11 Challenges and Opportunities of Improvement of Quality in the Process of Curriculum Development at University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"

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11.1 Abstract

At University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" process of curriculum development is the primary process for assuring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The quality processes of curriculum development, by University of Prishtina is considered as e main activity which should be followed by self-regulatory processes based on rigorous standards. Study programs of University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" are evaluated based on a self – evaluations report by Kosovo Accreditation Agency, analyzing how well they meet these standards, in light of their mission. The University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", as the largest and biggest public university in Kosovo, with thirteen faculties with 147 study programs in three levels of studies (Bachelor, Master and PhD), and around 45.000 students, has internal mechanisms for insuring the quality of study programs. Even though the process of quality improvement is very well fixed at the University, where every year many study programs are passing through the self-evaluation process, steel University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" is faced with new challenges to be in line with European standards and trends. Internal evaluation standards of curriculum development should meet with external evaluation standards and requirement which are defined by Kosovo Accreditation Agency. In this research paper, authors will analyze the processes, procedures and standards of curriculum development and based on evidence and findings, authors will comes with conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of curriculum development processes.

Keywords: Curriculum Development, Quality Assurance, Internal Evaluation, Accreditation, Teaching and Learning.

11.2 Introduction

In the last decade of this century, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" (UPHP) has resulted in positive changes in terms of implementation of modern reforms in line with the Bologna process. Efforts for changes, without doubt, have been challenging but also accessible. The reform have begun with the implementation of ECTS, quality assurance, teaching orientation to learning outcomes and curriculum development procedures, developing research, last but not least is the orientation of higher education towards the needs of the labor market. The implementation of the Bologna process at University of Prishtina"Hasan Prishtina" started in the academic year 2001/2002; these were the first attempts to reform of study programs (curricula) according to the Bologna process. At this time, the only institution of higher education in Kosovo was the University of Prishtina. Reforms of the study programs at the University have begun with the implementation of 3 +2 +3 degree study system and implementation of ECTS - credits. This trend continued until academic year 2006/2007. During the 2006/2007 UPHP began reviewing the study programs for establishing a better connection

of ECTS credits withstudents workload and consolidation of programs based on the European Harmonization Process of Curricula (TUNING).

In 2008, the reform process continued with the preparation for the process of self-evaluation.The process of self-evaluation has been the first step towards the self evaluation process in order to analyze quality of provided services by UPHP. Preparation of self-evaluation report was followed by a series of activities, where the process also had a comprehensive mobilization of the University, ranging from academic staff, administration staff and students. The process has contributed to the activation of quality mechanisms. University of Prishtina asked to identify shortcomings of the educational process, from providing administrative services, review of curricula and teaching performance by academic staff, infrastructure of University, teaching spaces, hygiene etc. This process is followed by the assessment of quality, through questionnaires for assessing the quality in University level and the level of academic units.

11.3 Organizational Structure of Quality Assurance at University of Prishtina" HasanPrishtina"

In order to continuously improve the Quality of the services UPHP in 2007 has established Academic Development Office. The Academic Development office was established with the aim to promote and apply the objective of the Bologna Process for integration in the European Higher Education Area. The office comprises of:
• Quality Assurance Unit
• Curriculum Developmentand ECTS Coordination Unit
• Monitoring the Process of Accreditation
• Centre for Carrier Development
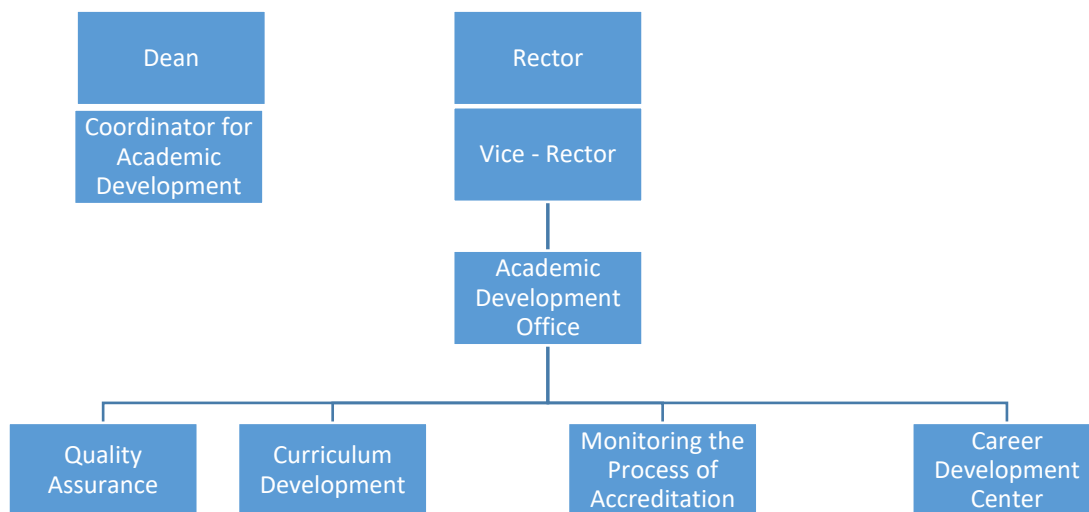
Figure1. *Organization Structure of Academic Development Office*

11.3.1 Academic Development Office and Quality System at University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"

The Quality Assurance Unit is charged with assisting academic and administrative units in continuously improving the quality of their services and ensuring the highest standards are

maintained in accordance with UPHP Statute[16], Law of Higher Education in Kosovo, and ENQA's set of Standards and Guidelines.

