



EPOKA UNIVERSITY:

Quality Control System and Research and Project Office

Kick-Off Meeting of the ERASMUS+ Project
Tirana, 29 February, 2016

History



- Epoka University started its academic activities during the 2007-2008 academic year.
- In 2011, Epoka University was granted institutional accreditation by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Albania.

Memberships



- Epoka University is a member of:
 - Magna Charta Universitatum,
 - International Association of Universities (IAU)
 - Balkan Universities Network
 - (Associate member) European Universities Association (EUA).

Mission



- Raising well-prepared, productive and competent individuals with a research-oriented spirit, who possess professional ethics and sensitiveness to the country's and world's realities, in order to serve to fundamental human values; contribute to the improvement of the quality life of humanity based on universal and regional needs.

Vision



- To be a leading university in our country in the areas of education, research and development as well as service to society.
- All the development strategies of Epoka University are built on the “Education, Research and Contribution to Society” triangle.



- **Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,**
 1. Department of Economics;
 2. Department of Banking and Finance;
 3. Department of Business Administration; and
 4. Department of Political Science and International Relations.
- **Faculty of Architecture and Engineering**
 1. Department of Architecture;
 2. Department of Civil Engineering; and
 3. Department of Computer Engineering.



- The University has applied to the Ministry of Education and Sports to open its third faculty: **Faculty of Law and Social Sciences.**
- Currently offers education in **three study cycles:**
 - **10 Bachelor,**
 - **8 Master of Science,**
 - **9 Professional Master,**
 - **1 integrated second cycle and**
 - **6 PhD** study programs



- The language of instruction of 32 study programs is English, whereas 2 programs are offered in Albanian.
- Epoka University fully complies with the requirements of the Bologna Process such as offering study programs in three cycles, adoption of ECTS credits apart from the American credits as well as the provision of the diploma supplement for all its graduates.



- 37% of academic staff members at Epoka University are foreign. The student community consists of 1485 students, 960 of whom are first cycle, 505 second cycle and 20 PhD students. Almost 9 % of the student community comes from foreign countries, mainly from the region.
- Epoka offers several scholarships to successful students
- During the 2011-2012 academic year, the student/lecturer ratio = 13.



- Internationalization represents one of the strategic objectives of Epoka University. In this context, Epoka University is one of the few universities in Albania to conduct student exchange programs with foreign universities.
- At the same time, Epoka University bolsters an excellent employability rate of its graduates, standing at 91%.

Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Board (AEQI)



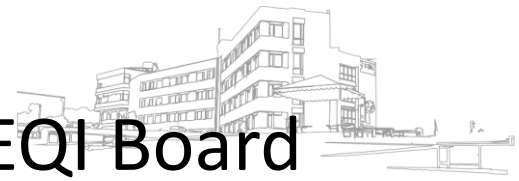
- In accordance with the requirements of Albanian legislation on the HEI and the provisions of the Statute and the Basic Regulation of Epoka University, the AEQI has been established in the institution.
- AEQIB was established by the Decision No. 2, dated 26.03.2009 of the Epoka University Senate.
- AEQIB represents the central unit of the Internal Quality Assurance System at Epoka University.

Responsibilities of the AEQI Board



- Performs the administration of all work in this context and the publication of results on the academic and administrative services evaluation
- Administers the work in the context of internal evaluation in the University and prepares or supervises the preparation of the self-evaluation report

Responsibilities of the AEQI Board



- Makes the necessary preparations for the external evaluation of Epoka University, and is at the disposal of the institution or organization performing the external evaluation for every necessary information
- Reviews all the work in the context of the quality improvement which can be taken as examples and models, and disseminates them to the other academic units



- Coordinates the fulfilment of the internal control of standards
- Prepares the Action Plan of Internal Control and if necessary defines the new standards for the University
- Defines the mission and vision of the University as well as the short-term, mid-term and long-term strategic objectives of the University;



- Prepares the strategic programs of the projects and activities;
- Defines the objectives and strategies of the institution;
- Gives directives on the fulfilment of the strategic plan and action plan of the institution;



- Develops improvement activities and periodic monitoring of all the institution;
- Prepares extra recommendations on the basic and performance indicators included in the directive of the AEQIB on the quality improvement and strategic planning of the academic and administrative units.



- The number of members of AEQIB is defined by the Senate. AEQIB members are elected by the Senate for a period of two years.
- Epoka University has strived to abide to the laws, regulations and suggestions of Albanian Public Agency for Accreditation of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education and Sports and has exercised great effort to comply also with the standards and suggestions of ENQA.



