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**MAGNET**

Managerial And GovernNance Enhancement through Teaching

*<Analysis & Master-Plan to Address the  
Needs & Wants of Higher Education in the  
Western Balkans>*

*<D2.1>*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Analysis & Master-Plan to Address the Needs & Wants of Higher Education Pedagogy in the Western Balkans study contains data from the Ministries of Education for the entire country, thereby expanding the dataset generated from consortium partners' data used in the process of studying the existing situation in the process of writing this project proposal.

Partners carried out a Needs Analysis survey in their HEI to depict the state of play, as it is assumed that the partner countries represent a sufficient sample for understanding the general situation in the EU and especially the area of Western Balkans. Based on these, the final study report is elaborated to present the conclusions which will draw the frame inside which the work for WP3 will be carried out.

A significant purpose of this report is to identify best practices in University Pedagogy and define the problems or gaps in each participating Institution that the project aims to address.



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# Introduction

The Analysis & Master-Plan to Address the Needs & Wants of Higher Education in the Western Balkans report integrates the data and information gathered from the national reports on Higher Education Pedagogy situation of the participating countries in the Western Balkan region as well as the Needs Analysis Survey that was conducted in all participating Institutions.

Data comes from both, participating HEIs in the MAGNET consortium, as well as information provided by the partners and based on their respective Ministries for the entire country, expanding the dataset generated from consortium partners' data used in the process of studying the existing situation in the process during the period of preparing project proposal.

The report maps a wide variety of approaches in enhancing teaching and learning in the participating countries at institutional as well as in national level, that represents the different historical, political, and cultural background and current status of the region's states.

The data presented follows the alphabetical row of the countries of the participating HEIs in the MAGNET consortium.

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# 1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

## 1.1. STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Albania:** The Albanian approach to enhancing teaching and learning primarily focuses on the pre-university level. Teacher competencies are only appraised at the pre-university level. Key strategic documents and laws that shape this approach include:

- In the context of higher education in Albania, quality is primarily associated with the accreditation of study programs offered by higher education institutions. There is no national strategy specifically dedicated to teaching and learning in higher education. At best, the quality of teaching and learning is subject to evaluation based on standards and criteria that can be considered external to the daily classroom experience.
- According to Law 80/2015, the state's role is to assess the quality and functioning of higher education institutions through its agencies, whether independent or foreign, and make the process and its results public. This process is known as accreditation, which is an independent external quality assessment determining whether the higher education institution and its offered study programs meet specific quality standards in line with applicable legal and regulatory provisions.
- External quality assurance is overseen by Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL), which cooperates and coordinates its activity with European counterparts. External quality assurance for each study program includes three phases: first evaluation, periodic evaluation and comparative evaluation. The results of these evaluations are made public by ASCAL. The validity of each institutional accreditation and study programs related to it cannot last more than 6 years.
- "Internal quality assurance" is the continuous process of monitoring, evaluating, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of activity in higher education institutions, which is developed by the institutions themselves.
- According to the same law, at institutional level, one of the functions of the Academic Senate, is quality assurance and to create mechanisms for evaluating the teaching and research-scientific activity of the academic staff. In addition to the law, every higher education institution has a permanent committee for internal quality assurance. Scientific activity is also seen as a function of ensuring the quality of teaching. Students have the right to express their opinion about the quality of teaching. More specifically, this law has a chapter (CHAPTER X) on "Quality assurance in higher education".

- Standards for quality assurance are drawn up by higher education institutions, in accordance with the "Quality Code". "Quality code"<sup>1</sup> is a summary of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education.
- The Quality Code of Higher Education, in session III "Study programs, teaching and assessment", standard 12, states: the institution follows a clear policy for improving the quality of teaching. This standard contains three assessment criteria: 1. The institution is responsible for the quality of teaching and designs a regulatory/guideline framework in relation to it. 2. The institution has an auxiliary structure that promotes the continuous completion of teaching. 3. The institution qualifies/trains academic staff in the field of scientific research to help further improve teaching. For bachelor's study programs and those of the second cycle the main aim is to promote competence-based learning. Responsible structures and units support experimentation and development of new innovative teaching methods, continuously train academic staff to improve teaching skills and implement new methods.
- At the institutional level, none of the Albanian HEIs has any strategy for teaching and learning. In the best scenario, there are mentioned as part of institutional document for quality assurance.
- In higher education, the main achievements, according to National Strategy for Development and Integration (2015-2020), consisted in the implementation of the reformed 3-cycle studies. Despite the introduction of a number of standards over the years, expansion and development of the education sector proceeded in a fragmented manner.<sup>2</sup> According to the same document, forty-four private and fifteen public higher education institutions failed to meet the minimum requirements, as established in the law on higher education. Furthermore, the curricula are not adequately harmonized at the national level.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Bosnia and Herzegovina has very complex administrative governance in all sectors, but especially in education. The operational jurisdiction and financing for education is at the level of entities (Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and cantons within the Federation. The Ministry of Civil Affairs at the state level has a coordinating role, meaning that they are responsible for the strategic documents and international activities. In the period from 2013 to 2015 a joint EU/CoE project titled Strategic Development of Higher Education and Qualification Standards (funded by IPA) was carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of its fundamental objectives was to define priorities for higher education development in

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<sup>1</sup> Approved by decision No. 824, dated 24.12.2021. This decision repeals decision No. 531, dated 11.9.2018, in an effort to align it (partially) with the new quality code in higher education with the recommendation of the Council of Europe (2017 / C 189/03, dated May 22, 2017 "On the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and the repeal of the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of April 23, 2008, on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning". <https://www.asc.al/media/documents/legjislacioni/VKM%20Nr.824,%20date%2024.12.2021%20Per%20miratimin%20e%20Kodit%20te%20Cilesise%20se%20Arsimit%20te%20Larte.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Republic of Albania, Council of Ministers (2016). *National Strategy for Development and Integration, 2015-2020* [https://www.dap.gov.al/images/DokumentaStrategjik/NSDI\\_2015-2020.pdf](https://www.dap.gov.al/images/DokumentaStrategjik/NSDI_2015-2020.pdf) P. 25.

BiH after 2015. In the document called "Priorities for 2016 – 2026 Higher Education Development in BiH"<sup>3</sup> the Project Advisory Group of the Joint EU/CoE Project "Strategic Development of Higher Education and Qualification Standards" defined 7 strategic priorities for higher education in Bosnia and Hercegovina:

- P1 Good governance and management
- P2 Resources
- P3 Connection between the labour market and higher education
- P4 Qualification standards
- P5 Student experience
- P6 Internationalisation
- P7 Statistics

The education system lacks common standards for the different levels of education, as well as in teacher training and performance evaluation. Minimum standards in the field of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina include a measure that implies that a higher education institution has a defined human resources management policy with clear and transparent criteria for employing academic staff, duties, workloads, responsibilities, criteria for professional development, advancement, and professional development of academic staff, as well as mechanisms for monitoring work. This gives a reasonable assumption that higher education institutions should provide a mechanism for professional development and advancement of academic staff during the accreditation process. However, the recommendation from European Commission<sup>4</sup> in their report on improvement says that comprehensive teacher training focused on developing students' key competences should be provided and a systematic approach for application of the common core curriculum based on learning outcomes ensured.

