

Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE)

ERASMUS+ CBHE PROJECT

Fostering Internationalization at Montenegrin HEIS Through
Efficient Strategic Planning – IESP

Project no. 609675-EPP-1-2019-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

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INSTITUTION ESTABLISHMENT - ACQAHE

- Law on amendments to the Law on Higher education of Montenegro adopted in June 2017 recognized the importance of establishing the institution for quality assurance
- Article 13a of the new Law on HE prescribes that activities related to quality assurance in higher education shall be carried out by ACQAHE in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
- ACQAHE was established in November 2017 by the Government decision
- ACQAHE started to operate in full capacity in September 2018

ACQAHE COMPETENCE

- ACQAHE is responsible for performing following tasks:
 - conducting study programme accreditation procedure and issuing a certificate on accreditation of the study programme;
 - conducting higher education institution external evaluation procedure and issuing a certificate on reaccreditation of the higher education institution based on reaccreditation report;
 - adopting standards for evaluation in accordance with standards in EHEA;
 - conducting a periodic assessment of quality of licenced higher education institutions work, on request of an authorized body of HE institution or Ministry of education;
 - establishing the list of experts for accreditation of study programmes or reaccreditation of institutions based on a public call;
 - cooperating with HE institutions with regard to quality assurance;
 - analysing self-evaluation and external evaluation reports of institutions;
 - proposing measures for quality improvement of higher education based on recommendations put forward in reaccreditation reports of HE institutions to the Ministry of education and the Government;
 - keeping a register of accredited study programmes and reaccredited institutions;
 - establishing the methodology for ranking the institutions and performing ranking of higher education institutions;
 - other tasks prescribed by the Law on HE.

ACQAHE MISSION

- Ensuring full implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area through defining clear procedures for accreditation of study programmes and reaccreditation of higher education institutions and making independent and objective decisions, which is all in common precondition for membership in the European quality assurance structures such as ENQA and EQAR.
- ACQAHE became affiliate member of ENQA in June 2019.

ACQAHE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ACQAHE consists of three sectors:



ACQAHE is managed by 2 bodies:

- Steering committee composed of president and two members appointed by the Government on the proposal of the Ministry of education
- Director appointed by the Government on the proposal of the Ministry of education

ACQAHE is supervised by the Ministry of education.

LEGISLATION FRAMEWORK

- Law on Higher Education;
- Bylaws on higher education:
 - Rulebook on the procedure for accreditation of study programmes;
 - Internal Rules on the procedure for reaccreditation of higher education institutions;
 - Rules on the accreditation procedure of a lifelong learning programmes.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Study programmes and institutions are evaluated according to defined criteria.
- Criteria are generated from ESGs.
- In order to have harmonized Standards and Guidelines with ESGs, Agency adopted:
 - Standards and Guidelines for accreditation of study programs;
 - Standards and Guidelines for reaccreditation of higher education institutions and
 - Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance of Agency.
- Each standard is referred to ESGs.

ERASMUS+ CBHE PROJECT

**FOSTERING INTERNATIONALIZATION AT
MONTENEGRIN HEIS THROUGH EFFICIENT
STRATEGIC PLANNING - IESP**

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION!

- To improve the quality of education through increasing international competitiveness and international standing, visibility and comparability within European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA)!
- The contribution of the Agency in the process of internationalization of HEIs can be made through:
 - Expert inputs and reviews of the internationalization strategies with action plans and their comparability within EHEA and ERA;
 - Accreditation rules and procedures for study programmes in the English language;
 - Accreditation rules and procedures for lifelong learning study programmes (summer schools etc.)

THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY

- In the IESP project, the Agency will provide:
 - expert input to the drafts of internationalization strategies with action plans, making sure the alignment with state-of-the-art European practices and national framework is complete;
 - expert input to the alignment of the internationalization benchmarks as initial quality indicators (within procedures of internationalization);
 - expert input to the alignment of the guidelines for enhancing different aspects of internationalization of Montenegrin HEIs.
- The Agency will ensure that the strategic planning process is aligned with the highest quality standards for higher education and aligned with the current EHEA practices, and that the national ranking criteria for HEIs, relevant to internationalization, are taken into consideration for defining strategy goals. They will provide expertise in defining criteria for strategy monitoring and evaluation.

THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY

- Also, the Agency will have advisory role in the process of development of courses in English and summer school curricula, ensuring that they are attractive to foreign students and academics alike.
- As governmental counterpart to HEIs, the Agency will be involved in the accreditation process.

EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THE PROJECT

- Being part of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in which goals and policies are harmonized to Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and then implemented in Montenegrin higher education system, makes the Agency more responsible to reach international goals. Achieving that level is rather challenging and it involves building staff capacity and using foreign experience.
- Therefore, participation in Project “Fostering Internationalization at Montenegrin HEIs through Efficient Strategic Planning” would be of high importance for enhancing Montenegrin higher education system and including international study programmes and/or institutions in it.

EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THE PROJECT

- Development of Internalization Strategy recognized by this Project, and later on, preparing implementation plans, monitoring of those plans and staff capacity building is crucial in the process of becoming internationally recognized. Various capacity building and training activities organized among this Project will equip the Agency's staff with the skills and knowledge for strategic planning process.
- The development of the Agency with the features that meet the requirements of European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) takes time, but the work undertaken so far is an excellent start. Every piece of guidance and reports produced under this would be referenced to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) to ensure the Agency can track its progress towards gaining international recognition.

THANK YOU!

Tamara Đuričković, PhD
Advisor
Sector for quality control
E-mail: tamara.djurickovic@akokvo.me
www.akokvo.me

