

*Project “Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education”
(La MANCHE)*

Tempus IV Programme



Tempus



Handbook of European Governance Practices in Higher Education

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Handbook of European Governance Practices in Higher Education

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Edited by: Klara Dimitrova and Todor Radev

Authors:

Project Team of International University College, Bulgaria

Project Team of AgroSup Dijon, France

Project Team of University of Thessaly, Greece

Project Team of Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal

Project Team of University College Birmingham, United Kingdom

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1. Introduction

The Handbook of European Governance Practices in Higher Education is developed in the framework of the project Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education (La MANCHE). The La MANCHE project is funded by the European Commission within the Tempus IV programme and addresses the regional priority of university management and student services in the Eastern Neighboring Area within the Governance reform theme. The project is implemented by a large scale consortium comprising of five higher education institutions and one business company from the EU and 23 higher education institutions in five Partner Countries from the Eastern Neighboring area, namely Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The project's overall objective is to promote the modernisation of the Partner Countries higher education institutions by building governance and management capacities and initiating sustainable dialogues on higher education institutions reforms among relevant stakeholders. In addition, the project aims at empowering students to become more actively involved in decision making processes at their higher education institutions.

The overall project objective is to be achieved through eight specific objectives, one of them dedicated to transfer of context-sensitive good governance practices and models for effective leadership and change management from the EU institutions in the project to the 23 Partner Countries institutions. The transfer of knowledge and good practices from the EU to the Partner Countries is to be achieved mainly through project activities envisaged for implementation in Work Package 4. The process of knowledge and innovation transfer is of key importance for the project for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is at the heart of the Tempus IV programme which promotes voluntary convergence of the Partner Countries higher education systems with the current EU agenda for modernisation in higher education.

Secondly, back in late 2011, at the project development phase the EU project partners had relied on their experience with other European funded projects aiming at transfer of innovation such as Leonardo da Vinci/Transfer of Innovation, Erasmus Academic Networks, and the Atlantis programme for cooperation between the EU and USA when planning and shaping the La

MANCHE project activities. In this regard it could be stated that the mechanisms for knowledge and innovation transfer as a driving force and leading principle in the project were embedded in the La MANCHE idea from the very beginning.

The project focuses on the processes of leading and managing change in higher education. When dealing with change, institutions and individuals need to constantly adapt and learn. In this respect, it helps a lot if they are not left alone searching for new solutions but are able to learn from and rely on the expertise and know-how of peers.

The current Handbook of European Governance Practices in Higher Education is a major outcome of Work Package 4. It has been developed by the EU partner institutions and consists of 16 case studies of innovative governance practices and approaches which have proved successful in the La MANCHE higher education institutions from Bulgaria, France, Greece, Portugal and the UK.

The 16 case studies present strategies applied and tools used by the La MANCHE institutions when dealing with internal changes and pressures from outside to introduce reforms. The institutional changes and transformations described in the case studies had been triggered by a variety of challenges related to modernisation of the current higher education systems. The case studies address curricula reforms, reforms of university management structures and mechanisms, quality assurance issues, financial autonomy and the diversification of funding sources. Specific attention in the Handbook is given to measures for strengthening the links between the universities and the society through university – business collaboration, promotion of entrepreneurship and lifelong learning and enhancing the knowledge triangle.

In the Handbook the five universities with their contributions are listed in alphabetical order. The case studies include information on the contextual preconditions, the processes of implementation of the specific good practice and the major outcomes achieved. In addition, the case studies assess the potential for sustainability and transferability to other contexts as well as the factors favoring the successful implementation of the good practices presented.

Although the case studies touch upon these common points, they have at the same time a rather loose structure. The reason behind is that the authors had been encouraged not only to provide an account of innovative governance practices they had introduced at institutional level, but also to share their personal understanding and views. In this regard, it shall be noted that the 16 case studies not only focus on a variety of challenges addressed but also reflect the variety of institutional cultures and the diverse perceptions of innovation at the different institutions.

In all case studies the introduction of the new practices presented had required clear vision and continuous support on behalf of the institutions' senior management. The majority of the case studies in this Handbook had been endorsed or written by representatives of the senior management at the La MANCHE higher education institutions. The commitment and positive attitude towards institutional reforms on the side of the universities' leading figures is a key factor in the processes of embedding change. This is also why the La MANCHE project's main target groups are comprised of the Rectors, Vice-rectors, Deans of Faculties and Heads of administrative units and departments in the Partner Countries institutions. This Handbook is above all a message to them from their peers in the EU.

The Handbook is also deemed to make an interesting reading for a large number of stakeholders in higher education in the Partner Countries such as policy makers, business representatives, civil society groups and student organizations. Their active involvement in the higher education institutions' governance processes is still modest and needs to gain momentum in order for the universities to succeed and achieve their missions.

2. AgroSup Dijon, France

The strategic plan of a European higher education institution: implementation and challenges

Martine David, Corinne Stewart

1. Background

From October 2010 until November 2012, a five-year strategic plan for AgroSup Dijon was developed in response to a context of profound change concerning:

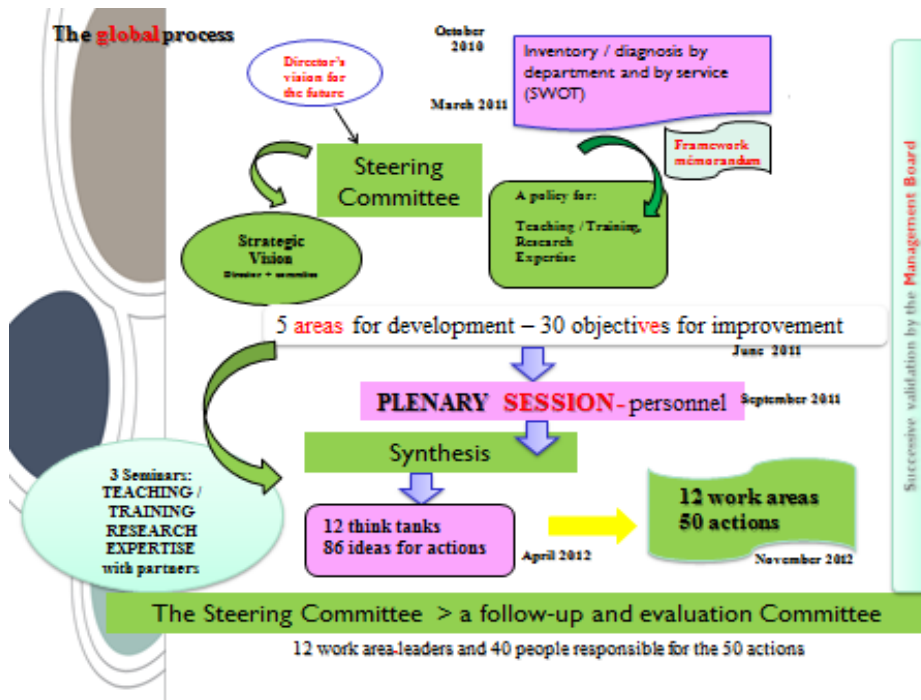
- Restructuring of French higher education and research in an ever-changing context (internationalization)
- Decrease of public funding, economic crisis
- Growing uncertainty due to the acceleration of change
- More and more complex systems
- Rival poles in Paris and Montpellier.

By implementing a new strategic plan, AgroSup Dijon aimed to significantly contribute to these changes through its main missions and skills such as research, training and expertise.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

AgroSup Dijon's strategic project was set up in a way that allowed all staff to participate in the process. It used what is called a "Global Process":

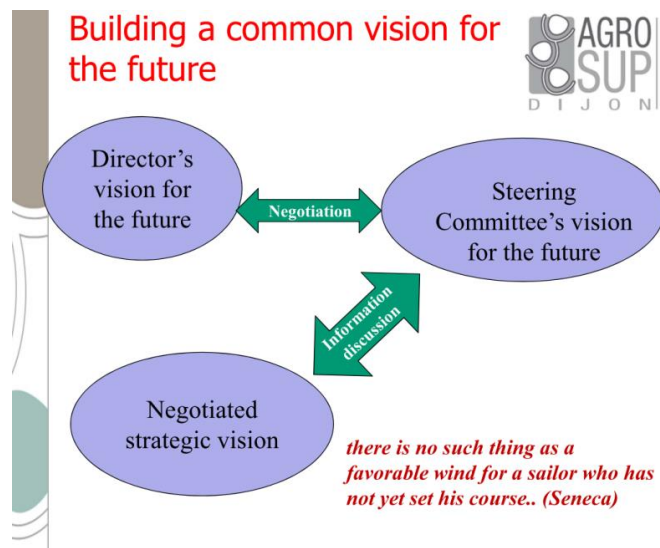


The project started from an initial text written by the Director of AgroSup Dijon and a concept note written by the Steering Committee whose members included:

- Two elected representatives of the Board of Directors
- Two elected representatives of the Academic Council:
- Two elected representatives of the Scientific Council
- Two elected representatives of Technical Committee
- Two elected representatives of the EDUTER Institute
- Two elected student representatives
- Director of AgroSup Dijon
- Deputy Director of AgroSup Dijon
- Director of the EDUTER Institute
- General Services Director
- Director of Education and Student Life
- Europe and International Relations Director.

Animation: Eduter Engineering

Co-facilitation: Director of Communications



The writing and development of this project took place over 2 years:

1st phase

Productions

- A SWOT of each entity at AgroSup Dijon
- Individual contributions
- Achievements in each entity (diagnostics, surveys, contextual papers...)

2nd phase

Steering Committee work

The merger of two institutions (to become AgroSup Dijon in 2009) of different cultures and different functions did not lend itself to the construction of common strategic choices immediately. The Steering Committee chose to work on the anticipation of these risks. Through constant exchanges of ideas between the Committee and the representative bodies, strategic choices, development priorities and objectives were produced (15 themes).

3rd phase

Plenary meetings

Once formalized, the project was presented to all staff and discussed at an all-day plenary meeting. This day allowed the Steering Committee to present the project status and gather comments and contributions during workshops carried out in small groups. This work was used to adjust the project and prepare the next operational phase.

4th phase

Commitments

Creation of 50 “action sheets” and an action plan. This phase started after the validation of the project by the AgroSup Board of Directors.

An “Action Sheet”

Title of the action	
Strategic development to which the action relates	
Issues / values / identity	
General objective(s)	
Operational objective(s)	SMART (specific, measurable, ambitious, realizable, temporalized)
Description of the action	Description of the terms and the main steps of the action. Beginning and end of the action. One-off or sustained action ?
Leader of the action	This is to identify the person responsible for implementing the action. Check they has the means to accomplish the mission (see below: mobilized resources)
Beneficiaries	Categories, all users, external public, professionals, etc ...
Partnerships	Specify the types of partnerships (technical, financial, governance, ...)
Resources mobilized internally or to mobilize	Mobilized persons: Professor, Researcher, Manager, Secretary, technical officer. Staff time Financing (internal or external)
Success indicators	Indicators (quantitative or qualitative) are significant parameters used to measure the results.
Transversalités	Research / training / expertise / engineering ... what missions or what components are involved?
Evaluation	Who is in charge, what are the planned evaluations during the course of the action? ...

This phase led to the operationalization of the project, that is to say how it was translated into action: deadlines, means and performance indicators. It allowed the participatory nature of the process to be strengthened and allowed all the forces of the establishment to bring in their share of expertise. It also allowed for efficient communication so everyone was perfectly informed of the progress of the project in order to volunteer for further exchanges between groups.

12 working groups were formed around specific goals each with a leader. The role of the leader was to make the link with the group and the Steering Committee so that the latter were kept up to date on the progressive completion of the action sheets, the set of choices and

priorities and the allocation of resources. Everyone had to be in line with the strategic goals set out in the project.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation system was established from the outset in order to:

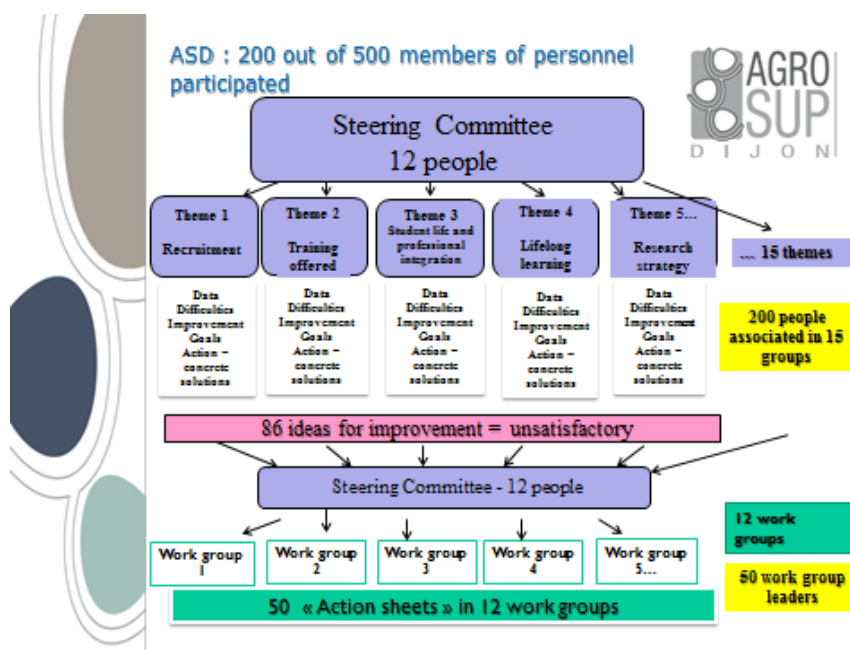
1) Provide indicators at several levels:

- Achievement indicators for each action sheet
- Performance indicators for each action sheet
- More comprehensive indicators to measure the achievement of major strategic orientations.

2) Organize monitoring and evaluation:

- A Steering Committee representative of the diversity of the personnel, which met at least twice a year
- An update using indicators
- Adjust the project to events
- Regularly inform the Admin Board
- Continue to communicate internally and externally.

Finally, a final validation process was put into place. After each step a written document was approved by each group to verify on what people agreed or did not agree. This helped retain the elements that were unifying for the project. It also helped to adopt the principle of “moving forward” and not going back on what had already been officially decided upon.



Funding and cost effectiveness

The budget necessary for the implementation of the strategic project activities were not to exceed normal departmental requirements. Specific needs were submitted and argued by the Steering Committee during the Administrative Board meetings. The role of the Steering Committee was to express an opinion on the budget allocations for the Administrative Board.

Sustainability

The final four strategic choices of AgroSup Dijon

- 1) European and international reputation based on commitment and a strong influence capacity within the Regional Research and Higher Education Area.
- 2) An engineering school which bases its attractiveness on its training offer, research strategy and differentiated and innovative pedagogies.
- 3) A proactive position on research in order to reinforce the identity of the establishment.
- 4) An institution that values diversity in its skills and resources.

Transferability and generalizability

Institutional project vs strategic plan?

A good way to manage change and to change the management

It is a quality approach but based on values, ethics and a shared strategy. It is a process that gives meaning to the work of the actors. If certain conditions of participation, transparency are respected, it can actually be used as a daily management tool.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

This is a five-year project. The list of the 12 actions of the strategic plan at AgroSup Dijon includes:

1. Simplify and improve recruitment of engineers (quality and quantity)
2. Improve the social and professional integration of students
3. Construct the areas of training consistent with engineer's curricula and linked to the expertise of our research professors
4. Encourage further study in AgroSup Dijon via doctoral programmes
5. Developing of exchanges of students (and researchers) at international level
6. Increase the quality and visibility of AgroSup Dijon research
7. Use our expertise in educational technology and engineering to develop practical and educational resources more in tune with new ways of learning
8. Develop a range of training for businesses and territorial actors
9. Develop our capacity to influence by strengthening our strategic partnerships
10. Organize the transfer of different types of expertise in education, research and engineering
11. Establish an efficient and effective functional organization for renewed governance
12. Promote the concept of sustainable development in the various activities and missions of the institution.

Success factors

Despite the fact that a nonspecific budget was allocated for the strategic plan, conditions for success were established and implemented:

- Break down the barriers of conception
- Build a common set of shared values
- Agree on a negotiated vision for the future

- Promote a systemic approach
- Involve as many actors as possible
- Problematicize
- Formalize regularly to ensure transparency
- Communicate at all stages (steps) of the process
- Be accompanied by an external expert
- Establish implementation, monitoring and evaluation system
- Give yourself time!

Unintended impacts

The impacts will be able to be measured after the first five-year period

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths: AgroSup built its common vision for the future collectively.

Weaknesses: the process was carried out internally and maybe the help of an external expert at certain points may have soothed certain apprehensions.

3. AgroSup Dijon, France

Incorporating sustainable development into the institutional governance processes: The Green Plan

Jean-Pierre Lemière, Corinne Stewart

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

AgroSup is a member of the Conférence des Grandes Écoles (CGE), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to support higher education institutions through joint activities, accreditation of educational programmes and promotional activities in France and abroad. CGE members are mainly engineering, management and other specialized schools (215), plus companies (16) and non-profit organizations (46) (www.cge.asso.fr).

In 2009, the CGE launched the Green Plan in collaboration with the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. It is a self-assessment tool which is currently used by 100 higher education institutions in France.

Aims and targets

On 1st March 2012, Jean-Pierre Lemière was appointed by the Director General as responsible for Sustainable Development at AgroSup Dijon for a period of three years. His work focuses on the integration of sustainable development not only within the training courses and research topics but also within the everyday operations of the institution. He must ensure that SD issues are integrated into all the decision-making processes. In order to do this, Mr Lemière and the Management team at AgroSup Dijon decided to apply for the Green Plan proposed by of CGE.

The Green Plan is a complete sustainable development strategy. It is not just about the teaching of sustainable development, but concerns the implementation of the SD principles in the processes of managing and running higher education institutions. The Green Plan at AgroSup Dijon should be completed in 2014.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

The Green Plan consists of an outline of objectives and actions drawn from the European Sustainable Development Strategy and an assessment framework based on the ISO 26000 standard to pilot and evaluate the following actions:

1) A Green Plan Outline to define the institution's sustainable development policy:

The Green Plan Outline is designed to indicate objectives for each establishment, along with points that can be progressively implemented depending on their pace, their status, their partnerships and their individual situation. This outline adapts and uses the nine key challenges of the European Sustainable Development Strategy:

Challenge 1: Sustainable consumption and production

Challenge 2: Knowledge-based society – 2.1: Education, training – 2.2: Research and development

Challenge 3: Governance

Challenge 4: Climate change and energies

Challenge 5: Sustainable transport and mobility

Challenge 6: Preservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources

Challenge 7: Public health, prevention and risk management

Challenge 8: Demographics, immigration and social inclusion

Challenge 9: International challenges in terms of sustainable development and worldwide poverty.

2) A Green Plan Framework to assess implementation of this sustainable development policy:

The Green Plan Framework is a tool for assessing the progress and relevance of the sustainable development actions carried out at the institution. It includes a self-diagnosis, a scorecard, a strategy guide and a basis for certification. It can also be the first step in the process for obtaining a label. This framework deals with the operational capability and takes into account the essential components of the institutions' activities: strategy and governance, social policy and territorial presence, environmental management, teaching and training, research activities.

These five topics cover all the elements comprising the nine challenges in the Green Plan. Each action in the framework corresponds to a number in

the Green Plan challenge. The framework thus enables each institution to comply with its social and societal responsibilities and, more precisely to:

- assess the progress made,
- analyze and diagnose its strong points and weak points,
- define a sustainable development strategy that is in line with its general policy,
- draw up its plan of action,
- implement the plan of action defined,
- assess and develop a process for continuous improvement and progress.

The Green Plan Framework is a steering tool for the Green Plan, with each topic in the framework comprising a field of action:

1) Strategy and governance: Commitment by the institution's governing bodies in terms of sustainable development: vision, stakes and principal challenges to be met, definition of its sustainable development strategy in relation to its overall strategy. Governance reflects the stakeholders' involvement in defining the sustainable development strategy and in making decision on managing the institution.

2) Social policy and territorial presence: All the social and human policies implemented for the personnel – jobs, labor relations, workplace health and safety, training and education, diversity and equal opportunity – as well as for students – assistance to disadvantaged students and integration for disabled students. This heading also concerns support for student projects and associations, as well as the institution's participation in local and international solidarity projects.

3) Environmental management: Taking the institution's direct environmental impact into account through its purchasing and transport policies: energy, water, air, waste and biodiversity.

4) Teaching and training: Integrating sustainable development challenges into initial and continuing training: a core "sustainable development" curriculum, specialized courses in the different disciplines, specialization courses, cross-disciplinary teaching, pedagogical method and tools, accompaniment for projects and placement courses. Education and development for responsible practices and behaviors: courses in ethics, social responsibility in management, signing charters.

5) Research activities: Development of research projects in the fields of sustainable development, cross-disciplinary projects, cross-disciplinary

teams, networks and partnerships; creation of a resource center and promoting research and teams.

Monitoring and evaluation

For each of the specified fields, challenges facing the institution are grouped together. Correspondence is thus established between these criteria (stakes) and the nine challenges in the Green Plan. **Four levels of application** are proposed so that each institution, depending on the progress it has made on the process, can position itself for each of the stakes. The answers provided must be based on the required information: significant performance indicators (qualitative and quantitative) and concrete documents concerning the actions carried out: charters, procedures, measurement tools, budgets, reports, various listings. As a summary document, the framework covers the actions carried out and the results obtained over a given period of time in a context of commitments within a strategy and a managerial approach at the institution.

Along these lines, the Green Plan Framework makes it possible to:

- measure and assess the institution's performances in relation to laws, standards, voluntary initiatives, etc.,
- compare the institution's performances over time (from one period to another),
- compare several institutions.