The state strategy does not explicitly state teaching and learning. In Republika Srpska, although several documents touch upon the issue of the professional development of academic staff, it can be observed that the importance of professional development of academic staff, especially in terms of improving teaching competencies, is not fully recognized in legal acts. The Law on Higher Education does not recognize the obligation of professional development for academic staff, and this issue is left to universities and faculties to define through their general regulations. In Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina, the cantonal laws differ in treating these question, but they also don't support explicitly enhancing teaching competencies in higher education.

The professional development of academic staff is recognized in the Development Strategy of Education of the Republic of Srpska for the period 2016-2021, which states that "systematic training and development of workers in educational institutions and understanding the importance and value of self-assessment is needed." Strategic goals

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.mcp.gov.ba/attachments/en\\_Migrirani\\_dokumenti/Units/Education/Obrazovanje-strate%C5%A1ki/Prioriteti,e.pdf](http://www.mcp.gov.ba/attachments/en_Migrirani_dokumenti/Units/Education/Obrazovanje-strate%C5%A1ki/Prioriteti,e.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina%20Report%202022.pdf>

recognize that the system of their education is crucial for ensuring competent teaching staff, both in undergraduate studies and throughout lifelong learning. It is also stated that "staying at prestigious foreign universities is an extremely important condition for the professional development of academic staff and is necessary for advancement in teaching and scientific titles." Measures to achieve these goals include encouraging adults for lifelong learning by providing opportunities for continuous acquisition of new, functional, and operational knowledge through adult education and the possibility of requalification, upgrading, and continuous professional development throughout their working period.

In the institutional strategy of University of Sarajevo for the period 2019 - 2023 under the article Teaching, strategic goal is defined as "Promotion and support for excellence in teaching processes", meaning that in the area of teaching and student affairs, the main strategic priority is excellence in the teaching process and continuity in the "rejuvenation" of the academic community and the permanent strengthening of the abilities of academic and non-academic staff, the development of joint, international, attractive study programs, the modernization of the teaching and learning process, and the introduction of "research-based " of the teaching process. The new strategy for the period 2023 - 2027 will emphasize the quality of teaching process even further.

**Bulgaria:** The Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, Teaching, and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021 – 2030) (Strategic Framework)<sup>5</sup> has been prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with stakeholders. The Strategic Framework corresponds to the implementation of Bulgaria's commitments under international treaties in the field of human rights, including recommendations of the monitoring mechanisms of international organizations addressed to Bulgaria, insofar as they are in line with national legislation, within the framework of the reviews held under UN human rights conventions and the Universal Periodic Review.

In the period from 2021 to 2030, the Bulgarian education system is called upon to prepare for personal and professional fulfillment the generation of children and students who will enter active working age in the next five decades at least. In view of the development of society, this is an extremely responsible mission. It requires a clear and widely shared vision for education until 2030, with the main priority areas for development outlined, as well as the goals and measures to achieve them. The Strategic Framework is drawn up in sync with the perspectives set out in current strategic documents at global and European level, which outline the shared vision for high-quality, inclusive, value-based and lifelong education, teaching, and learning.

In implementing the objectives of the Strategic Framework, the following principles will be observed:

- Partnership and coherence – active interaction and synchronization between educational institutions, central and local government bodies, universities, cultural institutions, scientific organizations, social partners,

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/media/strategicheska-ramka\\_obrobuuchene\\_110321-1.pdf](https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/media/strategicheska-ramka_obrobuuchene_110321-1.pdf)



employers and civil society to achieve the goals set in the Strategic Framework;

- Continuity – implementation of the Strategic Framework regardless of the political, social, and economic context and guaranteeing purposefulness, consistency, and sustainability in the implementation of the policies;
- Innovation – formulating new approaches, measures, and activities to achieve the goals set in the Strategic Framework;
- Measurability, accountability, and sustainability of the results – ensuring long-term benefits/effects of the achieved results;
- Transparency and promotion of measures and results – the priority importance of education, teaching, and learning in the Republic of Bulgaria requires a high degree of public awareness.

**Greece:** Traditionally, in Greece, academic staff do not undergo formal training in teaching at university before entering academia, even though they are constantly faced with new academic challenges. Moreover, the changing context and the need to raise accountability and improve the quality of learning and teaching has recently become a major challenge among higher education institutions (HEI) in Europe and elsewhere. To respond to this need, HEI have implemented policies which resulted in practices for empowering academic staff trying to improve their teaching. At the same time, governments put in place favorable laws designed to promote more sophisticated and in-depth approaches to learning and teaching. This is the case in Greece, where Law 4009/2011 included a provision for the establishment of Centers of Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Greek universities. However, due to limited funding, only a small number of Greek universities had proceeded with the establishment of such centers. It was only in 2022 that the Greek Ministry of Education funded this initiative horizontally, including all the universities in the country. This came alongside with Law 4957/2022 where, although nothing new was imported, the CTLs were more formally established in the organization of HEIs, as autonomous services within the Institutions with internal regulations, funding, and specialized staff.

In the Greek setting, the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) was the first HEI that introduced the scientific discussion on teaching and learning at universities, supporting a student-centered methodology. In September 2016, a Symposium was held in the city of Alexandroupolis, organized by the DUTH /Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics/ Laboratory of Teaching and Professional Development of BioScientists, titled «University Pedagogy: Education and teaching in higher education, a terra incognita?». The papers published in the Proceedings (<http://panepistimiaki-paidagogiki.gr/praktika/praktika2016.pdf>) provided the core material regarding the basic principles for the Hellenic net of University Pedagogy which was the founding text of Basic Principles for the Hellenic Net of University Pedagogy, which was established during the Symposium<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://panepistimiaki-paidagogiki.gr/>

In the same vein, regarding University Pedagogy, in April 2019, the DUTH /Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics/ Laboratory of Teaching and Professional Development of BioScientists organized the 1st National Conference of University Pedagogy in Alexandroupolis<sup>7</sup>. According to Law 4009/2011<sup>8</sup> DUTH established the first Center for Teaching and Learning<sup>9</sup> in Greece and shortly after the University of Patras established the second CTL in the country<sup>10</sup>. These two HEIs in 2020 co-signed a Memorandum of Mutual Understanding and co-organised several educational activities, with the most important one the implementation of a survey on educational needs of the faculty members of these two HEIs -a research co-funded by the national and European funds (European Social Fund- ESF) through the Operational Program «Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020».

Quite recently, a new legislation regarding higher education in Greece<sup>11</sup>, article no.129 provides for the establishment of CTLs at all HEIs whose mission is to provide educational support services, with the aim to strengthen and continuously improve teaching and learning processes, in accordance with the modern trends in pedagogy, as well as the use of new technologies in teaching for the development of distance education. The project of establishing CTLs was co-funded by the Greek government and the European Union (European Social Fund- ESF) under the scheme of Operational Program Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020 framework. Until today 24 HEIs have already established their CTLs, utilizing this funding source (for a complete list of Greek CTLs, see <https://www.ltcnetwork.net/index.php/el/gradim-network-gr/gradim-webpages-menu-gr>).