- When no conflict among the two entities' directives and suggestions, the university has always strived to implement the ones that would contribute more in the strengthening of the institution.
- In 2011 APAAL guideline based on the ENQA standards suggested for the AEQIB to be composed of members that do not have managing roles, thus excluding the Rector, the Deans and the Heads of Departments.

Members of the Board



- Among the members of the Board there must be
 - At least 1 member of academic staff from each Faculty holding at least the ‘PhD’ degree and without managing duties,
 - 2 members from the administrative staff,
 - The head of the Student Council,
 - 1 alumnus and
 - 1 external expert with distinguished experience in the labor market.



- In January 2010, Epoka University obtained the ISO 9001: 2008 certificate on Quality Management Systems.
- To supervise the correct implementation of all processes and procedures provided by ISO, Epoka University has established the Internal Audit Group, which by performing periodic audits twice a year, ensures the implementation of the processes and procedures of the institution.



- Internal Audit Group conducts periodic audits in each academic and administrative unit of the University, as well as prepares the Internal Audit Report, which is shared with the Rector's Office and related units in order to fill the gaps identified and solve the problems observed in the respective units.
- The relevant units are given a certain time to improve on the recommendations

Measurable indicators of quality



- Periodic student evaluation of the staff and of the courses offered (at least five times per semester)
- Periodic staff satisfaction survey.

Student Surveys



- At the end of each academic semester, all students at Epoka University fulfill through the electronic system the surveys about the evaluation of the lecturer of each course.
- Upon the completion of the survey, the electronic system shows the average evaluation for every course lecturer as an overall result and the result for each component of the survey, showing the rankings of the course lecturer on the Department and Faculty level.



- In order to ensure the well-functioning of the Quality Assurance - related activities there is a need for the Quality Assurance Office
- The Board takes decisions, sets normatives and creates working groups for several important tasks. (Periodic tasks)
- When need rises, AEQIB establishes working groups and supervises their work (Adaptation to the 3-year Bachelor programs, Analysis of graduate programs)

Quality Assurance Office tasks



- Ensures that the units of the institution are trained
- Coordinates the training of the staff
- Has to have a very frequent communication with the units
- Follows up whether tasks are completed.

Creation of Working Groups



- Periodic curricula evaluation and development, the AEQIB creates working groups
- Large scale structural changes
 - Transition from a four year to a three year bachelor program
 - Structural changes such as introduction of RESIT exams, course withdrawal
- (the latter) Are implemented after two-day long workshops with the participation of all the departments and all relevant units.



1. Epoka University has been engaged in one EU- TEMPUS project from 2011-2014 named ***“Innovation and practice of the curriculum in professional studies in the field of digital television and multimedia”*** (Project number: 517022-TEMPUS-1-2011-1-RS-TEMPUS-JPCR), and was finished by the end of the year 2014. The specific objectives of the project was the development of innovative curricula professional studies (VOCs) in the field of Multimedia and Digital TV (M & DTV) and design curricula for specialized professional studies (SPS) in the field of M & DTV.

The project was completed successfully and a new study program in the department of Computer Engineering has been opened in the frame of the project.



Within the last years Epoka has joined five COST Actions and two of them are pending.

1. ‘Electrospun nano-fibres for bio inspired composite materials and innovative industrial applications’ (MPNS COST Action MP1206)

Project coordinator: Dr. Albana Halili; Project duration: May 2013 - May 2017

Project aim: This COST Action is aimed at achieving European scientific/ technological advances and meeting European economic and societal needs in the area of electrospinning of nanofibres. Coordination and networking activity in Europe within the COST countries will have immediate benefits for European basic and applied research, particularly in terms of maintaining and reinforcing its global role.

More detailed information can be found in <http://www.electrospinning-cost.eu/>

2. “Evolution of reading in the age of digitization (E-READ)” - (ISCH COST Action IS1404)

Project coordinator: Dr. Diturije Ismaili

Project duration: November 2014– November 2018

Project aim: The goal of this Action is to improve scientific understanding of the implications of digitization, hence helping individuals, disciplines, societies and sectors across Europe to cope optimally with the effects. Based on a multidimensional, integrative model of reading, the Action will develop new research paradigms, and metrics for assessing the impact of digitization on reading. These metrics enable the development of evidence-based knowledge of paper and screen reading, and provide guidance for practitioners, policy makers, publishers and designers..33 countries are participating in this Action.