Funding and cost effectiveness

3000 Euro per year from AgroSup Dijon' budget will be allocated to the implementation of the Green Plan.

Sustainability

The framework also comprises an instrument for dialogue with the stakeholders and contributes to improving processes at the institution. This framework is shared by all institutions of higher education and attests to the actions carried out and the initiatives developed, as well as highlighting high-performance practices. Identifying and disseminating these good practices will encourage the rapid, widespread deployment of Green Plans in higher education.

Transferability and generalizability

The Green Plan assessment framework is open source and can be consulted at: http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Referentiel_CGE-CPU_2012_EN.pdf.

As the Green Plan is currently being implemented at AgroSup Dijon, the final outcomes cannot yet be assessed.

4. AgroSup Dijon, France

Curricula reform of the engineering degree programmes

Nathalie Cayot, Corinne Stewart

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

AgroSup Dijon was created in 2009 following the merger of two higher education institutions:

- the Établissement National d'Enseignement Supérieur Agronomique de Dijon (ENESAD - training of Agronomy engineers),
- the École Nationale Supérieure de Biologie Appliquée à la Nutrition et à l'Alimentation (ENSBANA - training of Food Science engineers).

AgroSup Dijon includes also EDUTER (an institute for education and professionalization).

AgroSup Dijon's missions are to:

- train generalist engineers at Master level in either Agronomy or Food Science
- carry out research, outreach and development
- train civil servants
- support the French agricultural educational system (via the EDUTER Institute).

Before the merger, the engineering degree programmes delivered in Agronomy or Food Science had a very different structure and it was therefore necessary to harmonize the two programmes both in terms of the common core modules offered and also in terms of teaching hours and internship periods. This required an implementation period of two years from April 2010 until July 2012. The reform was carried out internally and did not necessitate any particular funding.

Aims and targets

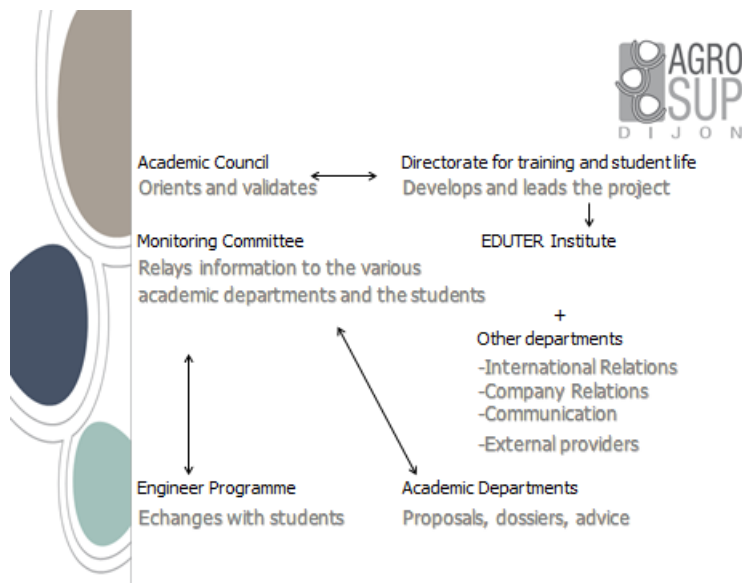
The objective of the curricula reform was to offer a rationalized programme in both Agronomy and in Food Science by determining the skills and trades required for all AgroSup graduates.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

Several bodies were involved in the strategy and actions of the curricula reform:

- 1) The Academic Council, whose aim was to both orient the workload and validate the tasks undertaken.
- 2) The Directorate for training and student life which acted as a pedagogical innovation body to develop the proposals and to lead the project.
- 3) A Monitoring Committee, led by the Directorate for Training and Student Life. Periodic monthly meetings to relay information to the various academic departments and the students comprising:
 - A Vice President from the Committee of studies;
 - Representatives from the academic departments;
 - Student representatives ;
 - A member of the Directorate for training and student life.
- 4) The academic departments which made proposals followed various dossiers and gave opinions.
- 5) Students who gave their opinions regarding the curriculum.
- 6) Other components of AgroSup Dijon including:
 - EDUTER Institute
 - International Relations department
 - Company Relations department
 - Communication department
 - External providers.



Monitoring and evaluation

The reform of the curricula in both programmes at AgroSup Dijon took place in 6 phases over the 2 years. Each phase includes the activities which were carried out which were then validated systematically by the AgroSup Dijon Academic Council.

Exploratory Phase 1 from April 2010 to September 2010: *Inventory*

- Socio-professional occupations;
- Repositories
- Training programmes in other institutions.

Activities carried out:

- Data analysis on the skills to be acquired;
- The employment possibilities for graduates based on recruitment channels;
- Analysis of the training offer (site visits);
- The recommendations of the CTI (French Commission for the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions in the fields of engineering)
- Validation by the Academic council in September 2010 - Exchanges with the academic departments.

Phase 2 from October 2010 to December 2010: *Development of specifications for the training programme*

Activities carried out:

- The objectives of the training and skills to be acquired;
- The types of programme (sequencing 18 months or 12 + 24);
- Structure and links between the other programmes (courses, Masters, specialized Masters, international exchanges);
- Candidate application conditions (types of entrance examinations, first-degree courses, life-long learning, and accreditation for work experience, which counts towards a qualification);
- The choice of foreign languages;
- Validation by the Academic Council in January 2011 at the General Assembly.

Phase 3 from January 2011 to March 2011: *Development of specifications for the training programme (continued)*

Activities carried out:

- Hours of the training programmes;
- The teaching modalities (face to face teaching, e-learning, tutorials, practical work);
- Number of internships;
- Structure and links between the other programmes (courses, Masters, specialized Masters, international exchanges);
- Foreign languages;
- Validation by the Academic council in March 2011.

In 2011 teaching programme workshops open to all professors.

Phase 4 from March 2011 to July 2011: *Development of the training programmes layout and creation of a presentation brochure*

Activities carried out:

- Hours per disciplinary subject;
- Creation of training presentation brochures;
- Validation by the Academic Council in July 2011 - Discussions with departments.

Phase 5 from July 2011 to December 2011: *Development of training content*

Activities carried out:

- Educational goals by teaching units;
- Hours per disciplinary subject (training content identified and schedules);
- Presentation brochures incorporating the hours per disciplinary subject;

- Validation by the Academic council in 12/2011 at the General Assembly.

Phase 6 from January 2012 to September 2012: *Developing lessons*

Activities carried out by the teachers in charge of training in conjunction with the pedagogical innovation department:

- Training content and schedules
- Types of pedagogy.

Funding and cost effectiveness

No extra funds were allocated to the implementation of the new curricula.

Sustainability

AgroSup Dijon was able to offer the new reformed engineering degree programmes in September 2012.

Transferability and generalizability

One simple mnemonic for curriculum design is named C-U-R-R-I-C-U-L-U-M (Kalb, 2009). Each letter representing a phrase important in curriculum design and can be used in any higher education institution wishing to implement curriculum reform:

- C** Consider context
- U** Understand learners
- R** wRite goals
- R** wRite objectives
- I** Identify content
- C** Choose methods and materials
- U** Unite resources
- L** Lead implementation
- U** Undertake evaluation
- M** Monitor outcomes.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

The organization of the training is now divided into two cycles: a common cycle and a cycle of specialty in either Agronomy or Food Science. The common cycle (6 months): a joint training for any AgroSup Dijon

engineering student, allowing them to develop a common culture based on scientific teaching disciplines in basic engineering, providing the students with openings to other disciplinary fields and methodological tools necessary for an engineering position. This cycle includes the teaching of multi-disciplinary simulation exercises (case studies, projects) and the undertaking of internships. The priority was to mix the Agronomy and Food Science students to give them a common culture in science and technology. The specialist cycle (30 months) allows the students to acquire the knowledge and skills related to their specific final degree (Agronomy or Food Science).

Success factors

Both the Food Science and Agronomy programmes now offer the students an obligatory five-month internship abroad in level 4.

Unintended impacts

Evidently, the introduction of a new curriculum poses a range of challenges to professors and institutions and AgroSup Dijon's case was no exception. Obstacles to the curriculum implementation at AgroSup Dijon were identified, and this included the absence of an in-depth state of the art inventory, the pedagogical choices, the course contents, the number of teaching hours, differences between professors' beliefs and the underlying ideology of the proposed curriculum, the internship objectives and periods, the level of student autonomy, student and employer expectations, institutional arrangements and the time restrictions for the implementation of such a reform.

Strengths and weaknesses

Although the programmes and training offer at AgroSup Dijon are now harmonized, the current situation is still extremely new and therefore will need some fine-tuning every year, with a complete review required every 2-3 years.

5. International University College, Bulgaria

External stakeholders management and establishment of Center for Strategic Partnerships

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

In the period of 2007 – 2013 International University College (IUC) underwent significant developments and changes in the areas of education and research. A series of curricula reforms have been carried out at institutional level, aiming at introducing innovative teaching methods and interdisciplinary modules and bridging the gap between the labor market needs and IUC graduates' knowledge and skills.

From an institution providing practice-oriented teaching approach and typically focusing on education and training, IUC has turned into one of the leading applied research hubs in the region in the fields of Tourism and Hospitality. Being a small business school located in one of the remote and less developed regions of Bulgaria, over the last five years, IUC has managed to attract international students from more than thirty countries and to create a multicultural environment, contributing to internationalization at home.

In 2012 – 2013, in regard with revision and upgrade of the IUC strategic development plan, a focus group consisting of representatives of IUC senior management body, faculty and students carefully analyzed the institution's performance in the fields of education and research. One of main conclusions the focus group drew, was that without exception, all positive developments in education and research over the last six years have been more or less related or originated in the establishment of sustainable partnerships between IUC and an array of diverse external stakeholders. It was pointed out that the inter-institutional positive developments and accomplishments are mainly due to the active collaboration of the institution with external stakeholders, such as employers and business leaders, social partners, other academic institutions, alumni etc. In the processes of interaction and engagement with the external stakeholders, a significant transfer of knowledge to and from IUC occurs, which on the

other hand contributes to the achievement of the so called third mission of the institution.

There is extensive literature dealing with the universities' third mission, as well as the mechanisms and indicators for measuring knowledge transfer. Very often, in the light of the history of the European universities' development, the third mission is perceived as a combination of brand new and different initiatives that would lead to added value for the universities and the societies. Given that the processes of internationalization and collaboration with the business have been present from the very beginning of IUC and its existence, the analysis of the focus group concluded that completing IUC's third mission is not about creating something different and new but about doing the "old" things – providing education and carrying out research – but differently. This could be achieved through opening the institution towards the society and allowing the flow of information and transfer of knowhow and outcomes of education and research between IUC and its external stakeholders.

Becoming conscious of the importance of collaboration between IUC and its external stakeholders may seem an important step but it would be useless if the collaboration with the external stakeholders is not brought to a new level. As mentioned above, interaction with business companies, other higher education institutions and social partners has been always in place at IUC, but these processes have been sporadic and very often random. In most of the cases the existing collaboration has been a result of the individual efforts of faculty or staff members of different administrative units at IUC. Staff members of a certain administrative units have often been completely unaware of the partnerships established and functioning in other departments. As a conclusion, there was a complete lack of unified, institutionally approved procedure for initiating, validating and establishing new partnerships with external stakeholders. As a consequence, it was decided that a new systematic and structured approach shall be created and introduced into the processes managing communication with external stakeholders.

Aims and targets

Following the analysis results of the IUC strategic plan, in March 2013 the focus group recommended the elaboration of a new Strategy for External Stakeholders' Management, whose chief goal would be to support the achievement of the IUC mission, vision and the objectives of the strategic

plan. In addition, the focus group suggested the establishment of a Center for Strategic Partnerships at IUC.

The Strategy for External Stakeholders' Management was planned to combine the efforts of all IUC faculty and units which have been so far in one way or another engaged in different initiatives or policies for collaboration with external stakeholders. These include, inter alia, the senior management of IUC including the Rector's Council, the IUC Career Center, the International Cooperation Department, the International Project Department and the Marketing Department. The elaboration of a Strategy for External Stakeholders' Management aimed at:

- Identification of the external stakeholders IUC shall work closely with until 2020;
- Analyzing the role and the needs of these external stakeholders;
- Outlining the priorities for development and management of stakeholders relations;
- Distribution of responsibilities at institutional level and identification of the communication channels;
- Setting up clear criteria and indicators for measuring the impact of relations with the stakeholders on the overall institutional development.

Simply put, the external stakeholders are organizations or individuals who are influenced by the institution performance and/ or have direct impact on the institution results. In the context of the Stakeholder theory, the results of any institution's activity are interconnected or related to its external stakeholders. Typically, in the field of higher education the external stakeholders are organizations or individuals who have vested sustainable interest and are closely influenced by the practices applied, and the results achieved at universities. These include business representatives, civil society, public authorities at regional and national level, other higher educational institutions, alumni associations, parents, students associations, etc.

It is fair to mention that in the context of economic, social and political changes nowadays, the pressure on the higher educational institutions from the external stakeholders is constantly growing. On the other hand, their engagement and contribution must be appreciated by the higher education institutions, as the external stakeholders share with the universities

knowledge and skills and create opportunities which are of significant importance in today's interconnected societies.

The establishment of sustainable strategic partnerships between the universities and their external stakeholders shall bring added value for both sides. This is, in particular, valid and relevant in case of IUC. Achieving added value through engagement with the external stakeholders is one of the most distinctive features of the so called entrepreneurial universities. Typically, these state a clear intent to achieve tangible results and often to obtain financial profits from this partnership without compromising their academic values.

Being a private higher education institution registered in Bulgaria, in the context of the Higher Education Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, IUC is not entitled to receive any funding from the state budget. The institutional main activities are funded mainly through students' tuition fees which on the other hand must be kept at reasonable levels, especially in times of economic turmoil and financial crisis when students and parents often face financial problems. In this respect, the diversification of funding sources has been a priority for IUC from the very beginning of its existence and the commercialization of its activities has been always at the heart of its financial policy.

As a result, the Strategy for External Stakeholders' Management was designed to show a clear correlation between activities for collaboration with external stakeholders and the direct or indirect benefits these would bring to IUC. The establishment of the Center for Strategic Partnerships at IUC was planned to generate revenues. Linking the performance of the Center to tangible results, including financial revenues, was a proof of the clear business and entrepreneurial approach IUC is not afraid to adopt.

The Center will work with target groups which include all external stakeholders of IUC. The Center will operate as a hub for all types of activities and initiatives for engagement with business representatives, members of the civil societies and NGOs, public authorities, other higher educational institutions and IUC alumni. The Center has been planned to combine the already existing separate units which have been working independently as one single entity. The main idea was to streamline the processes of external stakeholders' management as well as to bring to life a

new structural unit at the institution, aimed at contributing to the achievement of the third mission of the institution.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

Following the conclusions of the focus group in March 2013, a themed expert team consisting of IUC senior management representatives and heads of relevant administrative units was created a month later, which started working on the elaboration of the Strategy for External Stakeholder Management at IUC. The first stage included close examination of the existing documents and the regulations related to the topic at national and European level. When elaborating the strategy, the IUC experts referred to the following documents, used as a starting point:

- European Higher Education Modernization Agenda (2011);
- European Higher Education in the World (2013);
- New Skills for New Jobs (2008);
- The Employability of Higher Education Graduates: the Employers' Perspective (2013);
- Draft of the National Strategy for Higher Education Development in Bulgaria in the period of 2014 – 2020 (2013);
- National Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Bulgaria in the period of 2014 – 2020 (2013).

In addition, the themed expert team explored existing good practices for stakeholder management implemented at universities in Europe and in the USA. The initial stage of work on the Strategy included also an in-depth analysis of the status quo at IUC. Although the term “stakeholder management” has not been used at IUC in the past, many of the areas of intervention it covers have been already touched in one way or another. Along with the identification and introduction of innovative practices, it was decided to put efforts to ensure consistency of the processes of collaboration with IUC existing stakeholders. Internal reorganization and structural reforms shall by no means have a negative impact on the institution's performance and the quality of the existing partnerships.

When designing the Strategy for External Stakeholder Management, the themed expert team identified the key players at institutional level to be involved in the strategy implementation, depending on their professional experience and expertise. Subsequently, they identified the external

stakeholders on whom the strategy for engagement would predominantly focus. In line with IUC priorities and recent projects and initiatives, the following groups of external stakeholders would enjoy a privileged relation with IUC:

- Academic partners from the EU and the Eastern Neighboring Area;
- SMS in the EU;
- Research consortia active in the field of social studies and innovations and social entrepreneurship;
- Business incubators and chambers of commerce in the EU;
- IUC alumni working abroad;
- Formal and non-formal youth organizations as well as youth NGOs engage in youth policies making and implementation and active in the fields of sustainable development and intercultural dialogue.

Having identified its prospective strategic partners, the themed expert team developed a map of stakeholders. In addition, a needs analysis was prepared, which focuses on the external stakeholders' needs, expectations and stated intentions. For the purposes of accountability and transparency, the new Strategy recommended from the very beginning a clear distribution of tasks within the institution. It is often believed that the existing support and involvement of the senior management is crucial for the success of a certain partnership. However, IUC experience shows that the most sustainable partnerships created at the institution are those which the administrative staff members have been committed to and have carried out persistently.

After having analyzed the status quo and the current challenges, IUC as a higher education institution is facing a number of shortages related to stakeholder management, which were listed by the themed expert team. In order to overcome these, the following areas of interventions and priorities for IUC have been identified for the period until 2020:

Priority 1: Extending the network of SMS partners of IUC, aiming at involving these in the curriculum and the academic content delivery and design as well as better planning and achievement of the learning outcomes.

Priority 2: Optimization of the existing networks with academic institutions committed to the same values and principles as IUC, with the aim of innovative practices exchange and building capacity. The prospective transfer of innovation shall be considered as a key criterion when establishing new academic partnerships.

Priority 3: Initiation of new partnerships with social partners interested in social innovation and social entrepreneurship.

Priority 4: Enhancement of links between IUC and its alumni with the aim of building a network of IUC ambassadors and vox pops.

Priority 5: Establishment of Center for Strategic Partnerships at IUC to act as a hub at the institution; the Center will aim, inter alia, at introduction of integrated approach in managing links with external stakeholders; it will also follow the principle of long-term planning as a warrant for strategic partnerships sustainability and the principle of inclusiveness.

The draft of the Strategy for External Stakeholder Management was presented for discussion at the Rector's Council in November 2013. All interested parties at the institution including the student community were invited to share their remarks and recommendations until January 2014. A consolidated version of the Strategy was voted in February 2014. Its implementation will begin with the elaboration and validation of the founding documents and procedures of the Center for Strategic Partnerships.

The Center will act as a hub for innovative and efficient partnerships and for solutions to improve the stakeholder management at IUC. The Center will be managed by a Director, who is to report directly to the President of IUC. The Director will supervise the activities of the different units being in charge of collaboration with external stakeholders and will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Strategy for External Stakeholder Management at IUC. In particular, his/her portfolio will include responsibilities concerning the achievement of the so called third mission at IUC. Being the leading figure in charge of knowledge transfer at IUC, the Director of the Center will occupy a prominent place at the institution's organizational charter sharing the same level as the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Research in charge of education and research at IUC.

Monitoring and evaluation

Given the importance of the processes of knowledge transfers at IUC, the process of elaboration of the Strategy for External Stakeholder Management was closely followed by the Rector's Council at IUC. The themed expert team provided regular update on the progress in the framework of formal meetings and networking events as well as in the framework of informal discussions with existing external and internal stakeholders at IUC. The Center for Strategic Partnership at IUC will be

accountable to IUC senior management and the academic community of IUC, including students and graduates of the school. The Center will prepare annual technical reports on its activities and achievements as well as a quarterly financial report on the attracted revenues and new funding.

Funding and cost effectiveness

The elaboration of the Strategy for External Stakeholder Management and the establishment of the Center for Strategic Partnership were co-financed by the project BG051PO001-3.1.08-0044 Complex Innovative Optimization of the Quality Assurance System at International University College, Bulgaria. The project is funded in the framework of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme in Bulgaria within the European Social Fund. Following its establishment and after the project life, the Center will be engaged in activities for fundraising and in addition to securing its own financial stability; it will be also responsible for attracting new funds, commercializing IUC educational and research products and maximizing the potential of the institution in the field of knowledge transfer.

Sustainability

The Strategy for External Stakeholder Management will be implemented in the period of 2014 – 2020. In 2019 it shall be revised in line with the actual development trends and higher education policies on national and European level. The sustainability of the Center is dependent on own results and achievements. The decision for its creation and establishment has been endorsed by the highest management level at the institution.

Transferability and generalizability

In 21st century it would be difficult to find a higher education institution which does not have in place a Career Center, an office dealing with international cooperation, an alumni association or a specific research unit. Collaboration with various external partners has been part of the activities of universities for a very long time. However, the perception that each of these partnerships shall bring added value and be part of a structured streamlined policy towards achieving the institutions' third mission is relatively new.

Knowledge transfer and engagement with external stakeholders from the private, public and non-governmental sector is a universal issue in higher education. Introducing a strategy for streamlining these processes and

establishing a hub to facilitate these could significantly improve the performance of the higher education institutions in this field. The procedure seems to be relatively smooth and simple and therefore easily transferable. What could present a challenge though are the shift of mindset and the change of the paradigms, needed to turn this procedure into sustainable and beneficial practices.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

The following main results and outcomes could be reported so far:

- Improved overall awareness of the knowledge transfer importance in IUC academic community.
- Better understanding of the institution's goals and the strategic objectives in the light of the collaboration with representatives of the private, public and non-governmental sectors.
- Streamlined procedures for identifying, selecting and nomination of new partnerships, as well as improved mechanisms for stakeholder management at the institution.
- Stronger involvement of the academic community members in the processes of knowledge transfer.