Their mission is to (1) maintain high-visibility, and a campus wide concern about innovative active learning and teaching and (2) provide quality support for all teaching in HEI staff, from beginning instructors to experienced, highly regarded faculty members. However, despite Universities' concern about systems of quality improvement of their teaching and learning, their efforts have not always been as systematic as they could be nor as visible and accountable. Furthermore, conversations about learning and teaching improvement are not taking place at all institutions or within all departments at an institution. This led to the creation of the Network of CTLs in Greek Universities, which is committed to enhancing learning and teaching excellence and, additionally, it seeks:

- a) to promote a common assumption that excellence in teaching and learning is attainable with support, information, and practice,
- b) to coordinate Greek CTLs in their efforts i) to be flexible and visionary to meet changing needs and ii) integrating and applying advances in the cognitive sciences to learning and to curriculum development,

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<sup>7</sup> <http://panepistimiaki-paidagogiki.gr/>

<sup>8</sup> Government Gazette A' 195, Article 51

<sup>9</sup> Government Gazette/Regulation 2468/V.B'/24-6-2019 /<https://ctl.duth.gr/>

<sup>10</sup> Government Gazette/Regulation 1832/tr. B'/13-5-2020 / <https://ctl.upatras.gr/>

<sup>11</sup> Law 4597/2022, Government Gazette A' 141

c) to collect evidence for addressing the question whether student learning has been enhanced because of CTLs activities.

The Network of CTLs in Greek also aspires to establish a direction or a vision for learning and teaching, communicate that vision and align stakeholders (staff, students, and others), strategy (curriculum) and resources with it and help Greek CTLs, enabling, motivating, and inspiring staff, students and other key stakeholders to participate in and contribute to the realization of that vision.

## **Kosovo:**

**I. National level:** The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Information includes the Department of Higher Education which plans and supervises as well as develops plans and documents of policies, standards, and procedures that offer systemic solutions to the challenges faced by the Higher Education Education system<sup>12</sup>. Another important mechanism is the Kosovo Agency for Accreditation<sup>13</sup> which aims to support the development of quality in higher education institutions through the external evaluation process, and to ensure that the quality of higher education is at the level of international standards.

### **a. Education Strategy**

At the national level, one of the most important documents for education, including higher education, is the Education Strategy 2022-2026<sup>14</sup>. In the section that refers to Higher Education, "it turns out that many professors still use classical lecture techniques without any interactive involvement of students." In addition to the obvious shortcomings in teaching, the engagement of students in practical work is superficial and without any significant stimulation of critical and creative thinking. The large number of students within classes and groups does not enable an effective teaching process, does not promote critical and creative skills and does not increase interactivity with students". However, it is also concluded that some Higher Education Institutions have established offices, namely Offices for Excellence in Teaching, which have development strategies. In this direction, the University of Pristina, which has the Center for Excellence in Teaching, which organizes regular trainings with the academic staff of the University of Pristina, is the leader.

"Offices for quality assurance and academic development in HEIs have been established, but they function at different levels of quality and capacity. The staff in these offices will attend specialized training in order to support HEIs for the continuous review of quality metrics in their institution, as well as the completion and monitoring of the implementation of the requirements arising from the institutional and program accreditation processes. The evaluation reports of PSAK prove that there is little progress in the operationalization of Centers for Excellence in Teaching (CET) in HEIs. The CETs should be established and operationalized to continuously identify the professional development needs of the academic staff and to develop and offer

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<sup>12</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/category/arsimi-i-larte>

<sup>13</sup> <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/sq/about-us/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/strategjia-e-arsimit-2022-2026-action-plan/>

academic development programs and services, namely various training programs related to new teaching and scientific research methodologies."

One of the objectives in the Strategy for Higher Education 2022-2026 is related to the increase in quality, with special emphasis on quality of teaching:

**Specific objective 4.1: Increase the quality of higher education through the review of study programs, the advancement of academic infrastructure, the promotion of excellence in teaching and research, and the implementation of high standards of institutional assessment and study programs.**

In this document, among other things, it is argued that the "insufficient quality of study programs, insufficient academic infrastructure, limited capacities for quality assurance and professional development of academic staff, limited number of publications in international journals, and unfavorable academic staff – students ratio, necessarily raise the need to increase the quality of higher education through the revision of study programs, the advancement of academic infrastructure, the promotion of excellence in teaching and research, and the implementation of high standards of institutional evaluation and study programs.

#### **b. Kosovo Accreditation Agency**

In the Accreditation Manual of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency<sup>15</sup>, learning and teaching, is defined in Standard no. 6th, with points 6.1 to 6.9. Within these points, it is required that: the Institution drafts and approves policies and procedures applicable to all academic programs; observes the extent to which these policies and procedures are effectively implemented; ensures a system for all programs to meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, regular changes, and performance monitoring; monitors quality indicators; each study program is based on correlation between learning outcomes; student learning outcomes of each program must be in line with the National Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education; ensures the suitability and effectiveness of assessment methods for achieving the intended learning outcomes; ensures that teaching staff have adequate qualifications and experience suitable for specific teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies appropriate for different types of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness; ensures that teaching methods and environments are student-centered and that promote their motivation, reflection and engagement in the learning process. In addition, it is required that the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of programs are evaluated through students, student theses and employer evaluations with evidence from these sources used as a basis for improvement plans; it is required to set key performance indicators for all programs and data to be reviewed at least once a year by senior administrators responsible for academic affairs, the institution's quality committee and the institution's top academic body, with overall institutional performance reported in the governing structure; it is required study programs to be implemented, monitored

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<sup>15</sup> <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/ëp-content/uploads/2022/07/KAA-Accreditation-Manual-Updated-2022.pdf>

and validated through specialized internal structures in which efficient and innovative pedagogical technologies are developed.

**II. Institutional level:** Aspects related to learning and teaching are considered also at institutional level. In Kosovo, the University of Prishtina (UP) is the oldest public institution founded in 1970. UP, in addition to quality assurance offices, has also established the Center for Excellence in Teaching, which holds training for all academic staff. The UP is leading higher education institution in the country with the highest number of Faculties (14th faculties), academic staff, and students. The Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) was established as a collaboration with Arizona State University - USA in 2004. In 2007, in support of the TEMPUS project, the reactivation of the Center began. In this period, the governing council of CET was also founded. CET's vision states: "To become a recognized and respected center, at the regional level, for the advancement and modernization of the academic staff of higher education that will contribute to quality education. The University of Prishtina and other institutions of higher education in Kosovo meet the standards for excellence in teaching and learning in accordance with contemporary, innovative education that meets the needs of the labor market." CET's mission states: "To ensure continuous and sustainable advancement in teaching, in innovative services and in resources to promote the culture of excellence in teaching in the faculties of the University of Prishtina (UP) and in other higher education institutions (HEIs)." Similar centers have been established in several public universities: Mitrovica, Gjakovë, Prizren, while there is no data for private higher education institutions.

Although a Center for Teaching and Learning is to be formally established through the MAGNET project, the International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M) has been part of various pedagogical trainings offered to its staff. Most notably, all staff has received pedagogical training through the Erasmus+ CTPEC T2P project. Moreover, some individual staff members have received additional pedagogical training through other international institutions in forms of trainings, coaching, or fellowships.

**Montenegro:** In Montenegro the teaching and learning enhancement in HEI is recognized in national level, but there is need for further improvement into practices in the following period.

Strategic frameworks relevant for teaching and learning in Montenegro are presented in Figure 1. representing that Law of Higher Education is main regulative document, but measures, indicators and activities related to the teaching and learning enhancement were defined in the Strategy for development of Higher Education in Montenegro on the national level.