The higher authority in the reporting structure at the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" for Quality issues is University Senate. In central level of University exists Quality Assurance Committee. The Committee is a Sub-Committee which reports directly to the University Senate through the Vice-Rector for Quality Development[17] .

Figure2. *Quality Assurance System*

11.3.2 Quality Assurance Tools and Mechanisms at University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"

The UPHP, as a public University, has a responsibility for internal quality assurance and control and this is specified in the Law on Higher Education in Kosovaand the Statute of the UPHP. The Quality Assurance Committee developed Quality Assurance Guidelines for the University which is a document that contains policies and procedures on the quality assessment and implementation of actions following the recommendations, which were approved by the University Senate and are in compliance with the University Statute and the ENQA Standards and Guidelines.

The main mechanisms which regulate Quality Assurance activities at UP are:
  • Law on higher education in Kosovo.
  • Statute of University of Prishtina "Hasan Priahtina", and
  • Quality Assurance Guidelines
Through the mechanisms mentioned above UPHP leads three very important processes;
  1. Internal evaluation process
  2. External evaluation process, and
  3. Process of Accreditation

11.4 Internal Evaluation Process

In order to monitor the quality of academic and administrative services, as proposed by the Quality Assurance Committee, the Senate has approved a number of data collection

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instruments for quality assurance; these includequestionnaires for academic staff, questionnaires for administrative staff, and questionnaires for students.

In addition to the quality surveys mentioned above, according to the University Statute, course evaluation by students is organized at the end of every semester (usually in December and April) through anonymous questionnaires and this is coordinated by the Deans in cooperation with the department heads under the leadership of the Vice-Rector for Quality Development and the approval of the University Senate. The results of these questionnaires are used by departments in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the University.

From 2008 until today, since the university has started to implement instruments and mechanisms for quality and course evaluation process, the challenge for UPHP was to increase number of programs and courses evaluated per year and also to increase the students' involvement in process of course evaluation.

In academic yare 2009/2010 have been included only 4 academic units in the course evaluation process, which is very small number if we compare with number of faculties which operate under umbrella of UPHP. The goal of course evaluation process was not only to identify gaps and lacks of teaching performance but also to install quality culture to the Students and University Stuff. The next two years University of Prishtina has increased the number of academic units, programs and courses in the course evaluation process, where the challenge was to increase the number to 100 % of course evaluation for semester.

11.5 External Evaluation Process

All providers of higher education are subject of quality monitoring and evaluation of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency in accordance with the law on higher education and acts under the Law[18]. It is very important to note that, external evaluation process must be followed by the internal evaluation process in order to achieve minimum quality criteria for accreditation. Although, even if evaluation of study programs past through internal evaluation process, the final evaluation of quality of study programs offered by the UPHP is done by Kosovo Accreditation Agency. Structure of the internal and external evaluation process and accreditation is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Structure of the internal and external evaluation process

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[18] Low on higher education of Kosovo

11.6 Accreditation Process

Accreditation is a formal and transparent process providing internationally compatible standards to examine whether institutions and/or study program offered at university level comply with minimum quality requirements[19]. The UPHP as legal entity is obliged with a law for higher education to undergo the accreditation process in order to fulfill minimum quality criteria required by Kosovo Accreditation Agency. Procedures and activities which UPHP undertake before applying for accreditation are as follows:

Prior to the preparation for the accreditation process, it is critical that all staff members of the faculty/unit/department under review are fully briefed on the methodology of the assessment process. To foster a sense of ownership of the process and common purpose is not only vital to the success of the review but it is also key to the creation and maintenance of a quality culture. At the start of the process, the faculty/department/unit under review should select a group to form a Coordinating Committee which is charged with putting together the Self-Assessment Report for submission to Kosovo Accreditation Agency, which is the first step in the process of accreditation. The self Assessment Report contains all relevant information regarding to Faculties and Study Programs offered by academic units. The Academic Development Office (ADO) supports the Coordinating Committee in all matters related to the preparation of the self-assessment report. The Coordinating Committee is liaised with the ADO and agree dates for meetings in order to monitor progress and check the final draft of the self-assessment report prior submission to the KAA for accreditation. After the SAR past through internal evaluation process and after faculty concluded that all criteria required by the accreditation agency and governing bodies of the University are undertaken then UPHP make a decision to proceed the evaluation reports to Accreditation Agency for Accreditation.

11.7 Conclusions

This paper presents the quality mechanisms at the UPHP and also tries to explain the impact of these mechanisms on quality improvement and development. The impact has been shown through some indicator as:
  • Internal quality assurance system
  • External quality assurance system, and
  • Accreditation process

Even if the quality assurance system at UPHP has shown changes in this last decade, still exists space for quality improvement and development. Due to the fact that quality assurance and improvement is not act but process which continuously must be improved, challenges for next year's regarding to Quality Assurance/improvement at University of Prishtina will be oriented in digitalization of internal Quality Assurance system in order to be more efficient in managing quality system.

The components where needs to be focused in order to increase efficiency in Quality Assurance System are:
  1. Quality Assurance related to administrative meters
      • In line with ESG, revising and Improving Quality Assurance mechanisms
      • Digitalizing quality assurance system of monitoring
      • Establishing quality system on the bases of PDCA model (plan-do-check-act)
      • Setting rules for constant evaluation of results and follow-up measures (from evaluation to Quality Assurance)
  2. Quality of Curricula
      • Reviewing/Revising Learning Outcomes in line with labor market needs.
      • Reviewing/Revising Students workload and methodology of teaching.

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[19] See web page of Kosovo Accreditation Agency "www.akreditimi-ks.org"

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