Success factors

The following factors for success have been identified:

- IUC is a dynamic, relatively young institution, which supports the open-mindedness and creativity of its faculty, students and administrative staff members.
- Decision making processes at IUC typically involve different stakeholders and follow the principles of transparency and accountability. Having this type of corporate culture, embedded in the institution's main activities, definitely contributes to the success of any new initiative whether related to structural reorganization or to changing mindsets and perceptions.

6. International University College, Bulgaria

Promoting lifelong learning

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

The concept of learning from cradle to grave dates back to ancient ages and lifelong learning is part of the mission statement and activities of all modern higher education institutions today. The aims of involving the higher education institutions in teaching and training beyond the higher education system are to support the development of knowledge-based economy, to contribute to the personal development and initiative of the citizens and to assist social inclusion.

In Bulgaria, the statistics about the number of learners aged between 25 and 64 involved in any type of lifelong learning activities over the past years show quite a gloomy picture. In 2011 only 1.3% of this group and in 2012 only 1.5 % participated in formal or non-formal education or training compared to average levels of 9% for the EU as a whole. The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Bulgaria strives to tackle this issue. In line with the current universal trends in higher education and in the light of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Bulgaria, IUC has set up a new infrastructure to promote lifelong learning at institutional, regional and national level. Currently, the institution through its Academy for Continuing Education and Vocational Training provides an array of educational services for lifelong learning to external consumers and clients. The Academy activities are on one hand closely linked to the efforts to support knowledge transfer from IUC to the business and civil society and to contribute to the local community development.

However, in addition to the achievement of the so called third mission, promoting lifelong learning at IUC supports measures for diversification of the funding sources at the institution as well. As a private higher education institution, in the context of the Higher Education Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, IUC does not receive any funding from the state budget. Relying exclusively on students' tuition fees has not proved sustainable in the past.

Therefore an innovative entrepreneurial approach had to be introduced in order to identify and launch new funding opportunities.

When analyzing the feasibility of the new infrastructure established within the institution, it was outlined that being the only higher education institution in town, IUC has the best equipped team of lecturers and experts in the field of business, management, hospitality, tourism and foreign languages teaching. Therefore it has a strong competitive advantage compared to other providers of lifelong learning opportunities in the town of Dobrich and the region, with very good chances to succeed.

Aims and targets

The Academy for Continuing Education and Vocational Training was set up in 2010. It represents an independent administrative unit at IUC and is regulated by Art. 14.2 of the IUC Rules and Regulations. Its main goal is to create, provide and promote lifelong learning opportunities and activities which may include vocational training, professional skills and knowledge upgrade, development of transferable skills, design of new vocational courses and curricula, career consulting, validation of non-formal and informal skills, labor market and training needs analysis etc. In 2011 the Academy developed and proposed for discussion a Strategy for Lifelong Learning at IUC. The Strategy was endorsed by IUC Rector's Council and outlines the main priorities which the institution as a whole and the Academy in particular shall follow over the next five years in the field of lifelong learning. These include:

- Design and delivery of relevant training programmes matching the labor market needs, which enhance the trainees' employability;
- Provision of flexible and accessible lifelong learning opportunities for trainees with diverse professional background, profile and needs;
- Achievement of high quality standards of training and teaching;
- Introduction and implementation of innovative teaching and training methods including use of ICT and interdisciplinary approaches with the aim of stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Development of efficient mechanisms for social inclusion and access to vocational training and continuous education to disadvantaged groups on the labor market as well as for raising awareness on the lifelong learning groups among all social groups
- Development of sustainable mechanisms for fundraising and cost efficiency;

- Provision of efficient management of the Academy and exchange of good practices in leadership and change management with the senior management and other administrative units of IUC.

The Academy activities are intended for the following main target groups:

- Adult learners: the aging population in Bulgaria and the low levels of employment among population aged over 50 represents a serious challenge for the society and the national and regional economy;
- Young unemployed learners: youth unemployment in Bulgaria in the end of 2013 was 28.5%, hence almost 5% higher than the average level of 23.6 % in the EU;
- Disadvantaged, groups including migrants and learners with special needs;
- Employed or unemployed people interested or forced to upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to adapt better to the labor market needs;
- IUC alumni;
- IUC international students.

In general, the skills shortage addressed by the continuing education and vocational training opportunities provided by the Academy at IUC included lack of sufficient digital, transversal, foreign languages and communication skills, green skills, unawareness of entrepreneurship opportunities as well as specific areas of expertise in the fields of hospitality, tourism, rural tourism, agriculture, accounting and finance, etc.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

The Academy for Continuing Education and Vocational Training was brought to life as a follow-up of vocational training and continuing education activities, carried out in the past within the framework of various initiatives and involving staff members in charge of different roles and responsibilities at IUC.

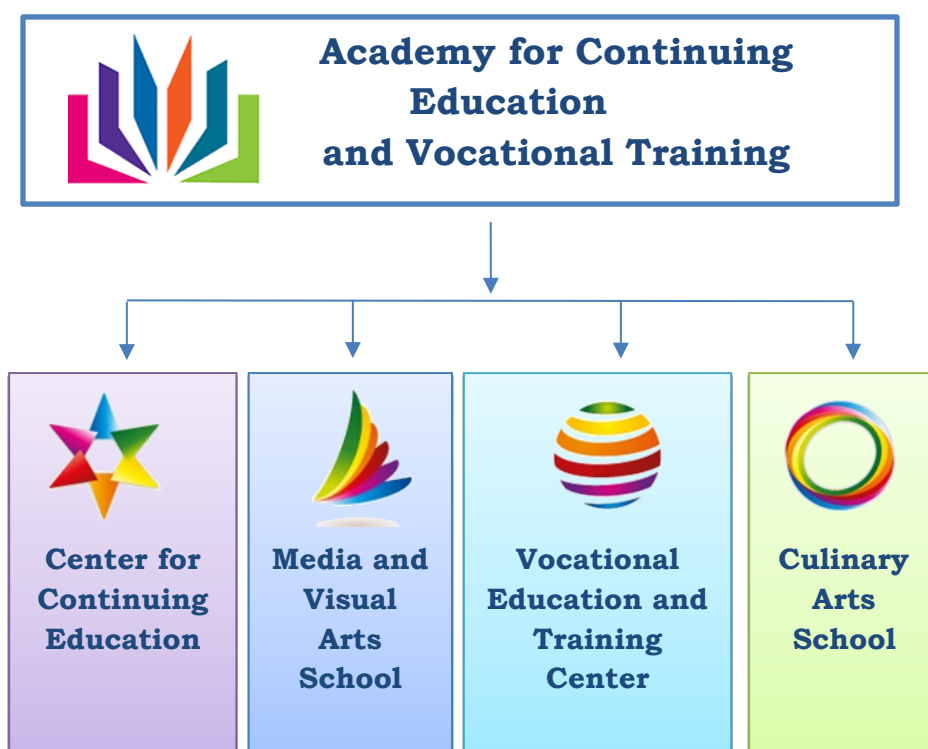
As indicated below in Scheme 1, the Academy comprises of the following four sections:

- Center for Continuing Education: provides IUC alumni with a variety of courses aimed at skills upgrade and further professional development;

- Culinary Arts School: provides training, exclusively in the field of culinary arts as a follow-up of IUC cooperation with HRC Culinary Academy and based on the experience and expertise in the field of hospitality management, which IUC has gained over the years;
- Media and Visual Arts School: supports interdisciplinary training initiatives including delivery of courses and modules in Art Management;
- Vocational Education and Training Center: part of the vocational education system and registered in line with the Vocational Education and Training Act in Bulgaria; the Center organizes training courses leading to award of vocational certificates or specific professional qualifications.

Scheme 1

Structure of the Academy for Continuing Education and Vocational Training

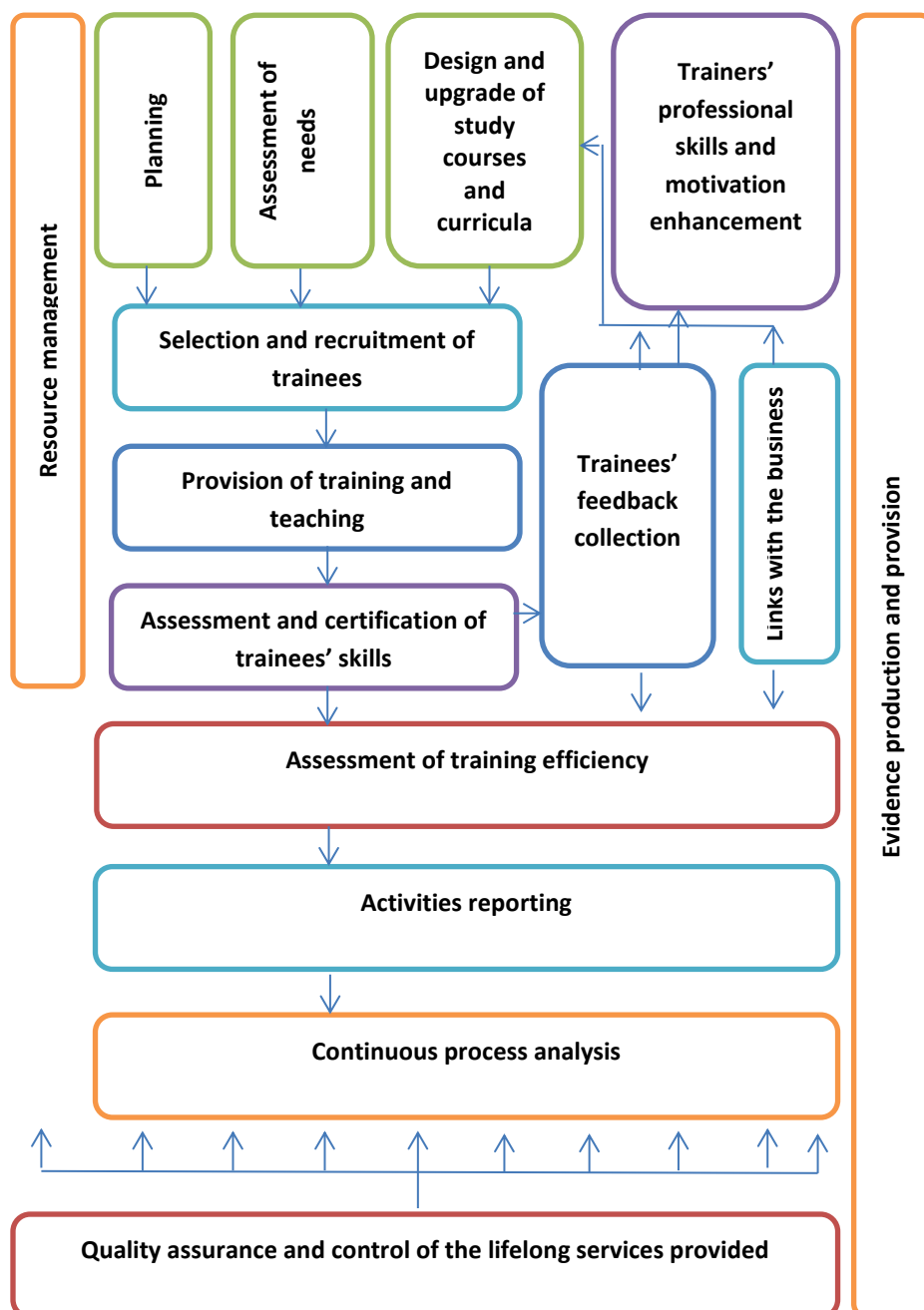


As already mentioned, on one hand the activities of the Academy are intended to promote lifelong learning and to contribute to the process of knowledge transfer at IUC. On the other hand, the Academy has been set up as part of the efforts to diversify the funding sources at IUC and to contribute to the financial stability of the institution. In this regard, the activities of the Academy are closely followed and led by the Vice Rector for Finance at IUC. Each of the four units is managed by a Director who reports to the Vice Rector for Finance.

The four units engage in a variety of activities, working both independently and in close collaboration with each other. The main activities and processes at the Academy are outlined below in Scheme 2:

Scheme 2

Activities and processes at the Academy for continuing education and vocational training



Monitoring and evaluation

The activities of the Academy are closely monitored and evaluated on a quarterly basis. Each of the four units prepares a quarterly report focusing on such indicators as number of participants trained, expenditures incurred and revenues attracted, etc. The enhanced accountability of the Academy activities is linked to the fact that its performance is deemed crucial from the institution financial stability perspective.

Funding and cost effectiveness

The Academy is funded through the revenues generated by its own activities.

Sustainability

The Academy's positive results so far show high potential for sustainability of the unit. It becomes more and more popular in the region as one of the most experienced and qualified providers of lifelong learning education services. If managed properly, the Academy could prove a sustainable long-term revenue source for the institution as a whole.

Transferability and generalizability

Nowadays, most of the higher education institutions are facing serious challenges in achieving institutional funding diversification. The provision of continuing education, as a complementary activity and in the context of the knowledge transfer institutional policy, could be relevant to any higher education institution, which is interested to commercialize its education products and seeking to maximize its academic staff potential.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

Over the last three years the following results have been achieved by the Academy:

- 1117 trainees trained in courses in the fields of business and management, accounting, entrepreneurship, sales management, business administration, banking, agricultural business, tourist guiding and animation, hospitality, etc.
- 799 trainees trained in courses in IT, English, German, Spanish and Chinese.

In addition, when relevant, the Academy has participated as a partner or an education and consultation services provider in a number of European funded projects.

Success factors

The staff members of the Academy demonstrate entrepreneurial skills, which are crucial for the success of the unit. Having entrepreneurial mindset and the ability to work under pressure is essential for the effective promotion of the Academy activities, sound management of the resources and efficient organization and facilitation of the activities. Being the only higher education institution in town has been a key factor for the success of the training activities carried out at the Academy.

Unintended impacts

The following positive side effect has been registered at IUC in regard with the Academy activities:

- Enhanced motivation among the lecturers and teachers of IUC involved in training activities facilitated by the Academy. The Academy provides additional employment and income opportunities for them and helps them maximize their potential and improve their skills.

7. International University College, Bulgaria

Collaboration between IUC and HRC Culinary Academy, Bulgaria: enhancing transparency and synergies between levels 5 and 6A of the National Qualifications Framework

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

IUC provides practice-oriented undergraduate programmes in the fields of business, management, hospitality and tourism. Its three-year programme in International Hospitality Management delivered in English and in close collaboration with Cardiff Metropolitan University in the UK leads to award of a Professional Bachelor degree in International Hospitality Management from IUC, which is equivalent to level 6A from the National Qualifications Framework and a BA (Hons) degree from Cardiff Metropolitan University.

While transfer and recognition of credits and periods of study within the same level of higher education is strongly supported at national and European level nowadays, the transfer of credits between different levels of education and the validation of knowledge and skills, acquired outside the higher education system, seems to be still a challenging initiative. The ECTS User's Guide published in 2009 and more specifically the information in p. 4.5.2, concerning the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, seems to be often treated as a pure recommendation, which could be therefore easily put aside and not taken into consideration. In this respect, the collaboration and partnership established between IUC and HRC Culinary Academy in Bulgaria could certainly be considered an innovation and a good practice example in Bulgaria.

The HRC Culinary Academy offers a two-year integrated vocational training programme in Culinary Arts, comprising of four semesters, two of them spent at the institution in Bulgaria and another two completed in real-work environment in high profile restaurants and kitchens around the world. Upon completion of the Culinary Arts programme, the students are awarded a vocational certificate equal to level 5 of the National

Qualifications Framework in Bulgaria. The two semesters spent studying at HRC Culinary Academy premises in Bulgaria cover a series of business and hospitality management related modules and courses which are also being delivered at IUC within the first year of studies in the International Hospitality Management undergraduate programme.

IUC has been collaborating with HRC Culinary Academy from the very beginning of its opening in the premises of IUC in Dobrich. The two institutions share not only facilities but also other resources such as human resources, know-how and business infrastructure. The established partnership between them envisages the enrollment of the HRC Culinary Academy students in the International Hospitality Management programme at IUC and includes recognition of credits and periods of study completed by the students at the HRC Culinary Academy, provided they decide to continue their studies at IUC on the undergraduate level in the field of International Hospitality Management.

The reason behind, is to avoid repeated teaching of modules already delivered to the students while attending the HRC Culinary Academy courses. Moreover, when returning to IUC to register as 2nd year students, after having spent one or more years working abroad in the field of F&B management, the HRC Culinary Academy graduates demonstrate an array of skills and knowledge which have been acquired through informal and formal learning in international work settings.

Aims and targets

The aims of the established partnership between IUC and HRC Academy are threefold, as it is deemed beneficial for the HRC Culinary graduates having the opportunity to transfer to IUC, the HRC Culinary Academy and IUC as well. The partnership between the two institutions guarantees transparency of the study programmes in Culinary Arts and the International Hospitality Management and allows credit recognition for modules delivered at both institutions. This measure encourages the graduates of the vocational training programme to continue their studies in the field of hospitality and to achieve a higher education qualification.

The enrolment at IUC after completion the course of studies at HRC Culinary Academy typically happens at least two years after the qualified chefs have worked and gained solid professional experience on the labor market working in F&B facilities around the world. The HRC Academy graduates are

offered the opportunity to apply also for validation of skills and knowledge obtained through informal and formal learning. The Academy for Continuing Education and Vocational Training at IUC has gained extensive expertise in the past in the field of prior learning validation and provides this type of services.

For HRC Culinary Academy the collaboration with IUC is beneficial, as it offers the Academy trainees an attractive perspective to achieve a higher education qualification. This creates for the Academy a competitive advantage, compared to other VET institutions in Bulgaria delivering vocational education and training at level 5. IUC on the other hand highly appreciates the opportunity to enroll students with professional experience and knowledge gained on the labor market. This is in line with the institution's strategic goal to attract more "non-traditional" students and to provide flexible access to higher education as part of its efforts to increase attainment levels on regional and national level.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

The collaboration between IUC and HRC Culinary Academy covers the following main activities:

1) IUC provides assistance and guidance in the processes of design and delivery of the following HRC Culinary Arts modules:

Semester 1: Introduction to Hotel and Tourism Industry; Business Communications; Leadership skills; Introduction to Hospitality Marketing.

Semester 3: F&B operations and table service; Catering and Event Management; Restaurant Service Operations.

2) Continuous promotion of the partnership with the aim of raising awareness of the opportunity to obtain a higher education qualification among HRC Culinary Academy students.

3) Enrollment of graduates of HRC Culinary Academy at IUC

The process includes the following main steps:

- The applicant applies for studies at IUC and submits along with the application form his/her portfolio consisting of evidence related to relevant work experience in the field of international hospitality as well as his/her certificate issued by HRC Culinary Academy, including recommendations of former trainers or employers if applicable.

- IUC Admission office consults with IUC Student Affairs office concerning the learning outcomes and the recognition of credits obtained in the HRC Culinary Academy modules delivered in semester 1 and semester 3, as listed above.
- IUC Admission office consults with IUC Academy for Continuing Education and Vocational Training concerning the evidence related to professional experience.
- After taking into consideration the results of the internal consultations carried out at IUC, the Admission office takes decision regarding the recognition of credits and prior learning of the applicant. As a result of this decision, the applicant could be either registered as a second year student in International Hospitality Management undergraduate programme at IUC or is recommended to enroll in 1st year in case sufficient evidence is lacking.

Monitoring and evaluation

The partnership is being monitored and evaluated at IUC as part of the internal procedure for assessing the impact of IUC cooperation with external organizations. The indicators for measuring success of the partnership include the number of HRC Culinary Academy students and graduates enrolled at IUC, the number of new partnerships established in the field of hospitality management, etc.

Funding and cost effectiveness

The funding mechanisms of collaboration between IUC and HRC Culinary Academy are simple and transparent. According to the agreement between the two institutions, as long as the student studies with HRC Culinary Academy, he/she pays tuition fee with them. After enrolling at IUC the graduates of HRC Culinary Academy finance their studies on the undergraduate level in line with the IUC policy for student tuition fees and financial support. It shall be noted that IUC provides merit-based scholarships to its students and HRC Culinary Academy graduates enrolled at IUC enjoy the same access to student financial support as the other IUC students.

Sustainability

The cooperation between the two institutions could prove sustainable only in case it continues to be endorsed and supported by the senior management of both institutions. Although considered successful so far, it is also deemed to be fragile due to its facultative nature. Changes in the

senior management bodies could lead to revision of the collaboration mechanisms and may represent a threat to the partnership. Being innovative and creative often goes hand in hand with uncertainty.

Transferability and generalizability

Given that the recognition of prior learning and validation of skills and knowledge obtained through informal and non-formal learning is a priority strongly supported on European level, good practices related to these should be easily transferable. However, national legislations or authorities may choose to postpone or not to support these processes. Having additional barriers at national level may therefore make the mechanisms for a partnership, similar to the one established between IUC and HRC Culinary Academy, not applicable in countries where these exist.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

So far more than thirty students or graduates of the Culinary Academy have transferred to IUC to continue their studies on the undergraduate level. In addition to this, in regard with the promotion of the HRC Culinary Academy's programme among employers and employees in the hospitality and tourism industry at national and international level, improved overall awareness on the International Hospitality Management programme has been registered. Through the collaboration with HRC Culinary Academy IUC has also managed to further develop its hospitality business infrastructure and networks.

Success factors

Building a bridge between different education levels is considered a bold initiative in conservative educational systems like the Bulgarian, one where a number of reforms are waiting to be implemented. Having the right entrepreneurial mindset and being in favour of innovation and change, is a major precondition for success when two education institutions initiate synergy between different education levels and embark on a joint learning journey. The development and implementation of efficient communication strategy to raise awareness on the possibilities provided to the students and graduates of the Academy has proved to be crucial for the success of the collaboration. Last but not least, involving representatives of the business in the design and delivery of the Culinary Arts and the International Hospitality Management programmes ensures relevance and feasibility of the partnership.

8. Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal

Changing institutional governance structures

1. Background

In the period of 2006 – 2012 the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB) underwent significant developments and changes, coinciding with the beginning of a period of relevant academic and legislative transformation. The publication of the legislation on degrees and diplomas of higher education took place in 2006 (Decree-Law No. 74/2006 of 24th March) and this represented, in practice, the beginning of the need to adequate the academic offer of higher education to the Bologna process. For polytechnic higher education it also represented the opportunity to offer master degrees and the expansion of professional short first cycle courses.

The new national legislation on higher education also dates from this period, in particular, the approval of the evaluation programme of the Portuguese higher education system (Order No. 484/2006 of 9th January), the approval of the legal framework for the evaluation of higher education (Law No. 38/2007 of 16th August), the creation of the agency for the assessment and accreditation of higher education (Decree-Law No. 369/2007 of 5th November), as well as the approval of the new legal framework for higher education institutions (Law No. 62/2007 of 10th September). Faced with these legal changes, IPB amended its Statutes during the year of 2008, and they were approved by the Legislative Order No. 62/2008 of 5th December.

Additionally, the overall legal change affected the teaching career statute of the polytechnic higher education (Decree-Law No. 207/2009, of 31st August and Law No. 7/2010 of 13th May), leading to changes in the constitution of the teaching staff of these institutions. As a result, IPB has approved the regulation for recruitment, selection and hiring of career teaching staff of IPB (Regulation No 290/2011 of 10th May), defined the list of disciplinary areas of IPB (Order No 8704/2011 of 28th June), approved the regulation of recruitment of specially hired teaching staff, (Order No 12825/2010 of 9th August, later replaced by the Order No. 8895/2011 of 5th July) and approved

the regulation of the performance assessment system of teaching staff (Order No 14/2011 of 10th January).

As previously referred, in 2006 the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) began making the international higher education evaluation, involving the following organizations: the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European University Association (EUA). The OECD evaluated the systemic performance of Portuguese higher education in an international context, whilst the ENQA focused its analysis on the accreditation system and quality evaluation. Additionally, a volunteer Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) has been implemented, coordinated by the EUA. The IEP is an independent membership service that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture.

The IEP programme was launched in 2006 engaging the first ten higher education institutions in Portugal, either universities or polytechnics, and both state and private. IPB was selected for this first evaluation programme and carried out a follow-up process in 2011, identifying the impact of initial evaluation in the development of the institution, in particular, by assessing the experiences and changes implemented after the initial evaluation and proposing new measures of change in the future.

The publication of the new Legal Regime of Higher Education Institutions (RJIES) and the consequent amendment of the statutes have allowed IPB to change its structure and the tasks of the central and school level governance bodies. This has also derived from the impositions of new national legislation, from the internal institutional evaluation, but also from the contribution of external evaluators, namely the EUA evaluation team.

2. Implementation

The Polytechnic Institute of Bragança and its national context (as seen by the EUA team):

“The IPB is a non-university higher education institution. It is located in Bragança, in north-western Portugal, close to the Spanish border. IPB consists of several schools or faculties. The four Schools of Agriculture, of Education, of Technology and Management, and of Health are located in

Bragança. The School of Communication, Administration and Tourism is located in Mirandela, around 60km away. As a polytechnic in a provincial surrounding with a rather weak economic structure, IPB has a central role to fulfil in contributing to the economic, social and cultural life of the region of Trás-os-Montes. With the exception of a small private higher education institution in Mirandela, IPB is the only institution of higher learning in the area."

Following the new legislation and statutes, IPB carried out significant changes in its structure and the tasks of the central and school level governance bodies.

Central governance bodies (IPB)

General council

In order with the RJIES, the general council is composed of 25 members, 14 representatives of the teaching staff and researchers (elected by its peers and in proportion with the dimension of each school), three representatives of the students (peer elected via an electoral college), a representative of the non-teaching and non-research staff and seven external personalities of recognized merit, knowledge and experience for IPB. The external individuals are co-opted by the internal council members after they are elected. The mandate of the elected and co-opted members is of four years (except in the case of students, where it is of two years only). The main tasks of the general council include the election of the president of IPB and the amendment of the institution's statutes. The general council has competence, on a proposal of the president of the institute, to approve the strategic plan, the activity plans and reports, the annual budget proposals, the creation, change or extinction of organic units (schools) as well as to establish the fees due from the students.

Although it was not introduced for the first time in the present statutes, the general council has now a substantially more important role in the institution, according to what was established by the RJIES, but also by the competence of electing the president of IPB, evaluating the activity plans and reports and the respective budgets, and also by the active participation of external members, thus contributing to strategic development of the institution. This body meets at least four times a year and has so far promoted several thematic meetings between external members and the schools directors. This aims at providing an external vision and evaluation of the strategic development of several disciplines at the institution.

President

According to the RJIES the president of IPB is the highest body of governance and external representation of the Institute. As previously mentioned, this body is elected by the general council. The office of the president has duration of four years and may be renewed once. The president organizes the presidency in activity areas, appointing vice-presidents (a maximum of three) and pro-presidents (in a number approved by the general council, after hearing the president). It is the president's task to draw up and present the general council with the strategic plan, annual activity plans and reports as well as the annual budgets. The president is also responsible for the creation, suspension and termination of degrees; academic management deciding on the opening of competitions, the appointment and contracting of staff, regulations for assessing teaching staff and students; supervision in the administrative and financial management of IPB, the allocation of teaching and non-teaching staff, appointing of IPB administrator and the social welfare administrator.

Since the first term of the current mandate, the president is assisted by two vice-presidents, one for administrative and financial matters, the other for academic affairs and international relations. In view of the strategic challenges identified, the president of IPB broadened its scope in June 2007 with the appointment of two new structures of the presidency of IPB and with the representation of the various schools: the Image and Students Support Office and the Promotion for Entrepreneurship Office. In view of the opening provided by the RJIES and what is established in IPB's statutes, in March 2010, IPB formally created the existing four pro-presidencies in the following areas: Image and Student Support, Entrepreneurship, Academic Affairs and Information Systems. These structures have allowed the standardization of policies and procedures, as well as the coordinated strategies of global interest to the institute.

Management council

The management council has the competence to carry out the management of the administration, property, finance and human resources of the institute; following the proposal of the president it also has the competence to approve the structure of the institute's central services and its organic units. The management council comprises the president of IPB, the two vice-presidents, the administrator of IPB and the administrator of the social welfare services.

Technical and scientific council of IPB

With the amendment of the statutes IPB has decided on the regeneration of a centralized scientific decision structure, whose mission is to safeguard the standardization of development strategies and policies, as well as to implement combined procedures at school level and scientific area level. The technical and scientific council of IPB is composed of 25 members, including the president of IPB who chairs; the presidents of the technical and scientific councils of the schools (simultaneously the directors) and by members of the technical and scientific councils of the schools, elected in proportion and representing each professional category.

The president is assisted by a vice-president, appointed by him from the group of members comprising the council. The mandate of the members of the technical and scientific council has the duration of four years. The technical and scientific council of IPB has the competence to propose and regulate the creation, amendments and termination of any of the teaching programmes offered by IPB, provided the schools where they are taught are previously heard on the matter; to promote the articulation of the different organic units and coordinate medium and long-term strategies in the technical and scientific domains.

This scientific structure, centralized and representative, has played a key role in harmonizing policies and the establishment of development strategies of the institution. Since its creation the technical and scientific council has been in charge of the design and approval of new fundamental regulations. From these we highlight the regulation for recruitment, selection and hiring of the career teaching staff of IPB and the corresponding listing of IPB's disciplinary areas; the regulation for the title of specialist; the regulation for the specifically hired teaching staff and the regulation of the performance assessment system of IPB's teaching staff.

Permanent council

The permanent council is a new centrally based body, created under the new statutes and is composed of the president of IPB, who chairs the council the vice-presidents and the pro-presidents of IPB, the directors of the organic units; the administrator of the social welfare services and the administrator of IPB. The permanent council is a consultative body entity of the president of IPB, whose objective is to homogenize the policies, proceedings and the coordination of global interest strategies of the Institute.

This council formalizes the existence of an essential body for shared management and shared responsibility in decisions, followed by the current presidency of IPB. It meets frequently in order to evaluate strategies and decide on short and medium term matters. It also represents a valuable connection among the presidency and the school directors and administration of the social welfare services.

Student ombudsperson

The student ombudsperson is a personality recognized with academic excellence and a teacher of IPB, who has a proven reputation for integrity and independence, appointed by the president of IPB (this person cannot perform management functions at the institute or its schools). The ombudsperson is assigned to a term of four years and may be renewed only once.

Having been created by the new legislation and statutes of IPB, it is intended that the action of the ombudsperson is developed in conjunction with the student's unions and with the other bodies and services of the institute, namely with the schools and the respective pedagogical councils. It is responsible for assessing students' complaints and making recommendations in order to protect the interests of students, in particular in the field of pedagogical activity and social welfare.

School level governance bodies

Director

Following what is established by the RJES each organic unit has a director. The statutes state that the director is elected directly by the full-time teaching staff (70%), non-teaching staff (15%) and students (15%) of the respective school. The director is assisted by two vice-directors freely chosen from the group of full-time career teaching staff of the school. Additionally, in accordance with what is established in the statutes the director also chairs both the technical and scientific and pedagogical councils of the school. The term of office has the duration of four years and may be renewed only once.

The statutes of IPB decided to maintain the election of directors of the schools (instead of the appointment by the president of IPB), adding the freedom of choosing its vice-directors and presiding over both the technical and scientific and pedagogical councils of the school.

Technical and scientific council

According to the RJIES each school has its own technical and scientific council. The statutes of IPB establish that this council is chaired by the director who is assisted by one vice-president, freely chosen, from among the members of the body. The technical and scientific council is composed of 25 members, including the school director and the representatives of career professors in their several professional categories and full-time teaching staff holding the title of specialist or a doctorate. The members of this council are elected for four years.

When compared to the previous legislation it is important to note that the RJIES imposed a limitation to the dimension of these scientific bodies, and it also changed the professional and scientific requirements of its members (the scientific council used to comprise all career teaching staff members and full-time teaching staff holding a master degree or above).

Pedagogical council

The pedagogical councils of the schools are made up of teachers and students in equal representation. According to IPB statutes the pedagogical council is chaired by the director of the school and is assisted by a vice-president, appointed by the director, from within the teaching staff, who are members of this body. The council is organized in degree committees (composed of a student of each year of the degree and of the equal number of teaching staff, being one of them the degree director) and the assembly (composed of the president, the degree directors and one student per degree). The teaching staff term of office is of two years and the students' is of one year.

Departments

The departments are both scientific and pedagogical bodies devoted to teaching, research and development activities, as well as to the provision of services. The technical and scientific council of IPB must regulate these structures, after hearing the respective school.

Permanent council

Each school has a permanent council, composed of the school director who presides, the vice-directors and the department coordinators. It is a consultative body of the school director, whose objective is to homogenize the policies, proceedings and the coordination of global interest strategies of the school's interest.

3. Outcomes

Self- and external evaluation

Self-evaluation

The changes in IPB's governance structures were implemented in order to enhance its efficiency and to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan. Following the recommendations of the team of the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the EUA and the strategic challenges then identified, the presidency of IPB was extended in June 2007 with the appointing of two new responsible persons for two new core structures: the Image and Student Support Office and the Office for Promotion of Entrepreneurship. The first focuses on consolidating strategies to recruit students and to improve the external image and external communication; the second promotes entrepreneurship and employability of students from IPB.

After the implementation provided by the new legal framework, in March 2010 four pro-presidencies were formally created in the two mentioned areas and in two others: the Academic Affairs pro-president manages the central academic services and the various entry applications for IPB; the other pro-presidency is in Information Systems, and has the aim of improving the institution's resources, particularly in communications and management systems and databases, and development of software applications relevant to the operation and diffusion of the institution.

The creation of these structures, in addition to having allowed the achievement of projects and initiatives classified as strategically important to the development of IPB, allowed the standardization of policies and procedures and also the coordination of efforts, involving the central and the resources of the various schools of IPB. With the same purpose, IPB and its schools decided on the creation of permanent councils at central level and in each of the schools. These councils are of consultative nature and join various levels of decision making and representation. IPB has also revitalized the technical and scientific council of IPB, which allowed the agreement of common policies regarding the hiring and performance assessment of teaching staff, as already mentioned in detail in the report.

The statutes of IPB decided to maintain the election of directors of the schools (instead of the appointment by the president of IPB), because freedom of choice and sharing responsibilities among the teaching staff is extremely valued. The director of each school has to accumulate with the

presidency of both the technical and scientific and the pedagogical councils and is assisted by two vice-directors and vice-presidents for each of those bodies and maintaining a structure of departments and degree committees, involving both teaching staff and students.

In line with the current legal framework, IPB has a student ombudsperson, appointed by the president, who possesses complete independence in exercising its functions and not performing any other management functions at central level or at school level.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that the general council, underpinned by the new legal regime, took on the responsibility for electing the president of the institution, involving internal and external members. It is our understanding that the current chain of command established by the legal system and by the statutes enables the efficient management of the institution and promotes sufficient debate and contribution to the development of IPB as a whole.

External evaluation

IPB's new governance structures were evaluated by the EUA team during the follow-up process (follow-up report published in March 2012).

The next lines present the external evaluation:

"IPB has made significant progress since the team's last visit in 2007. Previously characterised by a high degree of fragmentation, IPB appears now as an institution with an enhanced collaboration between the constituting units, the five schools and the two campus-areas in Bragança and Mirandela.

The institution has a new governance structure based on strong leadership, mutual trust and commitment. It will be of core importance that the new structures are applied in a way that will ensure that further development and change is embraced by all members of the institution.

In this regard the reformed Technical and Scientific Council has to play an important role. While the law does not prescribe the inclusion of students in this Council, it also does not explicitly exclude their participation. The Team recommends therefore that students are consulted on all issues of relevance to them, in particular of course on learning and teaching matters.

The Permanent Council should continue its role as the driving force for internal planning and collaboration. The fact that this previously informal central management group has been officialised and reinforced is certainly an achievement. The team had also the impression that its reinforcement through pro-rector positions has strengthened the leadership. Thus, leadership will have to assess from time to time whether the Permanent Council is in the best position to fulfil its role as a leadership group, regarding its planning and working methods, its members and the skills and task portfolios represented.

The inclusion of external members in the General Council, which is prescribed by the law, should be very welcome to an institution like IPB. Beyond its function for accountability and sound governance of the institution, the chairman and the other external members can play a pivotal role in liaising between IPB and its regional and national environment. The team gained the impression that this is a function that should be further explored over the next years. It will also give the external members a more active role, thus enhancing their interest in the institution and laying the ground for a constructive dialogue of the institution with the external stakeholder community.

These are early days and, while the team is of course not in the position to fully assess the functionality of the new governance structures, it gained the impression that IPB has established them very well. Therefore any recommendation here is really just to support this positive development further in order to ensure that these relatively new governance structures are fit to structure and support the institutional dynamics.

(...)

IPB has made significant progress over the past five years, thanks to the commitment of leadership and staff, and their ability to develop and implement institutional reform. (...) The team would like to attest IPB increased capacity to change and develop, not only in response to external evaluations and assessments, but through its own analysis in developing strategies, which link the different parts of the institution with its research, teaching and third mission activities into a diverse profile which is attractive for students and partners in the region, but also at national and international level."

References

European University Association (EUA), “Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, EUA Evaluation Report”, June 2007 (available at <http://www.ipb.pt/go/a381>)

European University Association (EUA), “Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Follow-Up Evaluation Report”, March 2012 (available at <http://www.ipb.pt/go/a381>)

9. Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal

Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

As pointed out in the "Action Plan: The European Agenda for Entrepreneurship" it is clear that there is a positive and close relationship between entrepreneurship and economic performance in terms of growth, survival, innovation, job creation, technological change, increased productivity and export. In parallel, the ability for self-employment is also a means of personal development and can strengthen social cohesion.

The advantages associated with entrepreneurship are clear: the creation of new businesses by investing in the local economy, creating new jobs, promoting competitiveness and the development of innovative business tools. Therefore, entrepreneurship is, itself, a strong driver of employment and economic growth and a key component in a globalized and competitive market economy.

The role of higher education institutions is crucial in the spread of entrepreneurship. Education should include the promotion of a set of values, attitudes and behaviors inducers of entrepreneurship, namely, the stimulation of a creative spirit and individual initiative capacities, the development of organizational and communicability skills, the open mind regarding change and new ideas and the ability to deal with uncertainty and manage risk and the capacity for generating economic value from knowledge and research results.

Aims and targets

Aware of the role higher education institutions have in fostering entrepreneurship and in the development of innovative business ideas, technology-based and/or with high growth potential, the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB) took the opportunity with the Bologna Process to change course curricula, introducing in some diplomas courses in Entrepreneurship or similar.

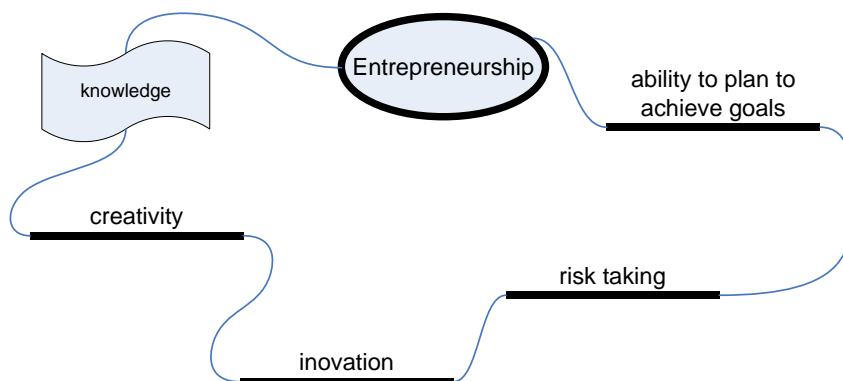
But these actions were not sufficient to achieve the objectives of promoting entrepreneurship to which the institution was engaged. Thus, a plan of active promotion of entrepreneurship was defined and, to develop this plan, an office to promote entrepreneurship was created. The following objectives sought to be achieved:

- Implement a training model that aims to foster creativity and innovation in developing sustainable business ideas.
- Assist the process of maturation of the business concept, supporting the development of the Business Plan, and complementing previously acquired skills.
- Mobilize teachers and researchers to support this process, namely by the realization of training activities of facilitators of entrepreneurship.
- Promote interdisciplinarity and connection to surrounding regional community through participation in the training process, assessment, monitoring and supporting the implementation of projects by mobilizing regional financial and material support for business ideas.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

To achieve these objectives a set of mechanisms were implemented to encourage the creation of entrepreneurial spirit in students, trying to empower them with skills to turn knowledge into wealth. Some partnerships have also been established with the aim of generating a favorable environment for the emergence of entrepreneurship.



The strategy for promoting entrepreneurship was based on three main pillars:

1. Entrepreneurship ateliers
2. Partnerships for entrepreneurship
3. Partnerships for funding
4. Incubation

A team involving teachers from all schools and a very small technical group was created with the aim to perform a set of continuous actions throughout the year. The actions taken are as follows:

- Publicizing the programme – more intense at the beginning of the academic year, it consists on a set of promotional activities like posters, emails, alerts in classes, etc., looking to captivate students for the initiative.
- Training sessions on Entrepreneurship – consists on workshops addressed to all students during the first semester.
- Training sessions on Business Plan development – actions more focused on the development of the business plan, during the 2nd semester, addressed only to the group of students who are planning to develop a business idea.
- Monitoring the preparation of the Business Plan – willingness to support students on technical issues in the field of management and financing of the project.
- Project Coacher – for students who are involved in planning a business idea and start a business, a mentor of the project is provided, with technical background to support the development of the technology.

A set of partnerships to support this process have been developed, creating a "Regional Ecosystem of Innovation and Entrepreneurship." To this end, partnerships with all municipalities in the region, with business associations and other public organizations were established. Seeking business financing, partnerships with credit institutions and associations of business angels were also established.

To ensure benchmarking, an annual competition of business ideas is developed. The winners participate in a national competition involving all polytechnics of Portugal. A space for the incubation of business initiatives which result from this process was created. These companies can benefit from a space with administrative support, to be housed in early life. The

young companies have access to technological university infrastructures, allowing them to consolidate its technological development.

Monitoring and evaluation

The activities to promote entrepreneurship were framed in the quality management system of IPB (ISO 9001), which ensures their continuous monitoring and evaluation as well as continuous improvement. Satisfaction surveys among users of the process are performed and a set of performance indicators are monitored.

Funding and cost effectiveness

The initial costs of installation and the operational costs of the office for entrepreneurship and innovation were very low. In fact, there is only one staff member who is full-time allocated to the work-group, with the majority of the tasks performed by teachers and researchers from IPB. The cost of the incubator is also low, since it was created in existing facilities, with minor adaptation costs.

Sustainability

Due to the low running costs the project is clearly sustainable. In this stage the main IPB purpose is to generate the largest possible number of businesses and maximizing self-employment of their students. However, in the future, it would be theoretically possible to turn the project into a revenue-generating activity, maximizing their financial sustainability. An active policy of intellectual property management and increasing the revenue from the incubator could generate higher profits if it will be a concern in the future.

Transferability and generalizability

This project is easily transferable. As it was early based on a framework of common activities that are managed in the same way by all the Portuguese polytechnic institutes, this created a stabilized common base and a culture of benchmarking, which makes the design easily adaptable to other situations. This is clearly a type of project that benefits from comparison and cooperation activities among similar institutions.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

The direct impact of the project can be measured by its direct impacts. Over the past five years 20 companies were created. These companies have generated an investment in initial assets exceeding one million Euros and have created about 50 jobs. Nevertheless, the project has eventually more important indirect effects. Many students who passed through these activities to promote entrepreneurship and who during this process thought about a business idea, carry this experience to companies where they are workers now, making them more creative and more productive employees. Such projects also have an impact on culture change and, therefore, should be evaluated based more on positive long-term effects than in short-term indicators.