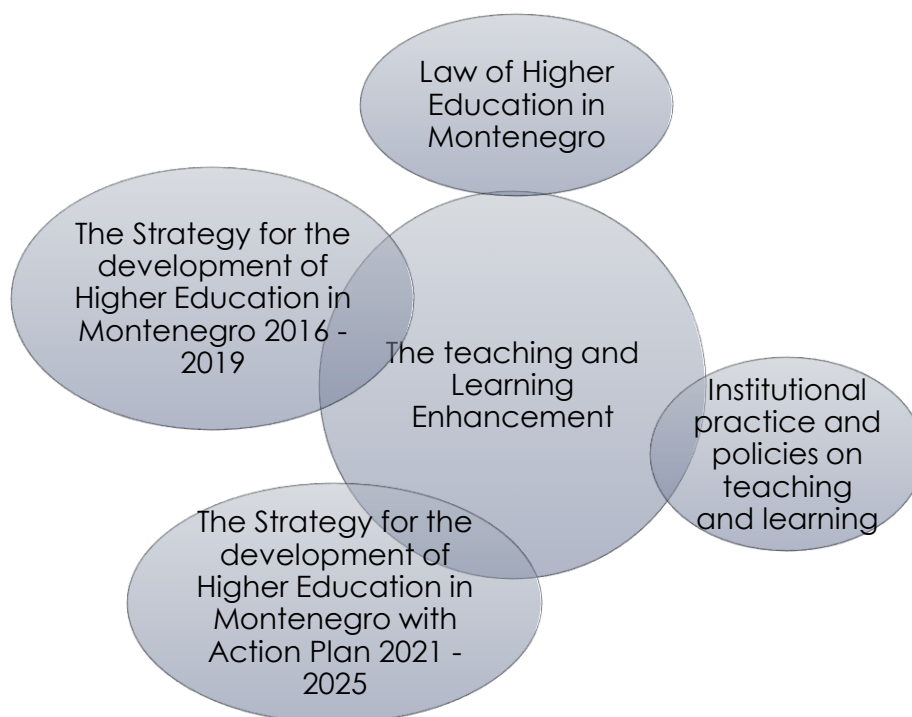


Table 1 gives a non-comprehensive overview of relevant strategic framework or policy documents for teaching and learning in Montenegro and comments on links of these documents:

Policy document	Relevance for Teaching and learning
<p><b>Strategy for the development of Higher Education in Montenegro with Action Plan 2016 - 2020</b></p>	<p>This document focuses on supporting the development of Higher Education in Montenegro which include the implementation of large number of measures and activities that contribute to the improvement of quality in higher education, strengthening the role of higher education in society development and producing competitive and competent human resources. The strategy also focused on changes in higher education institutions within the period 2016-2020 and their organization in terms of teaching, resources and strengthening the quality assurance system. Furthermore, the document includes key measures for each strategic objective –regard teaching and learning, stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the fact that most teachers, except those who have completed teacher training faculties, enter the teaching process unprepared for pedagogical work and with very demanding and heterogeneous population of pupils and students, as well as the rapid development of educational technology for the application of which most teachers are not sufficiently</li> </ul>

	<p>trained. For this particular reason <b>institutions are strengthening the needs for continuous professional development of teachers, so they would gain better teaching skills, be better prepared to apply modern information technology.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Professional development of a university teacher is imposed as a need and includes simultaneous acquisition and development of teaching skills, monitoring the development of scientific work and research engagement</b></li> </ul> <p>Action 1.1.3. in the Strategy stated - Encouraging the use of modern IT technologies in teaching process implementation (E-learning). To achieve this goal it is necessary to organize intensive training for academic and non-academic staff and students, particularly when it comes to the use of e-learning platform or LMS (Learning Management System).<sup>16</sup></p> <p>The Strategy also develope the guidelines for the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and for implementation.</p>
<p><b>The Strategy for the development of Higher Education in Montenegro with Action Plan 2021 - 2025<sup>17</sup></b></p>	<p>This document focuses on supporting the development of Higher Education in Montenegro with action plan 2021 – 2025. The Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Montenegro with action plan 2021 – 2025 relise on 4 main Strategies: <b>Guidelines of Development of Montenegro, Program of Economic Reforms, National Strategy for Sustainable Development, Directions of Development of Montenegro and The Smart Specialization Strategy (2019-2024).</b> The document includes key measures for each strategic objective – in regard teaching and learning, the strategy see as development of an innovative teaching approach stating: <b>Activity 2.2.6. Innovative teaching approach</b> - To encourage higher education institutions to transform their approach to education, the Ministry of Education, together with the Agency for Quality Control and Assurance, should create conditions that will supplement traditional teaching methods with an <b>interactive,</b></p>

<sup>16</sup> Government of Montenegro, 2016, Strategy for the development of higher education in montenegro (2016-2020): [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/montenegro\\_strategy\\_for\\_the\\_development\\_of\\_higher\\_education\\_2016-2020.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/montenegro_strategy_for_the_development_of_higher_education_2016-2020.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Government of Montenegro, 2021, The Strategy for the development of Higher Education in Montenegro with Action Plan 2021 – 2025: <https://www.gov.me/clanak/nacrt-strategije-visokog-obrazovanja-crne-gore-za-period-2021-2025>



	<p><b>collaborative and experiential approach to educational content.</b> The first step towards that goal would be the establishment of <b>Teaching and learning centers</b> in all institutions of higher education. These centers would primarily study, develop and support pedagogical innovations that would facilitate active and interactive learning methods (learning based on setting and solving problems, simulations, role-playing, peer learning, artificial intelligence for self-learning, etc.). By organizing workshops, the centers would train and affirm the development of innovative pedagogical approaches among the teaching staff.</p>
<p><b>The Smart Specialisation Strategy of Montenegro 2019 – 2024</b></p>	<p>The Smart Specialisation Strategy of Montenegro 2019 – 2024 issued by Ministry of Science Montenegro and has identified three strategic goals, namely: Development of human resources and research capacities; Improving international cooperation and networking; and strengthening synergy between science and economy. The strategic directions confirm the country's orientation to development based on knowledge, environmental protection, high employment level, productivity and social cohesion, with a focus on three interrelated development goals: smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. The Strategy identify higher education as one of twelve main pillars of competitiveness - Education and knowledge creation and point out the measure Support to innovative activities in the business sector which leads to Support for engagement of university graduates in the business sector in S3 priority domains: Sustainable agriculture and food value chain, Energy and sustainable environment, Sustainable and health tourism and ICT as horizontal priority.</p>
<p><b>The Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning (2020-2024)</b></p>	<p>The Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning (2020-2024) the strategy in include commitments across areas key to the development of entrepreneurial learning, such as curriculum, learning outcomes and practical entrepreneurial experiences, including education-business co-operation and teacher education. It creates important routes to building education-business co-operation and entrepreneurial career pathways, ensuring government and stakeholder engagement linked to economic development,</p>



	as a vital element of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Linked to economic development, strategy highlight the importance of entrepreneurial skills as an area of action, supporting national smart specialisation strategies.
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Furthermore, it is important to note that the evaluations of nine higher education institutions in Montenegro was done by the Institutional Evaluation Program (IEP) of the European University Association (EUA). The evaluations took place in the framework of the "Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness" (HERIC) project, implemented by the Government of Montenegro and financed from a World Bank loan. The evaluations were done during 2014 and follow up process in 2018. In overall IEP report, Commission stated: In Montenegro, several of the institutional evaluation reports acknowledged individual awareness about development among staff, and in one instance also among senior leadership." Nevertheless, during follow up period IEP recommend to all HEIs: "Taking part in the European discussions about innovation in teaching and learning and creating the conditions (e.g. the human and financial resources) for implementing such innovations in a systematic manner."<sup>18</sup>

**Republic of North Macedonia:** The national strategy for teaching and learning was primarily defined in 2018, following the establishment of the National Council and defining the education strategies in primary, secondary and higher education, for the period between 2018-2025. The action plan and the education strategy document can be found here:

<http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-ENG-WEB-1.pdf>

The national strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018-2025 is the basis of the activities of the institutions in the country in the field of education for the period till 2025. It builds on the current state in the educational system and aims at their gradual development according to the established priorities.

