



Unione delle Università del Mediterraneo
Mediterranean Universities Union
Union des Universités de la Méditerranée
إتحاد الجامعات المتوسطية



APPRAIS

governAnce, quality, accountability:
a Piloting Reform PRocess
in kurdistan region of Iraq

WP1 - Need Assessment Update

December 2021



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Contributors

All Partners

Partnership

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- University of Sulaymania, Iraq
- University of Duhok, Iraq
- University of Halabja, Iraq
- Duhok Polytechnic University, Iraq
- Garmian University, Iraq
- University of Zakho, Iraq
- Charmo University, Iraq
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- From the self-assessment we understood that there is an Evaluation Committee at the university, in charge to evaluate performance on teaching. Is there a Committee in each university? Is it recognized as part of the organigram? How does it work?
- Which are the planning tools used by the university? How is performance assessed against the plans?
- Art. 13 of Law n. 10 states that the University Council develops mechanisms to implement the Ministry's plan and strategy. Which are these mechanisms?

Group 3 ACCOUNTABILITY

- How is your institution accountable towards the university strategic goals? And accountable to whom?
- Financial accountability in respect to external funds. Stated that the university can attract other funds from donors, how does the university manage funds from international organizations and private sector?
- Accountability for Third Mission activities scores very low and is not perceived as a priority. What about social responsibility? Are you accountable towards the society?
- Do you put in place instruments to follow-up students employability after graduation?

Group 4 PARTICIPATION

- How do students participate and are involved in the decision-making process and/or consultations at the university? Is there a student union, a student committee?
- How to increase the participation of external stakeholders?
- How is decision-making at institutional level structured with regards to the participation of different stakeholders? Who is involved at all levels?

3. WORKING GROUPS OUTCOMES

AUTONOMY

"Guidance is needed, autonomy must be interpreted"

Dawood Atrushi, President of the University of Duhok

Academic autonomy

According to the outcome of the working group, autonomy is partial for Kurdish universities. Head of scientific departments have some kind of autonomy on course contents, workload, teaching programs, credits for courses, etc. Proposals are reported to the University Council which takes the final decision.

Autonomy in administrative and financial matters

Different is the situation for the administration, where autonomy is more limited by the HE regulations from the Ministry, for example on who to hire in administrative positions. Also, administrative staff is transferred from one university to another upon the decision of the Ministry, generating a problem of continuity. In the same way, financial resources are distributed upon decisions by the Ministry. On financial matters public universities have very limited autonomy, as part of the public sector; it is somehow different for private

universities, which still need to be accountable to donors and funding bodies. Universities report that before the economic crisis, universities used to have financial autonomy and more financial freedom. After the crisis, centralization on behalf of the government was implemented to make savings. Even the MOHESR should sit into the decisions of the government on financial planning. The financial capacity also as an impact on HR capacity, where decisions are centralized on hiring, dismissing, salaries, etc. Those are entirely depended on the KRG Higher Education Ministry in Erbil. Finally, the financial autonomy, as well the autonomy about HR management is very low in all the three strategic university activities (teaching, research and third mission).

Perceptions in relation to autonomy

Autonomy in scientific and academic matters is higher, but almost no autonomy is granted at the administration level. All decisions go back to the Ministry. Kurdish universities would like to have more autonomy, towards a process of decentralization. Autonomy is not the same everywhere, and it is very context-related, it changes with the mission and strategy of the university. And must rely to processes of accountability, quality assurance and good management procedures. A slightly higher degree of autonomy is on the capacity to attract funds from international organisation and the private sector, even though it should be complemented by the same degree of autonomy in the dialogue with the stakeholders.