Success factors

One of the main critical success factors of this project has to do with the cultural change which values individual initiative and willingness to risk as opposed to the traditional culture of preference for job security and low risk. This cultural change will occur much more easily as the economic environment is favorable and of growth. The current crisis is a weak point for this project.

Another important success factor is related to the ability of IPB researchers having preference for applied research and innovation. The current model for the evaluation of researchers, almost exclusively focused on publishing in journals with high impact, does not favor this view. Another set of factors, which can be designated jointly by administrative costs, also have an important impact. For example, taxation regime, registration costs, licensing of industrial activities, and others, most particularly affect the development of young companies.

10. Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal

Implementation of internal quality management system

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

The quality assessment in higher education is an old concern, but in Europe, with Bologna Declaration, acquired a major importance. One of the main objectives of the Bologna policy was to create comparability between different national systems and develop common criteria and methodologies in order to assure the same basis of quality standards.

In 2005 the European Ministers of Education adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). In 2007 was established the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). With this movement, a common system of quality assurance at supra-institutional level, based on accreditation, was implemented in Europe. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is the umbrella organization which represents quality assurance accredited agencies from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states, the ones responsible for assessing and accrediting higher education programmes and institutions.

The ESG are a set of standards, procedures and guidelines that higher education institutions and accredited agencies should follow in order to implement, assess and accredit quality assurance systems in the European Higher Education Area. According to ENQA (2007) they constitute a first step to the establishment of a widely shared set of underpinning values, expectations and good practices in relation to quality and its assurance, by institutions and agencies across the EHEA, aiming at providing a source of assistance and guidance to both higher education institutions and agencies, while contributing to a common frame of reference. The ESG are divided in three parts: Part 1 referring to standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions; Part 2 referring to standards for the external quality assurance of higher education; and Part 3 referring to standards for external quality assurance agencies.

Part 1 of the ESG establishes seven standards for quality assurance within the higher education institutions, complemented with guidelines for their implementation:

1. Policy and procedures for quality assurance;
2. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards;
3. Assessment of students;
4. Quality assurance of teaching staff;
5. Learning resources and student support;
6. Information systems;
7. Public information.

The creation of the ESG Part 1 led higher education institutions to start paying more attention to the implementation of quality assurance systems and forced national agencies to actively encourage higher education institutions to develop their internal quality assurance mechanisms in an effective manner in order to improve quality.

In this manner, quality assurance is both a national and institutional responsibility: internal quality assurance refers to each institution's mechanisms for ensuring that it is fulfilling its own missions and purposes, as well as the standards that apply to higher education in general. External quality assurance refers to the actions of a quality assurance agency, which assesses the operation of the institution or its programmes, to determine whether it is meeting the agreed standards in order to accredit or not the activity and the academic titles.

Furthermore another relatively recent development may also promote the implementation of quality management systems within European higher education institutions. It is the so-called quality enhancement movement, which can be seen as an attempt by universities to regain trust from society by restating that quality is their major responsibility and that the role of outside agencies should be limited to quality audits. (Rosa, Sarrico and Amaral, 2012)

The next step is to determine what the quality management is and how it should be implemented, managed and improved. There are several methodologies to measure and guide quality assessment and improvement in organizations. Within these the most worldwide recognized and used are the ISO 9001 standards, the Balanced Scorecard and the EFQM Excellence Model. All these models propose to assess higher education institutions as a

whole, including not only its teaching and research missions, but also other activities and, notably, institutional management (Sarricoet alt, 2010). In this context, IPB put itself two important questions: can the ESG be implemented within those management frameworks? Would it be helpful in order to improve quality, do more with the same resources and contribute to better attain our vision for the institution?

Based on this reflection, IPB decided to implement an internal system of quality management based on ISO 9001: 2008 Standard. This framework is the most used in all kind of organizations, independently of its dimension or type of activity. This standard sets the requirements for implementing a quality assurance system predicted under the ESG.

The ISO 9001 standard is based on the application of the PDCA (Plan- Do-Check-Act) cycle, setting the focus on the need to continuously improve the organization management quality and on the realization of the product whatsoever it is: teaching, research, services or any other. The system highly contributes to establish a link between the seven standards established in the ESG, allowing for the implementation of a quality assurance system with a truly developmental character (Rosa, Sarrico and Amaral, 2012).

Aims and targets

The main objective it was to implement an internal management quality system that complies with ESG, supporting the external quality assessment and accreditation process, but more than that, the institution pretended to implement a system that assures the continuous improvement, as well as a good efficiency and efficacy in the use of resources.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

Even if the final target it is implementing a Total Quality Management System, concerning all the processes of the institution, IPB decided to implement the system gradually, first regarding the support processes, and, in a second step, controlling all the activities, including teaching and research. Implementing a quality management system according to ISO 9001:2008 comprehends several phases, among which (Rosa, Sarrico and Amaral, 2012):

- determining the needs and expectations of customers and other interested parties;

- establishing a policy for quality and the organization quality goals;
- defining the processes and responsibilities needed to attain the quality goals defined;
- determining and making available the resources needed to attain the quality goals defined;
- establishing the methods to measure each process' efficiency and efficacy;
- applying these measures to determine each process efficiency and efficacy;
- identifying the means to prevent non-conformities and eliminate its causes;
- establishing and applying a process to the continuous improvement of the organization' s quality management system.

The system is based on a processes approach. Processes are described in procedures. Each procedure describes how their process is organized in terms of methods, responsibilities, resources and records. For each process included in the Quality Management System, IPB guarantees the identification of the applicable requirements of the ISO 9001: 2008 standard and the process compliance with these requirements.

For the moment the processes covered under the system are as follow:

Documentation Requirements: PR01 Document Management

Management Responsibility: PR05 Planning, Monitoring and Partnerships;

Resource Management: PR04 Communication and Image; PR08 Infrastructures and equipment Management and Maintenance; PR10 Human Resources; PR11 Performance Evaluation and Training; PR15 Maintenance of Information Systems; PR16 Systems Development;

Product Realization: PR06 Procurement and Subcontracting; PR07 Projects of Investment and Financing; PR09 International Relations; PR12 Academic Management; PR13; Management Entrepreneurship; PR17 Libraries and Documentation Services

Measurement, Analysis and Improvement: PR02 Improvement management; PR03 Audits; PR14 Voice of the Customer.

Monitoring and evaluation

The auditing process assures the application of the mechanisms of system evaluation defined in the ISO Standard with internal and external regular audits. Also, the process of improvement management allows the detection of non-conformities and potential non-conformities, complaints,

clarification of its causes and taking corrective and preventive actions, as well as identifies suggestions and set improvement actions. The “voice of client” process comprises a set of indicators that are continuously monitored.

Funding and cost effectiveness

In the stage of implementation, the system is very demanding in terms of human resources availability for critical analysis of existing procedures, reflexion, and planning. In this stage the implementation requires a trade-off with other activities, as it is very time consuming. Nevertheless, after this phase is accomplished, the system requires only a small team for the maintenance of the system, not necessarily on a full dedication basis.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the system depends a lot on leadership underpinning. Without a firm commitment of the leaders, the system easily falls in a situation of abandonment and non-efficacy, due to the resistance that it may be target.

Transferability and generalizability

As it is an international standard used in all type of organizations, much known and very flexible, it is easily transferable and applied in any context.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

The system, in the actual stage of application, mainly conducted to a better internal organization and a considerable gain of efficiency in the use of resources, allowing a significant improvement of efficacy with fewer resources. For the moment, the improvement of teaching and research quality, directly linked with the implementation of the ISO 9001 standard, has been only marginal, considering that the system only covers the administrative processes and some activities of services. Nevertheless, the significant improvement that the organization obtained on those activities, the policy and the culture of quality that has been integrated and stabilized in the organization, is a solid basis for extension of the system to the rest of the processes. We are now working on describing and rethinking the procedures and monitoring mechanisms related to teaching and research activities in order to have all the organization covered by the system in this year horizon.

Success factors

The critical aspects of a quality system implementation in a higher education institution are well identified in the literature. Mainly they are related with the academic culture and with the argument that quality systems have been created in an industrial context and that they are not adapted to the specificity and to the creativity that are a fundamental characteristic of an academic environment. However, we have now the experience of implementation in a large number of higher education institutions, with a very good feedback in terms of accountability, benchmarking and continuously improvement.

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11. University College Birmingham, United Kingdom

TESTA: Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment

Sasa Bobic

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

In response to a number of external and internal drivers University College Birmingham (UCB) is undertaking work to review assessment practices and potentially implementing changes to assessment practices by the end of the 2013 – 2014 academic year. As part of the review process programme teams have been asked to undertake a systematic review of their assessment practices. This evaluation exercise is based on a The Higher Education Academy (HEA) funded project called TESTA.

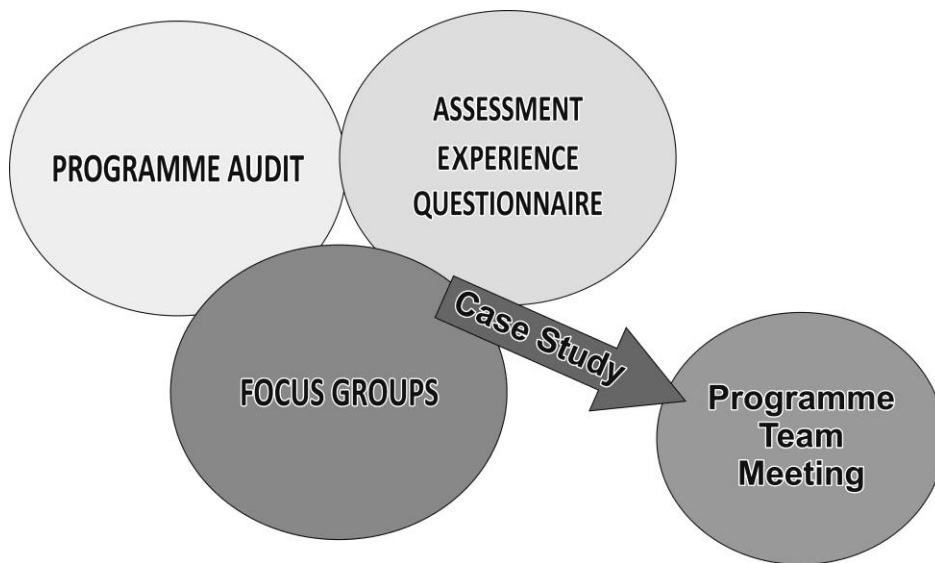
TESTA or Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment is a research and development project designed to provide evidence to UCB programme teams about assessment and feedback patterns and to help teaching teams to identify ways of improving assessment design in the interests of better learning outcomes (Jessop et al., 2012a).

Aims and targets

UCB will adopt the TESTA model and will initially audit one programme from each of college five schools (Business School, The School of Sport and Creative Studies, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management, College of Food, School of Education and Community) with potential to expand this further and cover all higher education programmes.

A report will be produced with a summary of the data and student feedback from the focus groups. This will be brought back to the programme teams for discussion and possible future action (see Diagram 1). The advantage of undertaking this on a cross college basis is that we will also have some comparative data by the end of the process and this may serve to highlight where assessment practice is working particularly well for the students (Jessop et al., 2012b).

Diagram 1: TESTA research process



2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

The approach of TESTA at UCB is to collect programme data, analyse and collate this into a readable case study, and then engage in a conversation with the whole programme team about the findings (Jessop, et al., 2011b).

The process consists of 3 stages:

- The Assessment Audit – Quantifies the volume and variety of assessment in assessment environments, by accessing available material such as module delivery scheme, graded assignments, module leader knowledge. It will provide information such as the number and type of assessments per programme, a feedback summary and a timeline.
- The Assessment Experience Questionnaire – Provides a quantitative measure of how students respond to the characteristics of their specific assessment environment. TESTA provides the questions and participating students in the programme will be asked to complete it during a normal teaching session. The advantage of using a standard set of questions is that there are already benchmarks to provide comparison.
- Focus Groups – Provide qualitative feedback from students about the experiences of assessment and feedback. Approximately 5 to 8 students per group, 2 groups per programme. Once again the TESTA

model provides a toolkit of questions.

- The three elements of TESTA are most informative when completed together.

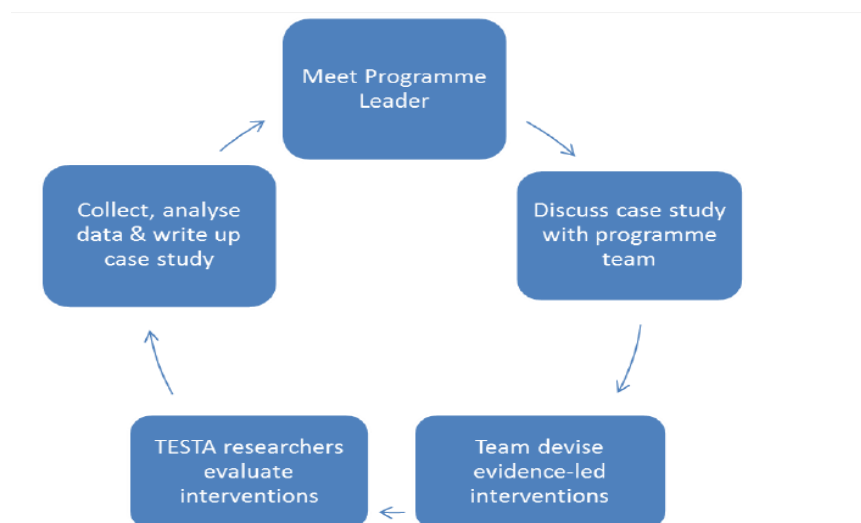
Monitoring and evaluation

The UCB version of TESTA outlined in this document follows the original principles of TESTA but simplifies the overall process to offer a more workable approach (see Diagram 2). The data provided by the TESTA process can be utilised by programme teams as suggested by Bloxham and Boyd (2007):

- to reflect upon the particular balance of assessments present in their courses
- to gather information about students' perceptions and experiences of assessment and feedback
- to inform decisions about how these assessments should fit together across modules and years of study
- to help to develop students' skills over the course of their degree.

Level 4, 5 and 6 students from the academic year 2013 – 2014 will take part in the initial programme audit stage. Only level 5 and 6 students will take part in the questionnaire and focus group stages, reflecting on their assessment experiences from previous years. Any changes to Module Delivery Schemes and assignments remits for this year will not be registered when collecting data, but will be acknowledged in the findings section.

Diagram 2: TESTA change process



Funding and cost effectiveness

No additional funding was required for the development and implementation of TESTA model. By adapting original TESTA model and by using in-house resources we were able to retain full control over the project. Main responsibility for delivery of TESTA within UCB has been absorbed within the role of one Learning Assessment Research Officer and no specialist equipment has been required.

Sustainability

TESTA aims to provide a systematic review of the volume, nature and balance of assessments across a specific programme of study. Auditing of each degree programme before and after changes will involve close inspection of programme and module documentation and discussion between programme leaders and their teams. It is believed that TESTA is an evolving project and while current model is working well and is very simple to sustain, some changes and enhancements may be required to make it even more effective.

Transferability and generalizability

TESTA is a partnership project, led by the HEA, which originally started with four universities in the United Kingdom (Bath Spa, Chichester, Winchester, and Worcester). There is evidence that more than 30 programmes in 20 universities in the UK and one university in Australia use it (Jessop et al., 2011a)

UCB's partner institution The University of Birmingham is already implementing and using the TESTA model under their BALI (Birmingham Assessment for Learning Initiative) label and will achieve almost 100% programme coverage by the end of academic year 2013 – 2014 (Green, 2013). There is no reason not to believe that TESTA system can be easily transferred to other institutions, especially as it can be adapted to individual needs.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

HEA offered the opportunity to undertake a programme review across UCB using a tried and tested TESTA approach to address possible assessment and feedback issues at programme level. It is built on a triangulated research methodology with qualitative and quantitative elements (audit,

questionnaire, focus group) and underpinned by educational principles and research literature (Jessop et al, 2012a).

The substantive change that TESTA has brought about has been a shift in understanding about assessment and feedback, and particularly its influence on student learning at the programme-level. TESTA has underlined the importance of taking a whole programme approach to assessment design, and illustrated the prominence of assessment for measurement over assessment for learning on modular degree programmes.

Success factors

It is believed that module directed assessment has resulted in creating challenges for students and staff at programme level (Green, 2013). For example, too many different assessment types, poor timing and extensive work load can get in the way, rather than push forward, efficient student learning. Feedback practices do not always effectively “feed forward”, and programme level aims can become hidden by a focus on modules (Gibbs and Dunbar-Goddet, 2009).

Unintended impacts

Assessment influences student perceptions and their satisfaction with higher education, and assessment requirements strongly influence the study behaviour of students (Gibbs and Dunbar-Goddet, 2007). Assessment demonstrates what we value in teaching and learning, and significantly shapes the lives of students. The design of assessment systems may contribute to a number of unintentional and unnecessary consequences for student learning, which may only be visible at programme level (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004).

Strengths and weaknesses

The TESTA project grew out of evidence and literature to suggest that assessment regimes in UK higher education strongly preferred a summative assessment over formative, and that this was not so beneficial to student learning. At the same time, a growing body of research has suggested that modular degree structures were having adverse effects on assessment design and student learning through an emphasis on the module’s assessment rather than the logic of the whole programme’s assessment plan (Jessop et al, 2012a).

TESTA identified, and will possibly do the same at UCB, a need for programme teams to engage with the “big picture” of what assessment and feedback regimes look like from a student perspective, and to identify and address problematic patterns. In essence, it seems that change requires whole programmes to take a different approach to assessment (Jessop, 2012b).

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12. University College Birmingham, United Kingdom

Professional development review – appraising appraisal

Claire Hayes , Amy Foley

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

As in many organisations, appraisal has been embedded at University College Birmingham (UCB) for a number of years. A review of the scheme took place in 2010 following a general lack of engagement from staff. Although the scheme had clear objectives in respect of identifying organisation-wide training needs, the value of the appraisal both to individual staff and the wider organisation was under question. The general opinion amongst staff was that appraisal was an annual paper-based exercise that did not lead to meaningful outcomes nor speak to their individual goals and aspirations.

It was agreed, via the Professional Development Committee (PDC), that the system of appraisal should be revised and re-launched. Stipulations included the need to retain a focus on professional development and to promote links to wider organisational strategies, priorities and plans.

Aims and targets

Our aim in reviewing the scheme was twofold. In the first instance we needed to re-engage staff in the appraisal process. Over a period of time staff had become despondent with appraisal, viewing it as little more than an annual administrative exercise. Any new proposal had to address this by emphasising the value of appraisal to both staff and the organisation. The second aim was to ensure that there were clear links between appraisal and the wider strategies, targets and goals of the university.

(This is from PDR policy) - Professional Development Review (PDR) is a process that provides an opportunity for individual members of staff together with a trained reviewer, to review their skills, experiences, responsibilities and role performance within the university, and to identify ways in which these might become more effective. It is also a chance to

reflect upon and consider the individual's contribution to the wider achievement of team and organisation objectives and targets.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

The initial action in preparing to revise the UCB appraisal system was to conduct research into the schemes used in other higher education institutions, with a view to benchmarking their methods against our own. Through this undertaking it was revealed that many institutions focused their schemes on a review of performance, usually with a direct link to grading or salary. This however was contrary to the original objective that required the focus to remain on professional development.

Based on this research we developed ideas for a new system that was divided into two distinct sections; the first retrospective and the second prospective. Initially staff would be asked to reflect on achievements since their last appraisal, addressing specifically their previously agreed objectives and the impact of their professional development on the department/School, colleagues and students. The second section would concentrate on the forthcoming year and the setting of targets and professional development which support individual, School and ultimately organisational priorities.

We presented the proposal to the PDC and they agreed in principle to the recommendations. In line with many other institutions we had recommended a change of name, away from appraisal to Performance Development Review. Whilst the PDC agreed a change of name was appropriate they felt that Professional Development Review (PDR) was a more appropriate title as this emphasised the focus on professional development. The PDC also recommended a pilot of the scheme, which we undertook across the three main staffing groups: academic, support and manual.

Following the pilot we gathered verbal feedback from the managers and staff involved and made minor changes to the scheme and paperwork as a result. The launch of PDR occurred in January 2011, supported by a number of information sessions which were open to all staff. These sessions provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the new scheme, communicate the reasons behind the new development, outline

expectations with regard to individual input and encourage the kind of engagement that had been previously lacking. Organisation-wide email and staff newsletters were also used as a communication tool.

From the project's inception, a primary aim was to re-ignite engagement with appraisal by inviting regular feedback from users. Therefore, at the end of the first PDR cycle in June 2011 we held a number of focus groups with staff representing a cross-section of the university. The feedback from these focus groups led to further enhancements, centred mainly on the grouping of objectives and the wording of some questions. The focus groups also suggested that a move to an online system would be something worthy of consideration.

Throughout 2012 we worked on the development of an online system with an in-house web developer. By this stage we had conducted two cycles of PDR, inviting feedback each time, and were confident that the content of the system was sound. The brief when creating an online system therefore was to ensure consistency in terms of appearance, content and feel which would assist with the transition and limit staff resistance to the move. Following comprehensive testing, the online PDR system was launched in January 2013. This was supported by university-wide emails, a bespoke user guide and a series of training sessions held regularly throughout the entirety of the PDR period (January – June) demonstrating how to access, navigate and use the online system.

At the close of the PDR period in 2013 we held a number of focus groups to discuss all aspects of PDR but more specifically soliciting views regarding the online aspect of the system.

The online system has increased efficiency, facilitated the analysis of data, reduced paper wastage and enabled users to monitor PDR progress. In addition, by having an accessible online system PDR has become a working document which can be updated and edited at any time by the reviewee rather than an annual task.