More detailed information may be found in <http://eread.unilib.rs/>



3. “Civil Engineering Applications of Ground Penetrating Radar (COST TU1208)” Coordinator: Dr. Endri Stoja

Project duration: April 2013- April 2017

Project aim: The main goal of this Action is to create throughout Europe a scientific and technical community that not only shares information and knowledge on the matter by establishing links between universities, research institutes, companies and end users, but also promotes the use of this safe and non-destructive inspection method which, among others, can be applied in construction engineering, mine detection, the survey of archeological sites etc. More detailed information may be found in <http://www.gpradar.eu/>

4. “Ageism - a multi-national, interdisciplinary perspective – (ISCH COST Action IS 1402) Coordinator: Dr. Diturije Ismaili

Project duration: November 2014- November 2018

Project aim: The aim of this Action is to enhance scientific knowledge and attention to the topic of ageism by integrating the different disciplines and schools of thought, by developing collaborations with public policy officials, non-academic professionals, civil society NGOs and older adults, by stimulating scientific and public interest, and by developing a new generation of researchers in the field. This Action is not intended to embark on new data collection efforts, but rather to consolidate and harmonize existing measures and empirical evidence in the field in order to generate new directions and collaborations for research and practice. 35 countries are participating in this Action.

More detailed information may be found in <http://notoageism.com/>



5. Semantic keyword-based search on structured data sources (KEYSTONE- IC1302) Coordinator: Dr. Elton Domnori

Project aim:

The COST Action 1302 started on October 2013 with the support of 28 European countries. Epoka University represented by Dr. Elton Domnori joined in October 2015 in the quality of COST Near Neighbour Countries. The main objective of the Action is to launch and establish a cooperative network of researchers in fields related to semantic data management, the Semantic Web, information retrieval, artificial intelligence, machine learning and natural language processing, that coordinates collaboration among them to enable research activity and technology transfer in the area of keyword-based search over structured data sources. The coordination effort will promote the development of a new revolutionary paradigm that provides users with keyword-based search capabilities for structured data sources as they currently do with documents.

Project started on October 2013 and ends in October 2017.

More detailed information may be found in <http://www.keystone-cost.eu/>

Pending Actions:

1. COST Action TU1401 - Renewable energy and landscape quality (RELY), Coordinator Assoc Prof.Dr. Sokol Dervishi
2. COST Action IC1404 – “Multi-Paradigm Modeling for Cyber-Physical Systems”
Coordinator: Dr. Ilir Capuni

External Projects: Research Fellowships

- The institution offers great flexibility, financial support and short and long administrative leaves to the staff members in order to support their academic improvement
- Dr. Albana Halili- Invited Speaker in NanoBioscience Workshop (JRC, ISPRA Italy)
- Dr. Arban Uka- Research Fellowship funded by Epoka University and Holland Research School of Molecular Chemistry (HRSMC). Work conducted at Leiden University and Amsterdam University. (Summer 2015)

External projects- HORIZON 2020



Last academic year 2014/2015, the Department of Architecture applied in the Twinning Call as grand holder with the proposal name “Scientific conservation of build heritage” – H2020-TWINING 2015. Coordinator Dr. Frida Pashako.

Epoka has endorsed in the following consortiums as equal partners in the last Calls of HORIZON 2020-2015:

- “Making Europe a True Global Actor through TR-EU Innovative and Inclusive Integration”, H2020-REFLECTIVE-SOCIETY-2015, Epoka Coordinator : Erda Cani. Epoka budget: 230 825 Euro
- Disaster Resilience & Climate Change topic 3: “Mitigating the impacts of climate change and natural hazards on cultural heritage sites, structures and artefacts”, Epoka Coordinator Prof. Dr. Sokol Dervshi
- “TRansmitting EuropE- TREE ” - H2020-REFLECTIVE-SOCIETY-2015, EPOKA Cordinators: Frida Pashako and Valbona Koci
- “Innovative ways to make science education and scientific careers attractive to the young people” Horizon 2020 Work Programme, Epoka Coordinator : Dr. Elton Domnori, Erion Luga and Endri Stoja,. Epoka budget 159 965 Euro
- “Innovative approach to release and disseminate research results and measure their impact”, Horizon 2020 Work Programme, aplikant Fatih University,. Contact point RPO. Epoka budget is 238 570 Euro.



Thank you!
Wishing a fruitful meeting!