MANAGEMENT

“The Bologna Process is a philosophy which requires effective commitment to mechanisms of implementation, and coordination”

Ridha Hassan Hussein, President University of Sulaymani

Effective management

During the working group on management, the management at the university level was discussed. Management is not perceived among the priorities for HEIs, even though a high focus is posed on the need to improve the quality of management at university level to gain more autonomy and more accountability. During the discussion also emerged the need to combine and align the national ministerial strategy for HE with the institutional strategy. In the definition of the annual plan, Universities have some sort of autonomy but work under the umbrella of the Ministry. Strategic planning is aligned with the national strategy at all levels. Kurdish HEIs confirmed the will to improve decision-making and management at both micro and macro levels, for better management at university decision-making level and the relation to the QA team and units. Leaders and decision-makers should be trained to value performance assessment and inform decisions based on the evaluation results. Some HEIs have follow-up mechanisms, others do not. Planning should rely on effective management tools and the results of performance monitoring. Training for also Presidents, University Council and leadership to make sure advancements are implemented at all levels.

Strategic planning

At Kurdish HEIs, Presidents do strategic planning, they consult with the University Council and the Vice-presidents. Later, the plan is sent for the approval of the Ministry. The plan is developed every year (1 year plan) and includes admission capacity, academic affair (courses, syllabus, etc), students' affairs, financial matters, etc. The 1-year short strategy is what strategic planning at Kurdish HEIs is done, however universities need training on long-term strategic planning. Right now, the plan is simply a response to the strategy of the

MOHESR on QA and ranking. Each university, based on set criteria and standards, develop its own plan, coherent with the national strategy. MOHESR sets the general framework then universities have their own plans. The Mission and vision should guide strategic planning over a long-term. Longer plans are related to QA and International relations (due to the work of the project TIGRIS).

Monitoring of performance and quality assurance

Monitoring of performance by national rankings and on QA criteria. Focus now is on the quality of education and research, HEIs are competing with other to become better. So now the issue is how to make the best use of the resources available. It is very different from big and small universities and even from old and new universities (some are more organised and more targeted than others). Not about the budget available, which is set, but on the capacity to manage resources and doing better. Kurdish HEIs lack monitoring performance tools. The national ranking is the best tool available now, but HEIs need tools for effective performance evaluation. Who makes evaluation? QA unit is responsible to ensure implementation of national strategy at institutional level. Partners taking part in the discussion stated that to ensure having good implementation of institutional strategy, universities need internal and external evaluation quality committees. A body to evaluate and assess the implementation of the strategy. The QA is related mostly to teaching activities. The Evaluation Committee should instead relate to academic affairs but also to the general administration of the university and all aspects of the HEI performance, and should work at departmental level and college level and institutional level. One of the participants proposed a framework called MEAL to assess performance, it should be in line with strategic goals – Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment, Learning (=MEAL). There is need for training for both QA staff and leaderships, QA Directors and staff, but also for HE leaders (i.e. Vice-Presidents). Moreover, there is a need to disseminate QA practices and share a QA culture at the university.

ACCOUNTABILITY

*“The Bologna process is not a checklist; it is a way of thinking about learning.
It is all about content, not about form.”*

Marco Abate, Vice-Rector University of Pisa

Accountability towards who and what?

The discussion of the working group started on public universities and how and to what extent they are accountable. Need for more accountability, it is suggested but not compulsory. How institutions are accountable towards strategic goals? The higher body is the University Council and it authorizes people on how to achieve the goals, if the goals are not achieved it is a responsibility of the Council to see why and follow-up. University Council decides the strategic goals and then checks performance. Quality is checked by the Quality Directorate every year or so, plus a scientific committee in each department is accountable for strategic decisions on courses and teaching / researching activities. Quality assurance for research results is just about reaching the results. There is also a course commission which receives students’ opinions.

Financial accountability

Financial accountability is mostly in respect to external funds, since the limited financial autonomy reduces the sense of financial accountability towards public funds. Stated that the university can attract other funds from donors, how does the university manage funds from international organizations and private sector? The

MOHESR encourages attracting donors, receiving funds from the external actors and organizations, but this is somehow in contrast with the little autonomy in terms of fundings that the universities have. Responsibility is within who gets the funds. The President of the university monitors, but little autonomy from the Ministry.