The main legal act for the sector is the Law on Higher Education (2008) which, among others, has provisions on harmonization of the country's higher education with the Bologna process and the European credit transfer system, as well as establishes a legal base for status of the teaching staff and student's mobility.

The Law on Scientific Research (2008) regulates relations in the sphere of scientific research and international cooperation, regarding to transfer of knowledge, research, training, and application. In 2013, a Fund on Innovations and Technological Development (FITD) responsible for coordination and strengthening of activities in the field of innovation, was established according to the Law on Innovative Activities. With

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<sup>18</sup> Institutional Evaluation Program (2018), Evaluations of nine higher education institutions in Montenegro System review report: [https://iep-gaa.org/downloads/publications/iep\\_me\\_system%20review%20report\\_2018\\_final\\_revised.pdf](https://iep-gaa.org/downloads/publications/iep_me_system%20review%20report_2018_final_revised.pdf)

a purpose to increase the access to higher education, three new public universities were established.

In 2013 a Rulebook was adopted, according to which all higher education institutions established their Boards for Cooperation and Trust with the Public (BCTP) aimed at ensuring quality by considering all stakeholders' opinions and recommendations for development of the institution. Academic development and mobility of Universities' teaching staff and students is improved in the context of the European Higher Education Area and international higher education environment.

**Serbia:** The strategy for the development of education in the Republic of Serbia has laid the groundwork for the development of pre-university and university education in the 21st century, in terms of improving the quality, scope, relevance and efficacy of education, for the purposes of creating the conditions for the personal and professional growth of every individual, as well as for the development of a society and state built on knowledge.

The current state of affairs, when it comes to the education of teachers, indicates a lack of implementation of measures relating to the basic education of teachers, the creation of a suitable system of professional development and appraisal of teachers' work, facilitating the hiring of teachers who have attained a suitable education for this career, and ensuring an environment where the importance of the teaching profession is recognised and its position is improved.

The professional development of teachers and associates in the course of their work is achieved through various programs for advanced training, for the purposes of gaining professional skills necessary for effectively functioning as teachers in a given educational institution, and for the professional advancement of teachers. Likewise improved is the legislative framework for career entry (a framework for internships, conditions for gaining and maintaining a licence), which positively impacts efficiency. The increase in efficiency is, among other things, aided by the Ministry for Education and Technological Development defining four priority areas for the advanced training of teachers in pre-university education. When it comes to the professional development of teachers, there is a lack of improvement in the system for the accreditation of advanced training programs, especially when it comes to program organisers (precisely defined criteria for who can be a program organiser and with which qualifications, including implementers), as well as in the precise definition of selection criteria for panel members working on the approval of advanced training programs, with a special emphasis on the qualifications of each individual member, to ensure a high level of quality for advanced training programs.

The analysed reports indicate that, in the education of teachers, standards of qualification should be developed, and the system for accreditation of basic teacher education programs should be improved. It is also noted that there is a lack of support for higher education institutions for the development, tracking and implementation of programs for the basic education of teachers and for ensuring support for university centres and/or faculties in the field of education to develop and implement programs for the professional education of teachers, for those who choose to pursue a career in teaching following their graduation. The conclusion is that support should be provided

for research and development in the methodology of teaching of specific subjects as interdisciplinary scientific fields, and that the concept of professional development should be reexamined in accordance with the completed analysis of the needs of systems and international trends in education.

## 1.2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Albania:** LOGOS University College has an Internal quality assurance unit. The Internal Quality Assurance Unit goals should be proactive and should evolve with regard to a development of a quality system for conscious, consistent and continuously programd activity, to improve the academic and administrative performance of the LOGOS University College.

Some of the functions of this unit that are related directly to the enhancement of teaching and learning are:

- To support the regular reflective practice by the staff of LOGOS University College, by teaching teams and academic managers;
- To evaluate the usage of modern teaching and learning methods in order to promote the model of the interactive student in the premises of LOGOS University College;
- Continuous improvement to respond to different needs through knowledge of new methods of evaluation and commitment;

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** On the state level, Agency for higher education and quality assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HEA)<sup>19</sup> is responsible for QA in high education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, due to the series of political obstacles, the Agency never succeeded to become a member of the ENQUA.

Agency is conducting institutional accreditations since 2014 and both partner universities in MAGNET University of Sarajevo and University of Banja Luka are accredited and re-accredited. The HEA adopted decision on the study program accreditation criteria in 2019 and study program accreditations started in this year.

Accreditation criteria for institutional and study program accreditation are based on the ESG and highlighting student oriented approach and accreditation focused on learning outcomes. The accreditation process stress importance of the enhanced teaching and learning, but the full impact could be evaluated only when study program accreditations become regular practice.

In the entity of the Republika Srpska, the issue of quality assurance is normatively defined at both the national (entity) and institutional levels (Agency for Higher Education of Republika Srpska, Council for Higher Education and Quality Assurance, public universities). At the entity level, this area is regulated by the Law on Higher Education of Republika Srpska (2020) and especially by the Law on Quality Assurance in Higher Education of Republika Srpska (2020), as well as a series of acts that operationally detail quality assurance matters. At the institutional level (Agency,

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.heg.gov.ba/>

Council, and higher education institutions), there are also regulations and procedures that govern the field of quality assurance. The institutional and normative framework provides assumptions that at the national and institutional levels, processes of internal and external quality assurance are developed through various mechanisms (e.g., reviews, cluster accreditations, individual accreditations). Specifically, the development of the quality of teaching and learning is primarily directed by Standard 3 within the document "Standards and Guidelines for Accreditation of Study Programs"<sup>20</sup>, which defines requirements and guidelines specifying different aspects of the quality of university teaching. If reports from expert committees (reviewers) identify deficiencies and weaknesses in terms of prescribed standards, requirements, and guidelines, "letters of expectation" are sent to higher education institutions and study programs, which include a set of recommendations for addressing the deficiencies and deadlines for their implementation. The entire process is transparent, and each step in the procedure is clearly defined, combining two principles in quality assurance: accountability and enhancement.

The cooperation between the two accreditation agencies, the one at state level and the one in the Republika Srpska, has improved. Bosnia and Herzegovina has to significantly intensify efforts to ensure a fully functional accreditation system of higher education institutions and in particular study programs.

Currently, the University of Sarajevo is in the process of preparing all study programs for program accreditation in which all faculties will have to report on the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning at the study program level.

**Bulgaria:** In recent years, the higher education system in the Republic of Bulgaria has undergone significant changes under the influence of a number of external and internal factors. There has been substantial progress in the implementation of many of the activities and the achievement of a large part of the Strategy's objectives, but there is still work to be done.

One of the effective measures to increase quality was the change in the way universities are financed through quality coefficients determined on the basis of objective criteria. This change was regulated by changes in the Higher Education Act in 2016. In 2020, approximately 60% of the higher education subsidy was determined through the quality criteria. This system needs continuous adaptation to the changing environment and improvement, e.g. to take into account the regional characteristics of the universities, but it showed its stimulating effect on the higher education system.

The level of scientific activity subsidy remains a negligible share of the student education subsidy. For this reason, the scientific activity subsidy has not become a strong enough motive for intensifying scientific activity in most universities. Private higher education institutions are not yet included in most forms of investment in scientific research, which represents an additional reserve for intensifying scientific and scientific-applied research in the country.