Monitoring and evaluation

There is consistent monitoring of PDR during the review period. From an individual perspective users can ascertain their personal progress. Reviewers, line managers, Deans of School and Directors are able to review the status of all PDRs that fall within their level of responsibility. There is

also a comprehensive administration section of the online system which allows us to chart the progress of PDRs university-wide. This information enables us to act as necessary, for example where there has been limited activity within the system.

During the PDR window we receive a constant stream of feedback, both formally and informally, from individual staff regarding their experiences. This has proved useful as in certain cases we have been able to immediately address minor (predominantly technical) issues that potentially affect other users rather than dealing with them at the end of the PDR period. Larger issues requiring a more complex solution are logged and dealt with in a timely fashion.

High importance is placed upon holding focus groups, attended by representative groups of staff, following each PDR cycle. The process is rigorously analysed and users are encouraged to be open and honest about their experiences and impressions of the system. We also use these forums to discuss and invite suggestions, enabling us to assess levels of suitability for future developments.

Although the day-to-day management of PDR rests with two members of the Personnel team, overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation lies with the PDC. The committee is made up of academic and support staff representatives from across the university. Regular reports are made to the committee and any decision regarding major changes to the system would be taken at this level.

Funding and cost effectiveness

No additional funding was required for the development and implementation of PDR. By developing the initial and online systems in-house we have been able to retain full control over the projects, whilst also ensuring cost efficiency. The additional responsibility has been absorbed within the roles of the three chief developers and presently, no specialist equipment has been required.

Sustainability

PDR has been highlighted as a positive advancement for UCB. This has been observed not only internally with a greater level of staff engagement but also externally through agencies such as OFSTED during their inspection of provision.

We view PDR as an evolving project and whilst the current model is sustainable, we recognise that further enhancements will be required in order to retain impact in the future. Links to our probationary and staff development application systems have been discussed, but firm ideas are yet to be developed. Staff opinion will continue to act as a driver for change, ensuring that the system is embedded and fit for purpose as well as adding value to the organisation.

Transferability and generalizability

There is undoubtedly scope for the system of appraisal developed at UCB to be transferred to other institutions, particularly those that share a similar culture and approach to developing staff. PDR would be especially relevant to institutions aiming to strengthen the impact and value of their professional development provision and ensure a fit for appraisal within the wider organisation.

3. Outcomes

Achievements and success factors

One of the driving forces behind a review of appraisal at UCB was to increase the engagement and buy-in of staff to the system; the statistics relating to staff participation evidence that this has been achieved. In addition, feedback gathered from a variety of formal and informal mediums has been positive.

Another aim, in direct response to criticism of the previous system, was to ensure clear links between PDR and the wider organisation. This is demonstrated within the PDR itself, whereby individuals are required to link their personal objectives to wider departmental/School goals. The link is also strengthened via the staff development application process where staff are required to demonstrate how the proposed activity supports the achievement of PDR objectives. The evaluation of staff development applications as they relate to PDR is expected to be an area of future development.

Positive affirmation regarding the PDR system has been received from external sources, including OFSTED, QAA and IIP which are responsible for regularly auditing the institution. Through these inspections, PDR has been exemplified as a source of good practice, particularly in relation to our approach to staff development.

Unintended impacts

The unintended impacts of PDR have been extremely positive. In particular, the evolving project has led to the discovery of a number of ways in which the system may be broadened to incorporate other UCB systems; probation and staff development evaluation are two examples currently under consideration.

Strengths and weaknesses

For UCB the strengths of PDR far outweigh areas of weakness. The potential weaknesses we have identified are:

- The scope to depersonalise PDR with the implementation of an online-based system.
- The relatively flat organisational structure necessitating review-by-peer rather than line manager in some cases, which may be perceived as less valuable. A positive from this is that it does allow for up-skilling of other staff to enable them to conduct reviews, thus contributing to their individual professional development.
- Despite extensive preparatory testing, some technical issues were highlighted following the launch of the online system due to limited testing using tablets, different internet providers and via remote access.

The main strengths of the system are:

Increased user engagement.

- Training needs data is used as a basis for university-wide development plans that are relevant and respond directly to staff requirements.
- PDR provides a comprehensive overview of staff expectations and aspirations.
- PDR ensures clear communication of organisation and team priorities.
- The link between individual contribution and organisational achievement is clarified.

13. University College Birmingham, United Kingdom

Sharing and co-creating with students in higher education

Sarah Digby, Simon Blake

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

The role and position of the student in higher education is changing across the sector in the UK and Europe. National bodies in the UK - such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) and Higher Education Academy (HEA) - all now have strategic positions on engaging with students to share, develop and enhance learning and teaching experiences. Across Europe and into the future, the emphasis is shifting towards partnership with students in co-creating knowledge as well as in governance, curriculum and quality (HLGMHE 2013).

As a “new” university (being conferred the title in 2012) - one of over 160 higher education institutions in the UK - University College Birmingham (UCB) has a strategic focus which aligns with these movements towards greater student engagement. It is steeped in an orientation towards working with students who don't have conventional educational histories in preparation for higher education. This “Widening Participation” focus for educational work is set within a historic context for the institution which gears programmes towards a vocational focus. The academic legitimacy for this model of delivery is supported by an accreditation relationship with a “sister” higher education institution which has a high sectoral status and reputation - the Top Twenty ranked University of Birmingham.

Student engagement is a vibrant and dynamic agenda for the five higher education institutions which operate within the city of Birmingham. The range of work addressing this agenda is diverse. Within this case study three elements of the current work at UCB will be addressed: Student Representation; Mentoring; and, Student Ambassadors.

Aims and targets

In order to offer opportunities for students to more actively contribute towards the life of the university, the aim of these interlinked projects and programmes is to create platforms for an enhanced student experience and personal development. Where appropriate, they also feed into the accumulation of graduate attributes and promote employability, most notably, the “skills, understandings and personal attributes” (Pegg et al 2012) of students in readiness for the graduate workplace. Student engagement work at UCB also feeds into the need to address recruitment and retention, issues which are particularly prominent when working with students from “Widening Participation” backgrounds.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

Over a period of more than eight years, the implementation and development of each inter-linked programme/project has taken on its own identity and culture. For example, the purpose of the Student Representative is to give voice to the student body for which they represent. Two Student Representatives are nominated/self-volunteered from each yearly cohort within each programme, in each School at UCB. This currently amounts to approximately 250 Higher Education Student Representatives across the institution.

The role of the Student Representative enhances other forms of student representation, including Module Review processes - where every student has opportunity to comment/feedback on each module they undertake in terms of quality, assessment and delivery and also the National Student Survey, which gives students the opportunity to comment holistically on the university and contributes to national statistics on the state of Higher Education.

Each Representative receives bespoke training from the Guild of Students - the representative body of the students within UCB, with some 8000 members. Of the Guild a new President has recently been inaugurated and there are high expectations that the changes posed will enhance student engagement further, with an emphasis on growing members and enhancing quality across UCB as part of their Development Plan.

In terms of their role, Student Representatives are expected to make representation at Academic Board meetings (one per semester) for their designated School of study. Such Board meetings are attended by senior management, school academics and the President of the Student Guild. The agenda is somewhat fluid in nature but meetings are chaired by the Vice Principal.

From each of the School Academic Board Meetings, the President of the Student Guild will take forward key themes posed by the Student Representatives to Senior Board Meetings including the Curriculum Quality Committee, the Board of Governors and the Equal Opportunity Committee.

In addition to Student Representatives, Student Ambassadors and Student Mentors significantly contribute towards the delivery of the university's Widening Participation Strategy. There are currently 51 Higher Education Ambassadors who perform a range of roles in support of core UCB functions, especially marketing, as well as outreach work. The mentoring programme, however, provides targeted training, support and interventions which raise student aspirations, manage transitions (from further education to higher education) and provide opportunities for access to education for young people in Birmingham and the West Midlands. The mentoring programmes delivered over 5000 individual sessions in academic year 2012 – 2013. The 99 student mentors worked with over 500 school-aged learners. Unlike the role of the Student Representative, which is voluntary, Mentors and Ambassadors receive token payment for their commitment, time and energies.

Monitoring and evaluation

Individual student experiences and performance on the engagement projects are managed through traditional 'line management' models of appraisal. These are, in turn, co-ordinated through existing departmental structures within the university: for example, Student Ambassadors through the Marketing Department, Mentors through a dedicated staff team in the Admissions department, and Student Representatives through the Guild.

Funding and cost effectiveness

Resourcing these projects affords legitimacy and effectiveness. University buy-in through the identification and approval of targeted, central funding has created a firm and sustainable basis for the management and development of existing projects. It has also created a culture whereby

extension of projects is feasible and viable. For example, the volunteer Student Representatives are resourced through the offices of the Guild - where the viability and success of the project is reliant upon the Guild's will and capacity to provide training, on-going management and monitoring.

Of Mentors, the success of the initially externally-supported "Aimhigher" (formerly a national-English programme for widening participation and access in higher education) mentoring has been transformed into a collaborative working relationship with other Birmingham higher education institutions to self-fund the continuation of 'Aim Higher' mentoring. Central budgets are identified and drawn down to finance the payment of UCB students on an hourly basis for their mentoring work. The creation of an 'in house' generic, transition-based mentoring project, follows the same business model. The returns include community social and human capital impacts, increased recruitment and retention, and student performance.

Sustainability

These three key projects will remain a central part of the UCB strategic model. However, with a strengthening of the emphasis upon student engagement across UCB, the likelihood is that their reach will be extended. Diversification of projects and their impacts may require the sourcing of fresh forms of external support.

Transferability and generalizability

The approaches to student engagement at UCB draw upon and contribute towards the development of established currents within the higher education sector in the UK across Europe. Whilst the student engagement programme at UCB is undertaken within the context of 'Widening Participation', it is indicative of wider and more diverse work across the sector. Hence, these programmes of student course representation, mentoring and ambassadorship (highlighted in the report) illustrate the flexibility in local adaptation of such work.

3. Outcomes

Achievements and success factors

Evaluation of the mentoring programmes indicates that levels of motivation to succeed, aspirations, as well as study skills were significantly enhanced in school student learners. The impact upon UCB student participants is

positive - with the vast majority of active Ambassadors and Mentors re-applying for their positions on an annual basis.

For the Student Representatives, the role is proving a successful medium for providing students with voice and a number of changes have been implemented as a result of student influence. For example two current research sub-groups (the role of the pastoral tutorial and employability) within UCB have been launched as a direct result of students raising concerns in these thematic areas within Subject Board meetings.

The success of these student engagement programmes is influenced by multiple factors. For example: higher education students receive training and support from their “sponsor” department; Academic Staff are actively involved in creating a culture to empower students through the use of their voice; and, UCB Senior Management are genuine in their approach to treating students with respect and providing them with opportunity for their voices to be heard.

An interesting feature of the successes of these programmes is the oft-repeated assertion that UCB has a strong and persistent “community culture”. This creates an open and positive environment for students to express themselves creatively and honestly. This is something that UCB strives to nurture and develop over the coming years.

Unintended impacts

Student union activism led to the establishment by the then UCB Guild President of a city-wide network of Student Guild Presidents from all five metropolitan Universities (including Birmingham City University, Aston University and University of Birmingham). The purpose of the “Lionel Group” is to share good practice between the intuitions with regards to student engagement.

Strengths and weaknesses

Drivers for engaging in student engagement work are clear and forceful within the higher education sector - both in the UK and wider European context. However, the diversity of techniques of intervention, modes of delivery, assessment, evaluation and learning have exposed UCB to consideration of both the strengths and weaknesses of this work.

Strengths:

Student engagement in core university business activities;

- Development and enhancement of graduate attributes and “Employability” skills;
- Enhanced organisation communication;
- Building a clear sense of community within the institution.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of formal measurement and capture of 'soft skills' development;
- Monitoring and evaluation of performance and impact of student engagement activities needs enhancing;
- A holistic approach to the work will allow greater cognisance of the strategic alignment of outputs and outcomes.

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14. University College Birmingham, United Kingdom

Collaborative provision in higher education: a successful partnership between University College Birmingham and QHotels

Rachel Mason

1. Background

Contextual preconditions

University College Birmingham (UCB) is based in Birmingham City Centre, there are over 8000 students on higher education, postgraduate and further education programmes including 1100 international students from 65 countries. UCB is a specialist higher education institution, offering vocational programmes within specialist fields at a wide range of levels, from Masters degrees to craft training. Our mission statement is: *To promote and provide the opportunity for participation in the learning process by those with the ambition and commitment to succeed and to maintain a learning community that meets the diverse needs of our students, the economy and society at large.* University Corporation. (UCB 2014)

Speaking in 2013 of the importance of employer engagement to the future of the university, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs said:

"It is vital. We can't work in isolation. You can't train somebody in hospitality management without any contact with the hospitality sector. You can't train somebody in PGCE Early Years Teaching unless you have got the link with that sector.

So, it is absolutely essential that we not only try to maintain, but also further develop our relationship with employers..and that's not just about more employers, although I think that's inevitable.. it's about the depth of the engagement with the employers and .. I do believe that is fundamental to our success, the success of UCB as much as anything else."

The UCB partnership Team Leader added:

"I think it is going to be very important perhaps as the issue of what are we essentially about..and I think, in our particular case, we have quite a high

vocational focus and we should not lose sight of, why it is that students come to us.

People are perhaps looking at things from maybe a more pragmatic sort of approach, rather than necessarily doing a programme for the love of doing a particular programme. They are looking in terms of, what sort of employment door will this open?.. Can I earn a reasonable standard of living for myself in the future?.. Not only that but, can I earn a reasonable standard of living that will enable me to pay my fees and get a return on those fees?"

QHotels is a private equity backed group, with 3700 employees and that has expanded to 21 hotels with potential for further expansion. It operates with a semi decentralised management model with General Managers and their teams being responsible for running their own businesses. The culture is entrepreneurial with a focus on speed of decision making. Their people are encouraged to innovate and take risks.

Some of the key challenges QHotels face are: increasingly high customer expectations of four star customer service delivery; complex operational systems; and a highly competitive market for personnel, especially for staff at lower grades (compounded by 62% of the workforce being under 30 years old). Managers are required to be highly numerate, literate, possess exceptional leadership skills, and educated to degree level or equivalent.

QHotels display strong commitment to training, with Chef Development programmes through to QED career progression programmes. Directors themselves deliver training and coaching. They also ensure that there is a robust approach to evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of developmental activities, for both the individual and its impact on business performance.

There exists a long standing relationship between QHotels and UCB, with the latter being a provider of placement students and high calibre employees. QHotels were actively seeking a flexible learning partnership with an specialist hospitality institution. There was also significant support from Foundation Degree Forward (FDF) who QHotels credited for encouraging such a partnership in the first instance. The main preconditions for success were a keenness to see the venture as a partnership, a supportive funding body, and a flexible and responsive higher

education institution. This also required commitment from senior management in UCB to provide not just the requisite time and resources, but to be responsive to employer requirements whilst balancing this with academic rigour in the validation process. The commitment of senior management at QHotels was also a considerable precondition, as these people would be actively involved with delivery and assessment.

"It's two pronged really, you need genuine support from above. My experience was a senior manager (from UCB) also being involved as part of the bid presentation..that very much helped to demonstrate to the employer that it was serious and it gave some degree of reassurance that this was something that had the institution's backing.

So, I think that there is a top down support and you also need bottom up support from the staff.. It's trying to find that happy balance..so a precondition is that that the vision is something everybody buys into. Not just a few people." (UCB partnership Team Leader 2013)

According to the team involved: *"One size doesn't fit all partnership agreements. The pre-nuptial needs to be clear and the partners need to have common interests, communication, trust underpinned by accountable systems and student enthusiasm."*

Aims and targets

QHotels were looking for a "true partnership" and flexibility, rather than having "off the shelf" modules and programmes imposed. The first stage was to provide a programme of study that led to a Certificate in Hospitality Management (level 4). For success, it was important to actively learn from each other. Such a working relationship was already in place with UCB being a specialist hospitality institution with a longstanding association with the hotel group – a group which that has always been impressed with UCB students/graduates.

From UCB's point of view the partnership had a strong fit with UCB's strategic objectives and mission. The employer engagement itself had potential for shaping full time module delivery, programme structure and increased placement/employment opportunities. It also provided an opportunity for institutional learning and staff development, as well as a platform for developing the Level 5 programme or progression pathways feeding directly into higher level awards.

2. Implementation

Strategy and actions

The strategy involved collaborative working and open communication right from the start. It also required UCB to start with a “blank canvas” when looking to design the programme in conjunction with the hotel group.

To whom the programme would be aimed – and its levelness – were the first key issues to be addressed. Participants/students would be coming from a variety of backgrounds with differing educational and training needs, and their ability to cope with the course demands needed consideration. Correctly selecting the right participants would be a key factor in the first cohort’s success and satisfaction. Success and high retention could then be built on via word of mouth and the programme could be rolled out to a larger number of people.

One of the key issues was to balance “academic” requirements of various higher education benchmarks with the commercial skills/ competencies/ talent retention requirements of QHotels. Assessment design also had to be a fully collaborative agreement and as such, needed to be appropriate to the level, student profile, the development objectives of Qhotels. Essentially, they needed to be “naturally occurring” and relevant to the work roles.

Although induction support was provided by UCB, the delivery was always going to be from in-house trainers and developers, primarily in the HR role, plus senior management. Bridging the gap between work-based learning and the validation process and experience for QHotel personnel, required a lot of support and flexibility on both sides. Balancing business requirements with the stringent academic/educational requirements required considerable discussion and time. The large amount of paperwork, wording and time required in getting the programme to validation, as well as the experience of the first examboard, was a significant challenge for the in house team.

Monitoring and evaluation

The same procedures that the university has in place for its full time programmes have been implemented throughout the provision; including internal verification, module review meetings and External Examiner visits.

There are also issues surrounding the full “Degree” (at level 5) and QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for higher education) such as the employer having to devise processes for Extenuating Circumstances and assessing the student experience. The National Student Survey (NSS) only takes place at one point in the year and tends to follow the academic calendar rather than the rolling calendar year of this particular programme. Rolling out other university-wide institutional practices, such as teaching observations and keeping it appropriate to the commercial environment will be considerations for the further development of the new Level 5 programme.

Funding and cost effectiveness

From UCB’s perspective, the partnership was viewed very much as a welcome initiative and not an exercise for financial gain. Financially there was negligible gain, with the project and process most likely not to break even. In taking the longer term view, any cost-benefit analysis should consider and value both the development of institutional learning and successful industry-academic partnerships.

“I feel UCB has a genuine interest to want to have employer engagement and I think it is quite important in terms of informing the curriculum.. it’s not just the financial benefit this represents .. in terms of growth in numbers or growth of funding but it also... comes from the staff development point of view the way in which it helps those staff keep up to date with developments or to see what change is happening (in industry)... It can have a benefit in terms of informing the full time programmes so the benefits go on beyond simply money. There are other aspects that perhaps, in keeping the courses in touch with what is happening out there and avoids this academic/ vocational divide that is often referred to in sources of literature.” (UCB partnership Team Leader 2013)

Sustainability

This area looks highly positive. The increasing costs associated with full time higher education will limit learning opportunities for a significant proportion of the future workforce. An integrated approach between education and industry offers opportunities for the employer to develop talent in house and so improve employer brand and retention. Further, UCB learned how to roll out this programme and it will be useful for other partnerships. As UCB are able to offer different progression pathways for development onto a full BA programme and postgraduate study in Hospitality, this provides fertile ground for the continuation of these initiatives.

However, funding has ceased for Foundation Degree Forward in October 2011 (HECFE 2010):

“This follows the achievement of the Government's target of 100,000 foundation degree students to be enrolled at any one time, in England. HEFCE's investment of £100 million has also enhanced the employer engagement capability of universities throughout the country, as part of its ongoing workforce development programme.”

This could be a limiting factor for attracting employers in the future.

Transferability and generalizability

Transferability was restricted, as the bespoke nature of the provision is distinctive. Being able to tailor the programme to the company/brand ethos and not base the development on existing programmes, was identified as one of the initiative's key strengths. Choices of assessments were specifically designed to be relevant to existing work roles. Further, as members of senior level management were involved in the delivery and assessment, the above are limiting factors in the initiatives transferability to other organisations.

It was also important that the hotel group adopted the same quality processes as UCB to allow for consistency; again this could be a limiting factor in partnering with another organisation. The need for speed in decision making, communication, differences in the “rhythm of the year”, changing workplace customer expectations may also be limiting factors.

3. Outcomes

Achievements

The first examination board was completed in April 2013, the second completed in November 2013 and the third cohort started in September 2013. In February 2014, the Foundation Degree (Level 5) went for validation and is now in the final stages of approval. Numbers have continued to grow with a high demand from applicants.

Success factors

Strategic level commitment from both organisations

Flexibility was of key importance. An open mind set on both sides and a willingness and commitment for the project to work.

"I think that having the flexibility, but also having this mutual trust and mutual understanding with another party, that is something that is absolutely fundamentally important to develop .. and I think it can be vastly underestimated.. the amount of contact time to nurture these relationships.. so you develop this mutual professional trust. You have got respect in terms of what they are doing and what they are about...what they are trying to achieve... but perhaps they can also understand that dealing with teaching professionals.. and they also have expectations (for us) to sort out quality and standards and it's trying to find that 'middle way' that both parties are happy with." (UCB partnership Team Leader, 2013)

Unintended impacts

There has been considerable enthusiasm, especially from school leaver applicants, at QHotels. Demand has far outstripped the provision available. There has also been much external interest from the academic community, most noticeably from Employer Based Training Accreditation (EBTA) forum.