Social Responsibility

Accountability for Third Mission activities scores very low and is not perceived as a priority. What about social responsibility? Are you accountable towards the society? Third mission activities: universities do their best to graduate students as good citizens and serve the community, but universities have limited action due mainly to the economic crisis and the context.

Students' follow-up

How to follow students' employability? Some steps have been taken to ensure students find a job, but it is still out of the university hands. Universities cannot do a lot, limits of the public and private sectors. There are some career centres but HEIs are not held responsible, they do not feel responsible. Ranking is not based (or only for a very little part) on employability of graduates and alumni. Study programs are not designed with the dialogue and collaboration of the private sector. Supply and demands are not correlated. Before usually people were hired in the public sector, but with the economic crisis not anymore.

PARTICIPATION

"Universities are complex living organisms. As Universities grow, the budget needs to increase as well. You have autonomy, you need to take care of it. Entrepreneurial university as part of the autonomy process. Leaders need to have a clear vision and work to implement that vision, it is a battle but also an opportunity."

Soumodip Sarkar, Vice-President University of Evora

Students' participation

In Kurdish universities students' participation is foreseen in all governance structures, in every college / faculty there is a student representative that talks with the academic staff, participate in voluntary work inside and outside the university, participate in mobility internationally but also nationally, moving between universities during the degree. Students can also participate in the university life by creating networks and organizations.

Alumni participation

Alumni can participate in the development of HEIs in creating associations and unions. For example, in European HEIs there are "Alumni days" to let them meet with university students. They come back to the university, share their experience, where they work and what they do and how to improve the university. HEIs need to know and learn how to create the relations with the Alumni.

Participation of stakeholders

Companies: exchanges between HEIs and the private sector should be supported, universities should be visiting companies to know their needs, and then companies should visit universities to tell which kind of graduates they need. Private companies should be active part in the definition of teaching and research programs. NGOs: purpose is to exchange ideas. Relation with EU: the Commission provides funds for HE development and participate to the country developments leading to good graduate students.

ANNEX I – AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 30TH MEETING IN ERBIL, KURDISTAN





APPRAIS

governAnce, quality, accountability:
a Piloting Reform PProcess
in kurdistan region of Iraq

1st Partnership Meeting

Erbil, 30 November 2021

AGENDA



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA



UiO : University of Oslo

UNIVERSIDAD DE MURCIA



UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA



Venue of the two days:

Cultural and social centre of Salahaddin University-Erbil

42VC+445, Erbil, Kurdistan region of Iraq



Tuesday 30 November 2021

09.00-16.00 (Erbil time)

09.00 – 09.15 **Greetings and introduction to the 1st Partnership Meeting of the project**

Mohammed HUSSEIN AHMED, Director General Head of the Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research KRG

Marcello SCALISI, UNIMED Director

09.15 – 10.15 **WP1 – Update of Needs Assessment**

Presentation of the WP1 results:

- **The University Governance Glossary**
- **Report on the State of the art on the desk research and self-assessment results**

University of Duhok & UNIMED

10.15 – 10.30 ***Coffee break***

10.30 – 12.00 **WP1 – Update of Needs Assessment**

Working groups to discuss and validate the results of WP1

University of Duhok & UNIMED with all the partners

12.00 - 13.00 **WP1 – Update of Needs Assessment**

Restitution phase in plenary session with all the partners

13.00 - 14.00 ***Lunch***

14.00 - 14.30 **WP2- Definition of a roadmap for a better university governance and implementation of Bologna process at KRI HEIs**

Presentation of the WP2 work plan and discussion about the roadmap (template, objectives, structure)