The improvement and further development of the Higher Education Rating System, which annually provides up-to-date and rich information on the state of each

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<sup>20</sup> [https://www.avors.org/attachments/article/306/Akreditacija\\_Standardi\\_SP\\_0806.pdf](https://www.avors.org/attachments/article/306/Akreditacija_Standardi_SP_0806.pdf)

professional direction in each higher education institution, also contributed to the improvement of the quality. Over the years, this information has outlined trends that serve not only as a guide for prospective students, but also for academic guides to make managerial decisions.

In 2018, the National Assessment and Accreditation Agency was re-admitted to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and entered into the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), which makes the universities accredited by it legitimate in the European educational space. The entry was made after assessment by the two institutions and reflects the accepted standards, guidelines, and quality assessment criteria as corresponding to the European ones. In this sense, the National Assessment and Accreditation Agency is also a European agency and has proposals for the accreditation of foreign universities – a possibility that was regulated by the amendments to the Higher Education Act from 2020. However, additional work is needed to develop and adopt an effective standardized quality assessment methodology that objectively outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the assessed higher institutions and educational programs.

Through the Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Program, funds were provided to support the qualification of educators, the updating of curricula, and the introduction of e-distance learning and digital resources. These activities contributed to increasing the training of educators, and hence the quality of education. On this basis, national programs are currently being developed to support educators, including in terms of their career development and professional realization. In order to improve the relationship between higher and secondary education institutions and increase the quality of profiled, professional, and specialized training, the possibility of concluding up to two agreements between state higher education institutions and state or municipal schools from the preschool and school education system was provided. Given the significant differences in the number of professional fields in different higher education institutions, this measure should be further developed in order to enable cooperation of larger higher education institutions with more partners according to the specifics of training.

The Credit Accumulation and Transfer System is documented at all levels, but its full capacity is still not used, due to the insufficient motivation of higher education institutions to ensure the recognition of credits received during student mobility. The Professional Fields and the National Qualifications Framework has not yet been updated, although considerable preparation has been made in this direction.

In order to maintain a high standard of quality in the process of training students at the Medical University of Plovdiv, it developed its own Quality Management System in accordance with the international Standard EN ISO 9001:2008.

The academic management of the University strives, through the introduction of a process approach in quality management, to achieve the integration of the Medical University of Plovdiv in research, as well as the transformation of the University into a factor in the development of the intellectual potential of the medical personnel in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The management of the Medical University of Plovdiv considers the process of ensuring and maintaining the quality of the University as a primary task that could guarantee stable strategic management, sustainability, and competitiveness of the institution.

**Greece:** External Quality Assurance / Accreditation of Study Programs in Greece is overseen by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE). Accreditation is an external evaluation process based on specific, predetermined, internationally accepted quantitative and qualitative criteria and indicators that have been published in advance and are in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). HAHE's main mission, as member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), is to assure that a program of study meets the minimum quality criteria as set out in the "Standards for Quality Accreditation of Undergraduate Programs" guide, where, in Chapter 5: Teaching Staff, is pointed out explicitly that the academic unit should:

- offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff;
- encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;

Both Greek Institutions, Democritus University of Thrace, and University of Patras, responded immediately to the requirements of the accreditation procedure and established their Center of Teaching and Learning within the first year after the accreditation decision.

**Kosovo:** The most important institution for quality assurance at the national level in Kosovo, is the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, which is an independent institution established based on the Law on Higher Education. KAA is responsible for internal and external quality assurance, including accreditation, re-accreditation, monitoring, validation and all other quality assurance processes in accordance with international best practices. This institution, through the Accreditation Manual, ensures the quality of the new process/accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs. The scientific research criteria for the carriers (leaders) of study programs are defined in this manual. According to the manual, the carrier of a bachelor program must have at least one scientific paper in the field of study indexed in WEB OF SCIENCES and/or SCOPUS, while the carrier of a master program must have at least two scientific papers in the field of study that are indexed in the abovementioned databases. Accordingly, these criteria have been also reflected in the process of academic staff advancement and quality assurance in higher education institutions in Kosovo, i.e. academic staff promotion is linked with the fulfillment of those publishing criteria.

**Montenegro:** Quality assurance has played an important part of the on-going reforms of higher education in Montenegro, corresponding to recommendations made in the context of the HERIC Project.<sup>21</sup> As a part of the developed Strategy of higher education, Montenegro established an independent quality assurance agency in 2017 - Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE). The main

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<sup>21</sup> Institutional Evaluation Program (2018), Evaluations of nine higher education institutions in Montenegro System review report: [https://iep-gaa.org/downloads/publications/iep\\_me\\_system%20review%20report\\_2018\\_final\\_revised.pdf](https://iep-gaa.org/downloads/publications/iep_me_system%20review%20report_2018_final_revised.pdf)

duty of ACQAHE is to manage the process of evaluation and certification of higher education institutions and study programs in line with European Standards and Guidelines of quality assurance in European Higher Education Area (EHEA).<sup>22</sup>

The national authorities provide questionnaires for students, which are often the main tools also for internal quality assurance. These questionnaires are focused on the quality of teaching, but noticeably do not cover the learning environment or the learning experience. Within the strategies and Law of Higher Education it is highly recommended that these questionnaires are modernised by the institutions and not drafted at the national level. Quality assurance at all institutions in Montenegro is dependent on the standardised students' questionnaires about teaching. Low response rates to these questionnaires is a systemic problem in Montenegro. In smaller institutions, more informal practices prevail – though student questionnaires are still used – with students having a much more direct access to teachers to discuss problems. The process of drafting questionnaires has the potential to promote more ownership among the students and teachers alike, making the questions relevant for all, improving response rates, as well as making it more likely that the feedback is actively used to enhance quality.

On the institutional level Quality Assurance System at University of Donja Gorica is based on **Almanac of Studies, which is the main strategic document**. It defines the basic system of values in teaching and research at UDG, used in defining standards for acting of all the participants in teaching and research process at UDG. The professor's equation  $S = z \cdot i^2$  represents the model of studying at UDG. Based on Almanac of Studies, and taking into account Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area, a set of criteria for evaluation of efficiency at UDG has been defined – these are Almanac indicators. The Quality System has been developed by a team that got instructions and framework by the Rector. The development of set of indicators is in accordance with recommendations and strategies on national level.

Another dimension of establishing a new system of quality assurance and development of information support to this system is continuous monitoring of statistical data about teaching, research, socially responsible and other processes at UDG for the purpose of a more effective management, in accordance with 7th and 9th standard for internal quality assurance of defined European standards of quality assurance. The establishment of a new framework of quality assurance, or better say institutionalization of already established practices and procedures (through the development of information system developed as a support of quality assurance system owing to institutional grant gained through HERIC project by World Bank) enables the following:

1. More efficient management of all teaching, research and other processes at UDG and its units;
2. Objective evaluation of efficiency and monitoring of results of individual UDG units in accomplishing their mission and established goals for development defined by the Almanac and other strategic documents;

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<sup>22</sup> Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Montenegro: <https://akokvo.me/en>



3. Establishment of an efficient system for systematization of data for effective institutional governance and for the needs of periodic external evaluations according to European standards for quality assurance

Rules and procedures by which evaluation and self evaluation of study programs are carried out are defined by Regulations for self-evaluation of quality of study programs, teaching, teachers' work and services at UDG. Presentations about all these have been delivered through **Round-table discussions for teachers, associates, employees and students.**

**Republic of North Macedonia:** The principles that define the quality assurance at national level are mostly derived from the provisions of the Law on Higher Education, which requires a self-evaluation report from every HE institution at a national level, as a basis for quality assurance and further enhancement of teaching and learning.