Strengths and weaknesses

There were a number of challenges in developing the programme. Firstly, assessing an increasingly diverse candidate entry and ensuring that the right people were recruited onto the programme. These people will be the "voice" to encourage others to participate in the future. Secondly, providing a university experience for students when most delivery was in the workplace. Thirdly, developing role relevant modules and assessments within diverse sets of working roles and locations. Fourthly, the speed of response needed to operate with commercial partners with differing rhythms of the year compounded by the requirement for fast decision making whilst running a demanding business.

The development time needed to design bespoke modules, plus intellectual property rights concerning access and use of materials, might have been viewed as painstakingly slow bureaucracy to an employer with a 24hour operation to manage. This, along with the integration of UCB systems with the assessment, marking and verification processes, required considerable patience and understanding on both sides.

"There are a lot of institutions where that can be an extraordinarily slow process but I think in this institution we can adapt to get validation 'fitter' for purpose. The issue is the time that you have got available to you in terms of the preparation that is required for that validation process. Which can be challenging. A number of issues to do with the system of validation that is

still more orientated towards a full time programme and the validation of full time programmes... which can make completion of that sort of material difficult because there are perhaps things that need to be 'trimmed down' or 're-adapted.'

(We need) "...a set of documents that still illustrates appropriate compliance, there is appropriate rigour being applied , that perhaps demystifies some of the language for industry...which we take for granted and can be off putting to companies." (UCB partnership Team Leader 2013)

The additional requirement for delivery observation and the external examiner process, along with offsite requirements for both partners with tutor training, reviews etc requires a considerable amount of time away from core operations and the "day job".

"It's developing and preparing for the validation of programmes and being able to allocate the appropriate people with the appropriate time, to foster and develop the relationship with a particular client and organisation.. and yes, there are limitations at the moment.. but I can understand it from a senior level that they will make an adjustment to the resources available, depending on the value gained.

..and that's the dilemma.. are you purely looking at this in terms of what cash this brings in or are you looking at it from a wider perspective in terms of the longer term gain?.. the wider reputational benefit ..therefore drawing in students that say 'look you are an organisation that I want to get a qualification with and be associated with'.. so there is no easy answer... there are different elements at different levels and I think there is an issue from staff themselves genuinely wanting to get things off the ground, wanting to be involved." (UCB partnership Team Leader 2013)

Reference

UCB college website:

<http://www.ucb.ac.uk/home.aspx>

Accessed 1st February 2014

15. University of Thessaly, Greece

The creation of new structures for innovation and entrepreneurship: 12 years of experience

Prof. Pantoleon Skayannis

The problem

Greece is a country considered, up to recently, as “hostile” to entrepreneurship. Generally speaking, the Greek economy has been characterized by the dominance of a multitude medium, small, and very small industries¹ with a low technology component [in most], low export performance, and low added value. The reasons for these lie in the history of the country’s development and of a deficient development of a robust entrepreneurial class. This was not unrelated to the way the public sector has been behaving to entrepreneurs. Legislation has been excessively and unnecessarily strict and inadequately dealing with the rapidly changing reality, taxation heavy, liquidity problematic and the land use system opaque and pending, to mention only some.

The inadequate state has been facing entrepreneurs with suspicion, while many of the big ones were very much depended on the public sector. Many of them have also been short sighted, going for very quick profits and risk averters. In this context, to start and run a business in Greece has been a risky and difficult task. Especially the new entrepreneurs have been facing bureaucracy, lack of transparency and an incomprehensible and unstable tax system, in combination with corruption.

Given this situation, a series of questions arise, related to how easy it is for new entrepreneurs to enter this market, especially how easy it is for a young graduate to start a business. In addition, in this context, there is a question of how can education contribute to entrepreneurship and whether [and how] tertiary education and related research has been linked to the

¹Micro enterprises: 96.6%, small enterprises: 3%, medium-sized enterprises: 0.4% (Estimates for 2011, based on 2005-2009 figures from the Structural Business Statistics Database (Eurostat), *SBA Fact Sheet 2012 - Greece, European Commission Enterprise and Industry*.

market. Today, in addition to the obvious barriers indicated above, the ongoing crisis has accentuated unemployment, especially of the youth, and has raised the question of how can education contribute to the performance of production and to the economy.

Formal tertiary education (universities and technological institutions) was (e.g. in 2000) not linked to the market (in terms of education structures).

In addition to the general problems indicated above, there have been structural problems marking the relationship between formal tertiary education (universities and technological institutions) and the market. The educational system in terms of content and way of teaching was alienated from entrepreneurship; it was considered almost as a sin within education and the cooperation between industry and universities inexistent with no common language. The educational system did not encourage student entrepreneurial pursuits, neither of young people. In his sense, no entrepreneurial ecosystem developed in and out of education.

The result of the formation of such a context was that the dream of young people was to find work in the public sector, as young people while, as said, were facing difficulties to start businesses, were not equipped by education to do so too, and were trapped into protected social environments, mostly by the traditional aspects of society such as the quite protective Mediterranean family.

The lack of connection between the educational system and the labour market resulted to further implications for the system and for graduates, namely to the lack of correspondence between the formal capabilities gained in education and the real needs of the labour market. This lack of correspondence has deeper roots as to a certain extent reflects the lack of correspondence between the educational preferences of the students and the studies they end up doing, due to the higher education examination entrance system in the country. In this sense, students often study their least favoured options, thus they are less motivated to find jobs related to their studies. In addition, the number of students admitted each year is determined by the Ministry of Education². This inflexibility cannot adjust the number graduates to the labour market and increases the pursuit of security within the comfortable embracement of the public sector (which

²This is closely related to the lack of autonomy of the universities which cannot formulate policies

however is now shrinking). So, there is a small number of students and graduates intending to get involved into entrepreneurial activities, or to start their own new businesses.

As a result, in the beginning of the 2000's, students and young graduates were hesitant to enter the entrepreneurial world as they had reservation, disappointment, frustration, and lack of knowledge, which are barriers related to the fear of failure, lack of confidence, and risk and responsibility aversion. The solution to the situation above was a challenge for the educational system of the country and for the University of Thessaly (UTH). In fact, the solution to the problem was the changing the established situation by encouraging students and young graduates, by linking education and research to entrepreneurship. These required a change a whole mentality, a policy shift, which should be materialised via an institutional change.

The response to the challenge

The action taken by the state (Ministry of Education) in the beginning of the 2000's was the launching of a programme entitled "Encouragement of entrepreneurial activity and innovation applications of students" which evolved in two waves (2003 – 2005 & 2005 – 2008), and came to complement in a major way the pre-existing Career Services Offices and Practical Training Offices. This programme that we shall name here 'Phase I' (as a 'Phase II' will follow later) actually consisted of courses on innovation and entrepreneurship in all universities financed by the Operational Programme "Education and Primary Vocational Training" (EPEAEK II), co-funded by the European Union.

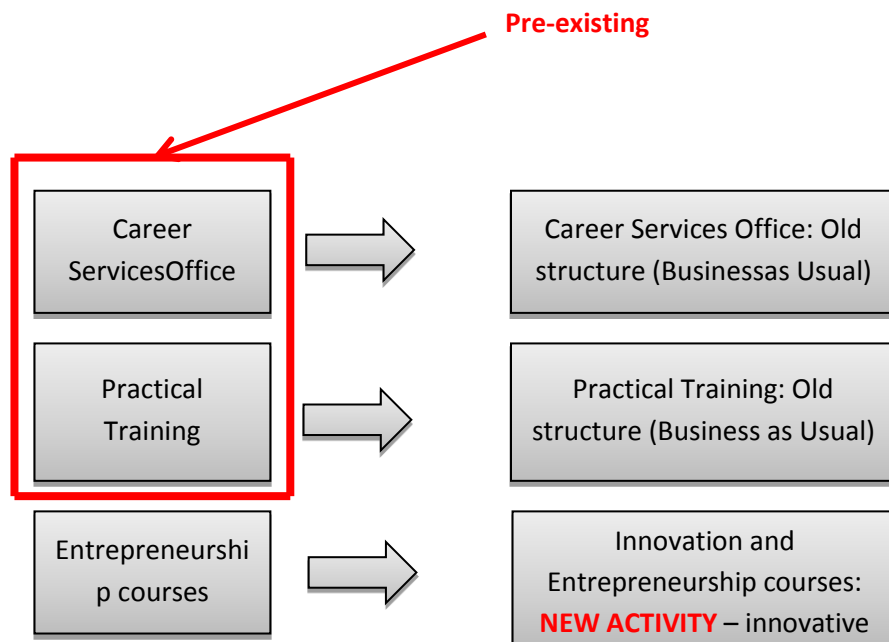


Figure 1. The evolution of employment and career support structures in UTH

The courses materialized by UTH marked a change, a transition from the concept of lecture to a new course based on complex activity.

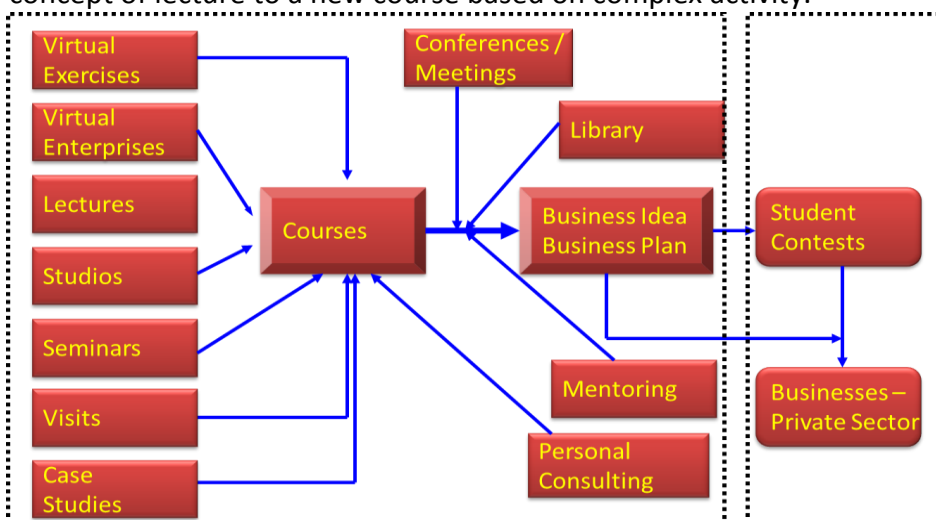


Figure 2. The new course structure of innovation and entrepreneurship of UTH.

This complex activity structure marked a change which faced two kinds of barriers within the university: a) Technical, meaning the difficulty of co-ordinating a complex course common to most departments of the University, something that required a university administration familiarisation, and b) Ideological, meaning the overcoming of the suspicion of staff and students that the programme would bring the private sector from the backdoor to the university, something that in the Greek context was not politically accepted at least among the most politically active parts of the academic community.

The programme was followed by a large number of students and was widely acknowledged as successful. The success factors were basically the human resources, good team building, involving lots of staff members (anti-suspicion), the up to date teaching approaches (academic credibility), the achievement of inspiring the students (psychology – and grassroots' support), the good relations with the university structures (diplomacy), the good performance according to the criteria of the Ministry (honesty – credibility), the good administration of the programme (competence). These were appreciated by external agents, thus yielding to the programme prizes, distinctions in competitions, etc. (public relations- prospects).

The success factors contribute to the mitigation of the initial problems, and encouraged the participants towards understanding that there is little to fear. The end of this Phase I was marked by an audit by the Ministry of Education that was launched for all tertiary education institutions that participated in this action (practically all in Greece). The successful completion by UTH at a very high level triggered the interest of the Ministry which asked the team for a study for the whole of the country. The study was entitled "Study for the Connection of Tertiary Education with the Labour Market via the Promotion of Entrepreneurship", and was commissioned by the Special Agency for the Management of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training (O.P. "Education") of the Ministry of Education, to UTH, in particular to the team which ran the courses on innovation and entrepreneurship.

This study unidentified a multitude of policy problems in the country, the most important of which were: a) the various programmes were implemented by different structures and/or persons without any central co-ordination within each institution, b) the absence of communication mechanisms, and of diffusion of information between the various

structures, c) the overlap of activities and waste of resources. These were coupled by the lack of single representation of institutions, of common philosophy and strategy hence of any concrete institutional policy which led to facing common problems in different ways.

These intra-university fragmented approaches revealed a lack of recognition of the necessity to place these activities under the regular institutional functions, and the lack of horizontal networking except of the pre-existing horizontal support activity of the Career Offices. It has to be noted that the issues and the problems were not known to a broader academic audience. Overall, there had been unfavourable conditions regarding the viability of entrepreneurial activities in the institutions. Taking all these into account, the study proposed an improvement and a completion of the structures that would have to be applied to the whole of the country.

The study was carried out in the frame of the then *New Operational Programme for Education and Lifelong Learning* that called for more efficient linkage at all levels of the educational system with the labour market, for the promotion of students' entrepreneurial spirit, for the upgrade of student internship programmes and for the extension/upgrade of Career Office services. At the core of the study was the idea of a cohesive and comprehensive treatment of the issue of linking higher education with the labour market, from the side of higher education institutions.

First, the study proposed the integration into a single programme of each higher education institution's strategies for entrepreneurship, labour market liaising and student internship activities, the organisation, coordination and supervision of this strategy in each higher education institution by a new structure, called Bureau of Employment and Career (BEC). BEC was proposed in order to conceive the vision, to formulate the strategy, to process and implement the policies of higher education institutions streamline of the structures related to student career and employment, the improvement of management and coordination, the amplification of synergy, the exploitation of scale economies, the expansion and enhancement of networking. This was planned in order to develop a clear and cohesive strategy for each higher education institution and to coordinate and upgrade all entrepreneurship services offered by higher education institutions.

Second, the study proposed the establishment of an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Unit to undertake the teaching of entrepreneurship courses, to support of student entrepreneurial activities and to launch new actionssuch as entrepreneurship seminars and summer schools.

The study included extensive consultation and deliberation with high standing university officials across Greece, and three summits (organized by the Ministry of Education) of higher education institutions Rectors and Presidents. This was soon applied in UTH and marked Phase II (2009 - 2012) of the whole programme. The whole new structure is depicted in Figure 3.

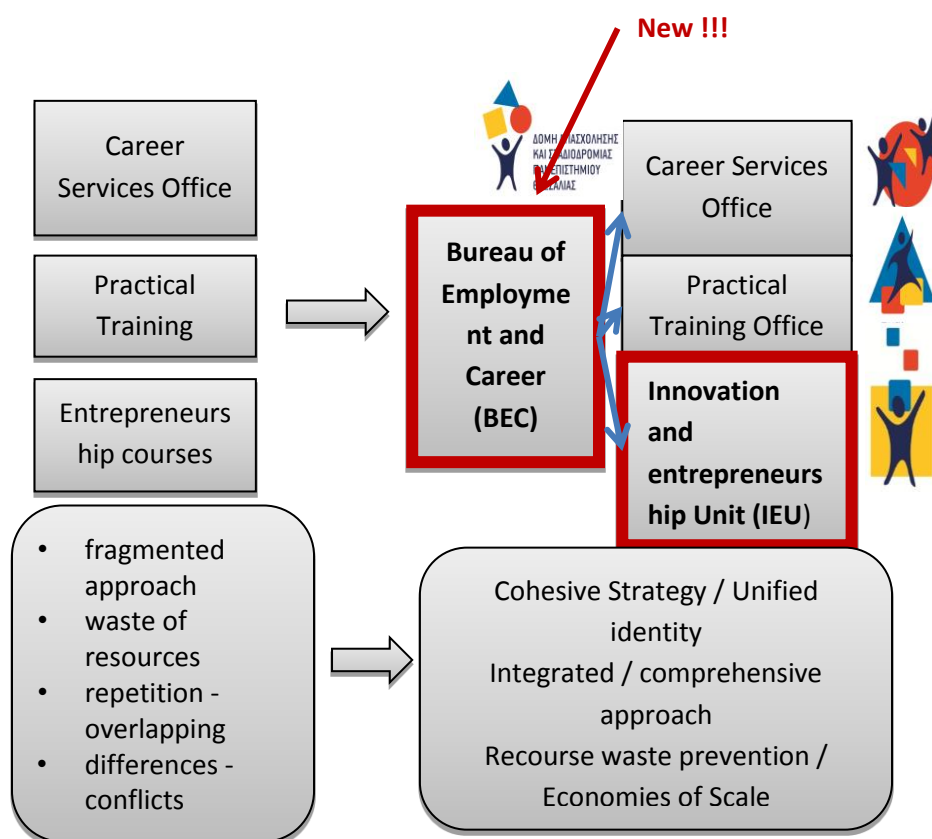


Figure 3. Phase II of the evolution of employment and career support structures in UTH

The new structures

The new Bureau of Employment and Career (BEC) structure is the one that co-ordinates the other three and aims at being the main link between UTH and the labour market. It secures a comprehensive approach of all career

and employment issues, common activities of all related structures, complementarity of all activities hence maximisation of benefits and scale economies. It focusses on “open” activities and on the involvement of the entrepreneurial community, especially the Association of Industries. One main aim is the establishment of a brand name (inside and outside the university) by linking itself and the other three structures with the market. This policy, having been adopted for the whole of Greece, started for the first time a comprehensive and common strategy of all universities which found its way through the BECs.

The also newly established Unit for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (UIE) has as fundamental objectives the cultivation and development of innovation and entrepreneurial skills of the university students and their encouragement and support to take entrepreneurial initiatives. UIE maintains a deep awareness of the dynamically changing business and market reality through the systematic and mutually beneficial cooperation with the innovative business community, locally and nationally.

It offers two elective courses to students: a) Introduction to Entrepreneurship (offered in the fall semester), and b) Business Plan Development (offered in the spring semester) which are structured as indicated in Figure 2, i.e. according to the experience of the previous successful Phase I. Yet, studio work has been added and additional tutoring has been introduced. The curriculum of the two courses integrates with visits to businesses, talks and Questions and Answer sessions with entrepreneurs and business executives, and mentoring and coaching sessions with members of the UIE mentors’ network.

In Phase II, UIE additionally offers: Personalised support to individuals and teams on the planning and implementation of their business ideas, Open Seminars on special topics, focusing on specific domains and trends related to innovation and entrepreneurship, Summer schools, Consultation to degree holders and third parties (entrepreneurial activity support inside and outside the university), event hosting (e.g. Start Up Greece), and it gets involved in external activities such as Open Coffees), while it plans Intensive Seminars on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in the form of short courses.

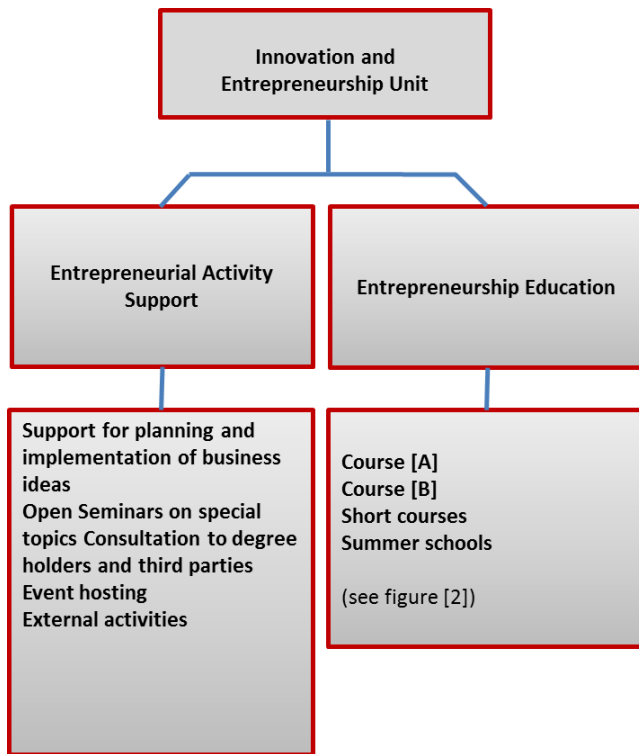


Figure 4. Unit of Innovation & Entrepreneurship

The challenges UIE faced primarily were to put experience and knowledge to good use by exchanging know-how and “good” practices, by establishing horizontal (national) networking and actions and diffusing the results. A major challenge is viability, i.e. operation after the end of the Operational Programme. Institutional changes in the university structure. Important challenges are also those related to culture and mentality, especially to entrepreneurial mentality and university – society – enterprises – organisations relationships, in order to enhance student employment and career options and, primarily, entrepreneurial prospects.

As becomes obvious, there has been an institutional change at two levels: a) on the country level by means of the adoption of the BEC and UIE structures by all higher education institutions which means a policy shift of the Ministry of Education towards a very concrete new agenda, and b) on the level of each higher education institution, hence of UTH which was supposed to introduce the new structures (and the enhancement of the old ones), make them part of the university organizational structure as well as of the everyday life of the university.

This policy shift and institutional changes based on a university Study that became a National Policy were made it possible because of the surprisingly impartial and objective judgment of the Ministry of Education (to commission a study with objective criteria), to the administrative continuity in the Ministry (the government change in 2009 did not affect but rather improved the same policy), and to the consistent efforts for the persuasion of the university administrations all over the country. Of course these could not have been made possible without the European Union funds and the good reception of the market that also was pursuing closer relations with higher education institutions

Problems and barriers of Phase II structures and activities

The introduction of this new policy however, despite the genuinely good intentions and determination was not free of problems. From the side of the Ministry, problems related to the lack of experience in dealing with a programme that combined multiple actions, to the lack of confidence to the purpose of some of the activities, and to the inflexibility of fund allocation and sticking to the budget item lines. This was coupled by the pressures for “equity” among universities and for the provision of more funds to the most known and lobbying universities.

Within the educational system and the Universities problems related to the suspicion of the academic community for anything related to entrepreneurship. These suspicions, parts of a broader cultural barrier, often took the form of opposition due to relevant political approaches of students, professors, and other staff. Education-wise, entrepreneurship courses were regarded as of secondary importance in a context whereby student curricula were very intensive and overloaded. Lack of experience and of connection with the business community and in adequate finances with limited University resources complete the picture of hindrances that those involved had to overcome.

