of Haxhi Zeka administration, it is evaluated through many forms and means such as:

- Questionnaires and external auditing
- Kosovo Accreditation Agency throughout the process of institutional accreditation.

Based on the abovementioned mechanisms the management of the University takes certain decisions which aim to improve the performance of the administrative services toward the students and the entire functionality of the University.

The number of employees in the University administration is 10. The survey shows that the administrative staff received no specific trainings and the need for trainings for this sector is high.

IX. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT

The university of Haxhi Zeka has established its managerial structure by electing the Rector of the University and appointing the vice rectors too. The new management of the University is elected according to the Statute of the University, more precisely based on the articles 16-19, 25, 33, 38, 42, 43, 50, 64 and 65, which regulates the issue of electing the permanent management. The university is led by the Rector and 3 vice rectors: Vice rector for budget, finance and infrastructure, Vice rector for international cooperation and quality assurance and Vice rector for teaching, student issues and scientific research.

According to this Statute of the University, the Permanent Management is elected by the **University Council**, which consists of 7 members. The management is subject of evaluation by the University Council.

X. QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICE

The University of Haxhi Zeka has established the Office for Quality Assurance. The office is responsible for teaching and learning evaluation process, curricula development and evaluation of syllabuses.

Currently in the in this QA office are employed 6 officers. It is worth mentioning that until now these officers received no trainings for the work. Therefore, the need for trainings for the Office for QA is necessary. The management of the office did not specified topics of the trainings they need. However, they wrote that they require trainings in all fields related to the quality assurance system and procedures.

XI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OFFICE

The University of Haxhi Zeka has established the International Cooperation Office. Currently there is only 1 official working at this office. Nevertheless, the University plans in the near future to employ three more officials.

Some of the duties and responsibilities which are undertaken by the office include:

- Facilitating the process of drafting project proposals (TEMPUS, U.S. Embassy funds etc.).
- Assisting in application process of new projects and different funds
- Assisting academic units in finding donors and partners for EU projects
- Act as a coordinator in implementing different projects
- Assisting in organizing events in UHZ

In the questionnaire it was stated that the personnel in the Office received no trainings so far. For these reason, there is an urgent need for trainings for this Office. There are no specific potential topics for the required trainings.

XII. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE

The Student Support Service is established at the University of Haxhi Zeka. Currently there are 10 employers working at this office. Some of the duties and responsibilities executed by the SSS office include, but are not limited to:

- Issuance confirmation for status of students.
- Grade transcripts
- Submission of exams
- Verifying that the student payed their tuition fee
- Issuance of diploma and certificates

Personnel in the Office received no trainings so far. Therefore, there is a need for trainings.

XIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the survey conducted there are several conclusions derived with concrete implications for the process of quality assurance at University of Haxhi Zeka. Conclusions are accompanied by concrete recommendations. This is done with the aim of creating a better overview for taking available measures to intervene through the project and, as a result, to increase the quality assurance system at UHZ.

CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Number of professors who are full time staff (40%) is very low compared to the number of teaching staff who are part time.	UHZ must find ways and possibilities to increase the number of teaching staff with full time contracts. By having sufficient staff which covers most of the study fields, UHZ can expand and apply for new academic programs which are required by the labor market.
Low number of teaching staff engaged in research and development activities.	UHZ needs to organize trainings in preparing teaching staff and administration on how to develop projects. So, they can apply and use EU and other funds to increase research and development capacities.
The administration of UHZ is functional and very effective. The evaluation of administration is conducted periodically.	There are no recommendations in this area.
The quality assurance office is established and functions properly. Nevertheless, staff of this office has not received training in order to be up-to-date with developments and practices in this field.	UHZ management in coordination with the QA office must create a list of topics of trainings to train QA office staff. This can be achieved with the help and support of EU partners through the TEMPUS projects.
University of Haxhi Zeka has established the International Cooperation Office. Currently there is only 1 official working at this office.	UHZ must increase the number of officials in the office. UHZ must organize trainings for the staff of the office.
The Student Support Service is established at University of Haxhi Zeka. Currently there are 10 employees working at this office.	UHZ must organize trainings for the staff of the office based on identification of the ongoing support needs of students

PROJECT FACTS

Project title: “Strategic support on establishment and development of sustainable structures on quality assurance, international relations and student support services at the newly founded Public University Hazhi Zeka in Kosova”

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Ministry of Education, Science
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Agjencia e Akreditimit e Kosovës
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