Apart from the self-evaluation report, the HE institutions define, within the framework of their action plans, their own mechanisms for quality assurance. Mostly, these mechanisms include student evaluations, conducted presently or to be conducted in the future.

Providing and assessing quality assurance in higher education, according to the Law on Higher Education, is a responsibility of the Board for Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education (BAEHE) established in 2011, which consists of 23 members.

At an institutional level, the institutional policies include several mechanisms of quality control, encompassing teaching, learning and services.

Quality management targets the effective development and monitoring of policies and procedures. To achieve these aims, the University focuses on Quality issues in its Strategic Plan and has a Quality Policy which underpins a functioning quality structure, with clearly defined roles and evaluative activities. The evaluation of achievements and the implementation of key priorities for improvement and measurement are carried out through Faculty and Departmental Action Plans, validated and monitored by senior managers.

All study programs provided by SEEU are accredited by the Accreditation and Evaluation Board of the Republic of North Macedonia. The quality of our curricula and assessment are regularly reviewed according to our institutional quality assurance procedures and through a cycle of external program review using international specialists. The University welcomes and positively uses both national and international evaluation and quality accreditations for continuous improvement.

Quality of teaching is one of the most significant factors in ensuring continuous improvement and development of the teaching and learning process. It is one of the main pillars on which every University is grounded and performs its function in society. There is a need to ensure that good practice is shared and staff is supported in the continuous development of skills, methodology, course content, assessment and use of technology. At the same time, the teaching staff needs motivation for even greater advancement in promoting the best teaching practices that facilitate learning and keep pace with international standards and guidelines.



At institutional level, the quality assurance mechanisms include self-evaluation reports, student evaluations and teaching observation. The process of teaching observation is described in more detail in the part related to teaching enhancement and career progression.

Apart from teaching observations, the SEEU quality assurance mechanism includes a thorough student evaluation, which is not mandated by state laws on Higher Education but considered an important process at institutional level. The student evaluation is conducted online, via Google Classroom which is used as a learning management system. Student anonymity is ensured, and the lecturers do not have a mechanism of identifying the respondents. The evaluation form consists of 15 Likert scale statements and comments, which examine student satisfaction with the course content, lecturer's teaching methods and communication, assessment and feedback, as well as digital learning platform use. The average results are calculated for each member of academic staff, impacting the income and career progression.

The University self-evaluation report, as mentioned before, is mandated by the Law on Higher Education, as a quality assurance system. At institutional level, it is prepared by members of the appointed committee. The self-evaluation report revises the challenges, the possibilities and the progress of each University unit (Faculty or Centre) and the University as a whole. The self-evaluation report is prepared once per year and published on the official website. The University self-evaluation reports, published since 2012 can be found here: <https://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/about/important-documents>

**Serbia:** Although significant strides have been made in the quality assurance system for higher education with the founding of the National Entity for Accreditation and Quality (NAT), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) elected to downgrade the then-KAPK in 2018, from a full member to a "probationary member", as shortcomings had been identified in the quality assurance and accreditation system for institutions and programs in the Republic of Serbia. For that reason, the NAT has prioritized the implementation of a new methodology for the process of accreditation and quality assurance in the Republic of Serbia, with the primary goal of achieving, as thoroughly as possible, internationalization, positioning in the higher education sector, gaining full membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and registration in the corresponding register.

### 1.3. NATIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL TEACHING PRIZES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Albania:** In Albania, in higher education, neither at the national nor institutional level (both, private and public), is there a practice of teaching prize.

In the case of pre-university education, Article 30 of the Law on Pre-University Education allows for the possibility of rewards. It states that a special budgetary fund can be used to reward teachers with outstanding achievements of public educational institutions. However, such a practice is rarely employed and lacks public attention, while is missing the definition of "outstanding achievements".

It's worth emphasizing that in public HEIs, teaching hours conducted beyond the legally stipulated norm are rewarded and academic staff often take on extra teaching hours as a mean to increase their income.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is an official national award for the best researcher. Also, at the University of Sarajevo there is the Rulebook for awarding the best researcher for each year according to the bibliometric criteria.

Unfortunately, there is no teaching prize organized at the national level or institutional levels. Procedures for awarding prizes for success in the teaching profession in higher education have not been regulated so far, nor have organized methods for promoting excellence in this field been established.

**Bulgaria:** Details on awards in education in Bulgaria can be found in site of National Inspectorate of Education (NIE): <https://nio.government.bg/конкурс-знак-за-качество-2/>

**Greece:** In Greece, there is only one National Prize awarded each year, the "Vassilis Xanthopoulos - Stephanos Pnevmatikos" Award for Excellence in Academic Teaching by the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH) starting in 1991. Although National, the Prize is established by a research Institution with a clear and concise concept: "The concept of excellence in academic teaching goes beyond the capacity for clear, comprehensible, interesting teaching while in class. It encompasses all the activities that open new scientific horizons for the student, provide inspiration and guidance through research, impart a sense of scientific values, and inspire a quest for truth".

Eligible for the award are all members of the educational and research staff of Greek universities, specialized scientists and other members of teaching staff, members of research centers with university teaching work, as well as those who used to hold any of the above posts (e.g., professor emeritus) in the past. However, the award will only be bestowed upon living persons. Potential awardees are proposed by one or more persons (e.g. teachers or students) that have personal experience of their educational work. Proposals must be documented and signed and are regarded as confidential and can be examined again along with the new ones in the following years.

The award follows a three-year subject cycle (Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Life Sciences). The Award is decided by a committee of distinguished academic teachers and scientists. The committee encompasses a wide range of sciences. All interested parties can be informed of the identity of the committee members. The committee evaluates the proposals, collating and possibly searching for additional relevant documentation.

- **Institutional Prize: UPAT**

The Senate of UPAT has already established the Outstanding Teaching Award to a member Faculty of UPAT. The award comes (a) to emphasize the primary importance which UPAT gives to excellent teaching in the undergraduate study programs and (b) to recognize those members thereof, who serve this ideal with ability and devotion. In addition to the teaching abilities, the awardee must be characterized by (a) excellent

academic ethos, and (b) contribution to the emergence of critical thinking in his/her students. The main evaluation criteria include the following:

- (a) The evaluation of the teaching work of the professor(s) by the students of the Department.
- (b) The written testimony of graduates who have attended one or more courses of the proposed.
- (c) The documented contribution of the proposed to the development of innovative teaching methods, but also in the use of modern educational technologies.
- (d) His documented contribution to the creation or the reshaping of existing courses that promote interdisciplinary studies and specializations.
- (e) Participation in the supervision of exceptional diplomas or theses and theses.
- (f) The transmission of independent and original thinking to undergraduate students, but also the active participation and guidance of students.
- (g) Active participation in open education processes, through speeches or courses of widely recognized quality, aimed at pupils, students, or professional scientists as well as the public.
- (h) The academic ethos, which is a self-evident condition, making the proposed worthy of being held up as a role model to the students of UPAT

- **Institutional Prize: DUTH**

In the framework of Quality Assurance System for Teaching at the Democritus University of Thrace (D.U.Th.), an active member of the permanent teaching staff of D.U.Th. is awarded every two years for his/her excellent teaching. The aim is to recognise teaching excellence, in order to adopt student-centred learning methods and to enhance the quality of teaching in Academia. The Selection Committee consists of the Vice Rector responsible for Academic Affairs (as Chairman) and the Deans of the Faculties of D.U.Th.