Especially for IEU barriers which had to be overcome at the university level, were the transition from programme to a structure, the support by the university administration and by the University Senate, the difficulty in its visibility and appreciation as a separate structure, and the insistence and consistency in communication within the university. For BEC the main intra-university barriers were the initial complete lack of visibility, the confusion about its role, the antagonism from other structures (Career Office, Practical Training Office) basically because of inadequate comprehension of

the policy and of the role of BEC, the reluctance to share information (e.g. data bases for firms), the distrust between the employees of all sides, and the problems in co-ordination.

Overcoming the barriers and facing the problems of Phase II structures and activities

A huge effort has been made to overcome these barriers and face the problems for the policy to materialize its shift and for the programme to be successful. At a wide, general level the principle factors that made the overcoming of the barriers and the facing of the problems possible, were first of all political, namely the fact that the changes of government did not affect in any major way the programme and that the university team had built a good relation with the administration of the Ministry, the fact that the funding which was asked for the particular purposes was good (of course could be a bit better).

Second, a set of crucial factors had to do with systematic and consistent networking that involved the labour market, and was also horizontal (higher education institutions). These included the very good relation with the entrepreneurial community in an organized way (organizations, mentor groups, support structures, such as co-lab, individual industrialists and entrepreneurs, etc), and the good relations with other higher education institutions (two PanHellenic conferences in the university seat, Volos, and all kinds of invitations). This approach managed to create a brand name, and to bring forth an identity of the university, especially of the structures considered here, that worked as a virtuous cycle.

At the wider social level, the fact that entrepreneurship started to be more appealing to society (by and large because of the crisis) and that the start-up ecosystem in Greece was enriched helped also a lot in the success of the effort. Yet of paramount importance has been the relation that the university team developed with the Association of Industries of Thessaly and Central Greece, a very important institution that proved to be devoted to this effort and always stood by the university with determination and deep understanding of the cause of the programme.

At the university level, in relation to the whole of the programme the fact that it was carried out in two phases helped a lot. This was meaningful as the two phases were closely related to each other (evolution in continuity). In addition, a very good information system at a university level has also

assisted the effort. This integrated Information System improved effectiveness and added value, made management more efficient, maximized the participation of involved actors (students, staff, teachers, organisations, central government) and started to yield feedback, in the direction of creating a “living” organism.

Factors that helped, at the level of UIE have been related to the quality and determination of those involved, i.e. to the human resources, to a devoted team with good relations among its members, that had enthusiasm and sense of investment in the future, and included key members with high specialization. The team had excellent knowledge of the university's ins and outs as well as very good relations with the university authorities (Rectorate, etc). Important was also the fact that at least in Phase I of the programme (and less so in Phase II) representatives (academic coordinators) were appointed in the academic departments to play the role of conveyor belts between each department's community (e.g. mechanical engineers) and the team.

The enrichment of activities in the second phase (summer schools, start-up weekends, open coffees, etc.) also contributed into placing the team in a wider entrepreneurial eco-system that had a virtuous feedback on its work.

At the BEC level, in addition to the human resources factor and the good relations with the university authorities and Ministry, important have been the basically good coordination of the sub-structures, and the good collaboration between BEC and IEU, since the latter was the think tank of the whole enterprise. Important has also been the limited so far but quite promising prospect of networking with institutions and organisations abroad (University of Mondragon, lately the participation in the Tempus IV La MANCHE project, etc.).

Overcoming barriers at the very practical level in relation to the students

It is important to highlight the fact that a series of problems were faced and significant barriers were overcome at the level of teaching in the context of UIE and of the relations with the student community. At a general level, internal marketing, the creation of a good image and a good explanation of the aims proved to be very helpful. More particularly, systematic contact and approach, talks to the various university departments, events organisation and extroversion, good persuasion about the benefits of the programme, providing the floor to opposition, making things interesting

and establishing contact with the wider ecosystem were crucial. Similarly crucial has been the persuasion that there are prospects in this endeavour. Visible results and prospects, the participation in new programmes (e.g. UIE-hive, coaching new projects taken up by graduates) and further integration into a wider entrepreneurial ecosystem have been important in this direction.

The new context created, as indicated above, has yielded results in the perception the students have developed about the UIE courses. An on-going internal UIE research for the years 2011 – 2012 concerning the change of attitude of students from the beginning to the end of the year, after following the classes, has shown that there has been improvement of the student perceptions in most key issues. Improvement was revealed to have been made in the unwillingness or incompetence to market one's personal skills and competences, in whether entrepreneurship suits the student's character, in the general lack of appreciation of entrepreneurship, in the issue of insecure income, in the fear of losing one's property, in the question of whether society provides a safety net for entrepreneurs.

In parallel, in two issues this research has shown some worsening. Students were disillusioned when realizing the frequently of changing or the unclarity of legislation as well as the difficulties in the prospects of managing to get external financing. Overall however, more students were willing to become entrepreneurs and work in the private sector than before following the UIE classes.

Conclusion

Conclusions for such a huge experiment can be seen in a multitude of ways and can be drawn from a multitude of sub systems and actions of the whole endeavour. After all this process has been a learning process for all those participated in it. None of the participants, whether professors, assistant, student, even the secretaries of the Ministry is the same after nine years of this huge effort.

The materialisation of this series of programmes signalled an institutional change in Greek tertiary education, as dealing with entrepreneurship at university level, was a breakthrough. Overcoming ideological fixes and establishing and embedding new structures were real challenges that were faced successfully. However, the lessons and conclusions are by and large contextual, hence bound to be partial and open for completion and further

discussion, especially if attempted to be applied to different contexts. In this perspective, some lessons can be codified as follows:

Principle lessons

- The human resources as factor of change
- The importance of (broader) societal changes
- The importance of institutions of their structures and of their documentation
- The importance of alliances creation within and outside the university
- The importance of discussion at all levels and of persuasion of the academic community
- The importance of creating a common and comprehensible target for the university
- The importance of co-operation between the various university structures (e.g. rectorate, administration, research committee, units)
- Institutions should be learning institutions on top of being administrative, teaching, and research ones
- Institutional knowledge and memory is one of the key elements activating institutional learning and change.

Addendum

Having highlighted the paramount importance of the human factor, it is obvious that the names of the key collaborators of the UIE and BEC projects have to become known to the wider public. These are:

Dr. George Stamboulis, Responsible for all teaching and chief planner of the project

Prof. John Theodorakis, Responsible for BEC [Vice-Rector]

Dr. Apostolos Papadoulis (President of the Association of Industries of Thessaly and Central Greece), External Advisor

Dr. Achilleas Barlas, Teaching staff

Dr. Nikolaos Tzeremes, Teaching staff

Dr. Ch. Kouthouris, Teaching staff

Prof. Manolis Vavalis, Information System Advisor

Petros Rodakinias (MSc), Studio teaching and technical support

Anna Zygoura (MSc), Studio teaching and administrative support

George Kaparos (MSc), Studio teaching and consultancy to spin-off groups

George Kalaouzis (MSc), Technical advisor and Planning and support team

Sophia Kessopoulou (MSc), Planning and support team

Areti Paschali (BA), Planning and support team
Dimitris, Koutsaftikis (MSc), Information system
Ioanna Nassiopoulou (BEng), Planning and support team
Agapios Kiouisis (MSc), External Collaborator
Thomas Malakis (MSc), External Collaborator
Parina Gravari (MSc), Administrative support
Mara Mandellou (DEA), Administrative Support

It is also important to mention and acknowledge here the critical role of the two Special Secretaries of the Ministry of Education who deeply believed in the necessity and the potential of this policy shift and in the capacity of our university and our team to play a key role. These are George Pandremenos (2008-2009) and Faye Orfanou (2009-2012), who I would like to cordially thank in public.

Prof. Pantoleon Skayannis, Co-ordinator

Note

For some more detailed aspects of the experience presented in this paper, see:

Skayannis,P., Stamboulis,Y., Rodakinias,P., Kaparos,G. and Zygyoura,A. (2010) "Patterns in Student Business Ideas: Experience at UTH". European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Athens, 16-17 September.

Skayannis,P., Stamboulis,Y., Rodakinias,P., Kaparos,G. and Zygyoura,A. (2010) "Policy Shifts in Labour Market Liaising and Entrepreneurship in Greek Higher Education". European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Athens, 16-17 September.

Tzeremes,N. and Skayannis,P. (2009) "The International Experience in Entrepreneurship Education". Agora ChorisSynora (Market Without Frontiers), vol. 15(1), pp.3-28. Athens Institute of International Economic Relations (in Greek).

Skayannis,P., Stamboulis,Y., Rodakinias,P., Kaparos,G. and Zygyoura,A (2008) "Study for the Connection of Tertiary Education with the Labour Market via the Promotion of Entrepreneurship", commissioned by the Special Agency for the Management of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training (O.P. "Education") of the Ministry of Education. <http://repository.edulll.gr/edulll/handle/10795/95> (in Greek).

16. University of Thessaly, Greece

The University of Thessaly Quality Assurance Unit

Prof. Yiannis Theodorakis

The issue: introducing formal procedures of quality in the university

The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) was constituted upon decision of the University of Thessaly (UTH) Senate Special Committee from 23th January 2009. The aim of UTH Quality Assurance System is to develop a quality atmosphere in its academic community to be able to convey knowledge through efficient teaching and produce high-level know-how with innovative research.

The QAU is the supreme instrument of coordinating and supporting the evaluation procedures at UTH. The university departments, through the Internal Evaluation Teams (IET), submit their annual internal reports which include centralized evidence with quantitative data about the students, the professors, the remaining scientific staff, the curriculum, the administrative staff, and every other issue that relates to the department. The QAU submits the Internal Evaluation Reports to the Agency of Quality Assurance for Higher Education (AQAHE), which is at state level. Based on those reports, the AQAHE produces a biannual internal evaluation report of the university.

QAU has a coordinative character and is not executive or prescriptive. The responsibility for decision-making in assuring quality within the departments and the university is assumed by their own members. The QAU pursues the following:

- to help UTH and its departments to shape a clear view of their mission via the system and procedures of quality assurance.
- to record the ways used in accomplishing their mission and form and evaluate the necessary means.
- to highlight the quality of the instructional, research, and administrative functioning of UTH, ensuring an equal participation in the national, European, and international academia.
- to contribute to self-contained decision-making by the departments, the university, and the State.

- to strengthen the independence of the university assuming the responsibility of evaluating its own work through departmental self-evaluation using clear and systematic procedures including the participation of staff and students.

The problem

Bureaucratic and institutional difficulties had to be overcome for the university to international requirements. QAU had to contribute to the international accreditation of UTH, for its excellence in education, the pioneering knowledge it produces, and its contribution to development and progress of science and society.

What was the possible solution?

Obviously the solution was to overcome these difficulties. External and internal evaluation reports were useful procedures and obviously the best possible solution to fulfil quality's assurance mission, which is, among others, to promote an atmosphere of quality.

Which were the barriers?

UTH, a relatively new regional university had significant deficiency in administrative structures. As any state university, it works under the guidelines of the Ministry. Finally, issues of culture and bias, with negative connotations regarding evaluation, had to be overcome.

What actions were taken?

From a total of 16 departments, 10 external evaluation reports from international assessors and all the internal evaluation reports have been completed (Medicine; Architecture; Mechanical Engineering; Civil Engineering; History, Archaeology, and Social Anthropology; Veterinary Science; Biochemistry and Biotechnology; Physical Education and Sport Science; Agriculture Crop Production and Rural Environment; Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment).

Yet, because of the crisis and funding problems of the state, external evaluation was stalled. However, from the beginning of 2014 is starting again for the departments which have not undergone this procedure. Additionally, a reliable digital system has been developed for the collection and analysis of all necessary data for the evaluation of the university. The departments which have completed the procedure of internal and external evaluation will discuss and analyse the reports, and proceed to improve the

quality of their overall work, while having already presented their viewpoints to the university.

How were barriers overcome?

During the procedure of internal and external evaluation reports, UTH became aware of its weak and strong points. Additionally, the reliable digital system, was of great help to the administrative services, whereas, various actions, such as, newsletters, articles and various conferences contributed to a slow but stable change of the mentality of academics on quality assurance issues.

What is the new situation?

The internal evaluation of the departments and the university as a whole is a continual and participatory procedure. Its goal remains to make the departments and the institution shape a critical view of the quality of the executed work, based on academic, relevant, and objective criteria, and on standards of common consensus and general acceptance. The university is now aware of its weak and strong points and able to take targeted actions for improvement, in accordance with the following positive and negative points.

Synopsis of negative points:

1. Unsuitability of classrooms in some departments leads to difficulty in having a flexible curriculum. This most often occurs in the Faculty of Humanities.
2. The ratio of administrative staff members to students is 1:100, which is not satisfactory in the School of Humanities. In the Schools of Engineering, of Agricultural Sciences, and of Health Sciences, the relevant ratio of 1:20/25 which is more satisfactory.
3. The ratio of administrative staff members to professors is not satisfactory. The student/PC ratio is also not satisfactory.
4. The lack of funds has, unfortunately, not been helpful all these years towards the desired levels of development. The same applies for physical space the university needs for its development.
5. There has been no collaboration between departments or Schools in sets of common courses which is needed due to economizing on staff-hire.
6. There is only one interdepartmental postgraduate course.
7. There is a low percentage of students partaking in exchange programmes.

8. There are an extremely high number of students in relation to the number of professors.
9. There are some deficiencies in basic infrastructures, classroom space, and lab equipment.
10. There are deficiencies in board and lodging; lodging is offered to only 40 students and board to 2,430 (1:3 ratio).
11. Not all services are included in a uniform information system.
12. Public investment is limited for the completion of the required infrastructure for the development of the university as planned.

Synopsis of positive points:

1. UTH is a new university, it is dynamic and has potential to attract new scientists.
2. There is a high educational level of incoming students.
3. Research and scientific work are increasing.
4. There is an upswing of total research work and citations year after year. The European funds from European projects are significant, which shows that the scientific achievements are of a high level according to international standards. The new researchers are active in producing publications.
5. There are increasing connections between UTH and enterprises.
6. There is good organization of undergraduate and postgraduate studies.
7. There is adaptation to the ECTS system.
8. The university has good teaching practices, practicums, and positive evaluation and acceptance from students.
9. The organization of services and the high educational level of staff, in addition to the utilization of information technologies, are good.
10. There is transparency in the choices of those making the decisions.

Achievements

QAU is now working along with the Departments and Schools, to publicly present the directions and strategies they will follow. Evidence from the interim internal evaluation of the university, as well as the first comprehensive results from the analysis of the external reports, will be presented. For the QAU, the promotion of a quality of atmosphere and the systematic evaluation of its work are basic steps in achieving excellence, quality of studies, and innovation in research.

Synopsis of suggestions for future actions at UTH

1. The institution of teacher-consultant should be enhanced.

2. Scientific partners, employees of private contract of indefinite duration, and PhD candidates should be utilized in providing teaching duties. An effort should be made to utilize PhD candidates in teaching, lab work, etc. Funding procedures should be facilitated for PhD candidates.
3. Interdepartmental cooperation and common courses, especially of the first year, should be an option to be taken. Co-teaching among departments (and Schools in certain cases) should be encouraged but sufficient classroom space is lacking due to the great number of students.
4. Postgraduate programmes among departments or universities should be promoted.
5. The relation between compulsory and elective courses among departments or Schools should be improved.
6. Procedures of compulsory attendance of courses of prerequisite attendance year after year should be enhanced.
7. Ideas of organizing sets of courses with a common theme should be promoted.
8. Emphasis should be placed on cutting edge technology and contemporary field courses.
9. The number of courses students need to receive a degree should be reduced. Generally, a reduction of less than 50 courses is suggested, even in 5-year curricula.
10. Some departments have already reformed their curricula (mechanical engineers, physical educators), whereas some departments expressed their will to reform their curriculum and incorporate common courses with cognate departments, especially in the 1st year of studies (Ichthyology, Crop Production, Civil Engineering, Veterinary Science, etc.).
11. The departments should record their targets in combination with the needs they serve and the relation they have with the labour market.
12. The evaluation of the curriculum and the teachers from the graduates before they receive their degree should become compulsory.
13. The departmental curricula should be adapted to the societal needs.
14. The ratio between teachers and students should become more rational. In some departments there were too few students for professors (1:5), whereas in other departments the number was too large.
15. The development of postgraduate programmes is reversely proportional to the increase of professors. The ratio between teachers and students in postgraduate programmes should be maintained as it stands today.
16. A redefinition of time allocated for practicum should be made in some departments (e.g. two summer two-month practicums, a two-month practicum in the public sector, and a two-month one in a productive unit).

Some departments discuss the issue of increasing the time of practicum: now it is two months but there is an intention towards six months for substantial results.

17. In the postgraduate programmes, personal information on graduates and vocational rehabilitation should be sought.

18. ERASMUS+ programme mobility should be enhanced. Low mobility of ERASMUS students and professors is recorded.

19. The departments should not expand their research towards many research fields at the same time; instead, they should focus on a few research areas and there should be collaboration between professors and laboratories.

20. Interdepartmental questioning should be developed about where the research focus should be over the next years in each department (new domains, cultivations, etc.).

21. A decrease of exam periods and the increase (or institution where lacking) of prerequisite courses should be discussed. The latter should be included and a flexible system should exist.

22. Field trips should be reduced in number and they should be more organized with a clearly educational purpose.

23. The relation between theoretical and lab courses should be improved. It was observed that, in some departments, the curriculum offers too many hours on theory at the expense of lab courses and too many courses are taught in a traditional way.

24. The course timetable should be improved. Students are pressurized with many hours of lectures which are spread too much over the timetable.

25. In five-year departments, the idea of reducing the number of courses down to four years with the last one to be the practicum year should be discussed.

26. A scientific gala of the departments that have concluded their evaluations should be organized.

27. The restructuring of curricula should move on.

28. The informational system of digitally collecting all the information concerning the evaluation of the university should be concluded.

29. There should be better briefing of the external assessors before they get into the departments for evaluation. There should also be better briefing on the institutional context that governs Greek universities.

17. University of Thessaly, Greece

The University of Thessaly bookstore

Prof. Michel Zouboulakis

The issue: creating the university's bookstore and gift shop

Established universities in Europe and in the US have their own bookstores and gift shops promoting their brand names among students, staff and visitors around the world. The University of Thessaly (UTH) is functioning since 1988 and the time has come to create its own facilities to promote the books it produces and the souvenir products that will publicize the university's image to the public.

The problem

The UTH Press is already at work since 1998 and has produced over 110 titles of books mainly academic textbooks, monographs and collective volumes coming out of national and international conferences. These books were promoted through private booksellers in Greece and Cyprus. No possibility of selling directly to a student, a faculty member or just to a bibliophile was possible and the eventual "customer" had to command the book to a private bookstore, which would transfer the command to UTH Press responsible person. To honor that command, UTH Research Committee was also involved, since UTH Press worked for 15 years as a research project managed by the Research Committee. In total more than 5 employees were involved only to sell one single book!

Furthermore, the university had no brand name products to promote its image during its various events, i.e. graduation days, conferences, anniversaries, visits etc. To obtain these products, the university staff had to pass through private product makers, paying higher prices and with no common identity items.

What was the possible solution?

Obviously the solution was to create our own bookstore and gift shop. The university's shop would be a profitable operation to support educational activities and an eventual working place for students.

What were the barriers?

UTH is a public higher education institution which has no right to commercial transactions of any kind. Private funds can be donated to the university, but should be first accepted by the University Senate or the University Council (since 2013). Services provided to the public are possible only through the university's Research Committee which is also the only official provider of the innovative products emanating from the research so far. To make commercial transactions the university had to activate its Property Development and Management Company (PDMco), created in 1987 but never functioned since. According to its statute the PDMco is allowed to develop and manage any product created by UTH as well as to produce and reproduce scientific publications of the university and to manage the intellectual property rights associated with these publications. Many university administrations have tried in the past 20 years to activate the PDMco and failed because of the insurmountable bureaucratic problems related to the conflicting rights and duties between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

What actions were taken?

The Senate of the university has decided to activate the PDMco in July 2010 and has appointed a new administrative board under the Rector which is the company's only legal representative and holder of the unique and undivided share of capital. Additionally, the Rector's Council has decided to create the PDMco's capital of 60000 Euros and has appointed the Vice-rector of economic affairs as its executive manager. An office of the PDMco was created and staffed with one employee and with the Vice-Rector's Secretary for administrative support.

How were barriers overcome?

The main barrier was to overcome the state financial instances' refusal to provide a fiscal identification number after 23 years of inactivity. Moreover, because of the fact that UTH was originally officially seated in Athens, the proper fiscal instances were located there and all the procedures had to be made in place. It took more than 22 months to obtain the license to work and to transfer the seat of the Company in Volos, where the university is seated since 1995. The PDMco started officially in June 2012, thanks to the persistence of UTH Rectorate.

What is the new situation?

The bookstore opened only in June 2013, because the plant that was designed to be located has been delayed for construction reasons. It is located in Volos, in the ground floor of the newly renovated building facing the School of Humanities and Social Sciences Building. The bookstore sells more than 20 originally designed items bearing the university's logo (T-shirts, sweatshirts, bags, pins, mugs, hats, ties, pens, folders, notebooks and umbrellas). It opens daily from 9 am to 2 pm. The store is the official seller of UTH Press books and the promoter of every new edition.

What was the institutional change achieved?

The university has created a new facility to sell the books it produces and activated the Property Development and Management Company. The bookstore inaugurates an eventual source of funds and creates job opportunities for students in the future. It is the first time that UTH enters the retail market in order to promote itself.

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www.lamanche-tempus.eu

International University College
3, Bulgaria str.
9300 Dobrich
Bulgaria

Email: lamanche@vumk.eu
Tel: +359 58 65 56 38