University of Evora & Charmo University



14.30-15.15	<p>WP3 - Strategic Planning, Management and Quality Assurance: Capacity Building action</p> <p>Presentation on WP work plan, setting the calendar for the trainings and field visits</p> <p>University of Pisa & Sulaymania University</p>
<hr/>	
15.15-15.45	<p>WP4 - Bologna process implementation at KRI Universities: Recognition of credits and learning mobility</p> <p>Presentation on WP4 work plan, discussion on the MOOC and the training handbook</p> <p>University of Murcia & Zakho University</p>
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15.45-16.00	<p>WP5 - Restitution and harmonization phase towards a Shared Strategic Plan for University Reform</p> <p>Presentation on WP tasks, deliverables and timeline</p> <p>Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research KRG & Garmian University</p>
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16.00	<p>Wrap up and conclusion of the 1st APPRAIS Partnership Meeting</p>



ANNEX II – WORKING GROUP COMPOSITION



Working group 1 AUTONOMY			
Salahaddin University-Erbil	Manhal	Boya	Quality Assurance member
Salahaddin University-Erbil	Jawhar Fattah	Saeed	President
University of Sulaimani	Ava	Fatah	Director of Teaching quality assurance and curriculum development
University of Duhok	Dawood	Atrushi	President
University of Duhok	Ismail Amin	Ali	Lecturer, member of the higher committee for Bologna Process
University of Halabja	Aram	Qadir	Quality Assurance Director
Duhok Polytechnic University	Bareen	Sadiq	Director of International Relations
University of Garmian	Farhad Qadir	Zand	President
University of Zakho	Yaseen	Mustafa	Vice President for Scientific and Postgraduate Affairs
Charmo University	Lanja	Hayder	Quality Assurance Director
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research-KRG	Mohammed Hussein	Ahmed	Director General & Head of the Apparatus of Supervision and Quality Assurance
Working group 2 MANAGEMENT			
Salahaddin University- Erbil	Nabil	Fakhre	Director of Quality Assurance Directorate
University of Sulaimani	Kawa	Amin	Vice-President
University of Duhok	Sarhat	Adam	Quality Assurance Director
University of Halabja	Dana	Tahir	Vice-president for scientific affairs
Duhok Polytechnic University	Masood	Abdulrahman	Dean of Health and Medical Techniques college
University of Garmian	Drivan Jalal	Bajalan	External Relations Coordinator / Director of Career Development Center
University of Zakho	Nazim	Jacksi	President
Charmo University	Pshtiwan	Mohammed	Director of International Relations Office
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research-KRG	Hawkar Rashid	Arab	Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation
Working group 3 ACCOUNTABILITY			
Salahaddin University-Erbil	Hardawan	Mahmoud	Member of Quality Assurance
University of Sulaimani	Rezhen	M.Rashid	Head of Bologna Process
University of Duhok	Lukman	Hasan	Vice President for the scientific affairs and postgraduate studies
University of Halabja	Barzan	Hama Karim	Director of International Relations office
Duhok Polytechnic University	Karzan Awni	Abduljabar	Quality Assurance Director
University of Garmian	Ahmed	Omer-Bali	Director of the International Academic Relations and Media, and LEAR of the University
University of Zakho	Dler	Jameel	Quality Assurance Director
Charmo University	Omed	Al-jaf	Dean of Charmo Center for Research, Training, and Consultancy
Working group 4 PARTICIPATION			
Salahaddin University-Erbil	Mohammed Azeez	Saeed	Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator
University of Sulaimani	Aari	Kamal Rifat	Member of International Office
University of Duhok	Rund	Hammoudi	Project coordinator
University of Halabja	Mahabad	Abdullah	President
Duhok Polytechnic University	Ahmed	Zeerak	Professor
University of Garmian	Ahmed	Tarkhany	Quality Assurance Director
University of Zakho	Dlofan	Salman	Lecturer
Charmo university	Salah	Saeed	President
Charmo University	Zhwan	Othman Ahmed	Director of Bologna Process