Candidates are nominated, after an open call, from a member of the academic staff or by at least two alumni who are aware of the teaching work of the nominee. Written testimonials from alumni who have taken one or more of the proposed university teacher's courses are considered favorably. Candidates must have taught for at least four semesters in the last four years. Selection criteria are:

- (a) The successful integration of research and teaching
- (b) The candidate's teaching broader impact outside of D.U.Th.
- (c) Outstanding guidance and support to students
- (d) The candidate's teaching effective and consistently high quality and originality in learning outcomes.
- (e) The use of appropriate teaching and learning resources and tools

**Kosovo:** There are no national and institutional awards for teaching/teachers in Higher Education. However, there is an Award at national level given to research/researchers. On the other hand, there is also an Award for teachers in the pre-university education system, which is given on the occasion of March 7 (Teacher's Day in Kosovo).

**Montenegro:** There is no specific teaching prize for individuals nationally, but they can be defined and developed by the institutions. Within stipend, tuition fees certificates, specialization award etc.

**Republic of North Macedonia:** Nationwide, a procedure and the criteria for awarding a teaching prize are to be established. There are no formal teaching awards awarded at national level at HE institutions. Institutionally, teaching awards were awarded on two occasions. The mechanisms for selecting the nominees included the overview of the data provided by the Quality Assurance Office, including teaching observations and student evaluations for the past semesters and the input from the Head of the Department/ Faculty management (Deans/ Directors). The prize was considered as a mechanism of recognition of the past efforts, incentive and motivation for future work.

**Serbia:** There is no institutional system for rewarding teachers for successes achieved in teaching.

## 2. TEACHING ENHANCEMENT

### 2.1. ORGANIZATION OF TEACHING ENHANCEMENT COURSES

**Albania:** All Albanian Public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that have a faculty of education also operate a Center for Lifelong Learning. These centers offer training programs which are also provided by private HEIs. All these programs receive approval from the Albanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University (ASCAP) and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) following an application process. The primary objective of these centers is to provide training programs for pre-university level teachers, rather than their own academic staff. For instance, the University of Gjirokastra “Eqerem Çabej”, a public HEI, operates a Center for Lifelong Learning<sup>23</sup> that exclusively offers training programs for pre-university education teachers. These training courses are fee-based, with the cost determined by credits (1 credit = 11 euros).

Some of the training modules scheduled for May-June 2023 included<sup>24</sup>:

- Comprehensive Strategies in the Classroom (2 credits)
- Identification, Prevention, and Intervention in Problematic Student Behaviors (1 credit)
- Preschool Education Curriculum Framework (2 credits)
- Designing Learning for Various Teaching and Learning Styles (2 credits)
- Project-Based Teaching and Learning (1 credit)

At the Marin Barleti, a private HEI for profit, there is a professional unit of comprehensive courses and trainings, under the name “Academy of Education and Teaching”, that offer training programs with the same focus and target.<sup>25</sup>

LOGOS University College, a private HEI not for profit, established its Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) as part of the MAGNET project. However, it is worth noting that various HEIs host conferences with sessions focused on teaching. Unfortunately, specific data about academic participation in these sessions are not readily available.

At Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës (UAMD), a public HEI, the Center for Continuing Education, which is a department of the Faculty of Education, charges individual fees for mandatory continuous professional training of pre-university education teachers, in accordance with Law 69/2012 “On Pre-University Education in the Republic of Albania” and related regulations. The national fee for one ETC (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credit typically ranges from 15 to 25 euros, but the Center for Continuing Education charges 10 euros per ECTS credit and 20 euros for 2 ECTS credits.

Different from the most of Albanian HEIs, at UAMD, special emphasis is also placed on internal trainings that each faculty organizes with academic staff. At the beginning of

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<sup>23</sup> <https://uogj.edu.al/category/III/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://uogj.edu.al/6366/#>

<sup>25</sup> <https://bttc.umb.edu.al/akademia-edukimit-dhe-mesimdhënies/>

every year, the Life Long Learning Center in the Faculty of Education, with the support of the Department of Pedagogy, drafts a work plan for the internal development of academic personnel. The training topics to be conducted are decided based on questionnaires developed by the Unit of Internal Quality Assurance at the Faculty of Education in cooperation with the Dean's Office (NjBSC Faculty). These questionnaires contain several questions directed at staff concerning the improvement of teaching quality and the need for training. Thus, in the academic year 2022-2023, this center conducted 6 training sessions attended by 118 academic staff members. The training topics were: Innovative teaching methods, Technological platforms in teaching, Ethics in teaching, Continuous assessment, Internal institutional organization, Equality and diversity. In addition, the academic staff also undergoes training within various international projects, such as Erasmus+ where UAMD is a partner. For our institution's new teaching staff, participation in these trainings is mandatory.

For the first time, the need for enhancing teaching in higher education in official documents can be founded in a report of OECD. According to it, Albania needs to ensure that initial teacher education programs are equipping future entrants with the student-centred approaches and other competencies they will need for the classroom.<sup>26</sup>

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Organization of teaching enhancement courses is upon authority of the universities and there are no common or obligatory pedagogical requirements for the higher education academic staff at the national level. Rectors' Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina launched the initiative for organization of teaching enhancement courses to build upon experience of the University of Sarajevo. For this reason, B&H are providing firstly information on experiences at the level of the partner universities, and then describe the Rectors' Conference initiative.

#### 1. University of Sarajevo - Organization of teaching enhancement courses

At the University of Sarajevo, there are the following major programs/initiatives for teaching enhancement.

- **TRAIN:** Since September 2013, the University of Sarajevo has been participating in the TRAIN training program (Training & Research for Academic Newcomers), which includes the implementation of modules for academic staff. Modules that implement include three broader thematic units: the educational process (designing the curriculum and teaching effectiveness), research (research methodology and information literacy, reference system) and development of communication skills (networking, teamwork, etc.). The program is organized by the Office for teaching and student affairs and all modules are conducted by university professors.

All modules are two-day, and a structure of compulsory and optional modules as follows:

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<sup>26</sup> OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Albania. Supporting teachers' professional growth. <https://doi.org/10.1787/d267dc93-en>. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/oecd-reviews-of-evaluation-and-assessment-in-education-albania\\_8814b2f7-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/oecd-reviews-of-evaluation-and-assessment-in-education-albania_8814b2f7-en)

**Mandatory modules:**

1. Basics of andragogic activity in higher education,
2. Didactics of higher education,
3. Curriculum planning in higher education,
4. Methodology research, scientific writing and presentation scientific research/artistic research results:
  - a. humanities and social sciences
  - b. natural, technical and medical sciences

**Elective modules:**

1. Communication and presentation skills,
2. Preparation of applications for financing and project management,
3. Entrepreneurial abilities,
4. Networking and teamwork.

The evaluation of the participants' achievements within the TRAIN program developed together with the program and from cycle to cycle it was the subject of thorough analysis in order to determine the most favorable system evaluation of the participants' achievements, taking into account the specifics of informal education. From the very beginning of the implementation of the program, it became evident that the interaction that is happening is within the area of education of inestimable importance for the exchange of experiences at the level of University and networking that ultimately results in very useful cooperation. The participants must fulfill three criteria would be entitled to receive a certificate: attendance, assignments and an integrated test. As a part of the implementation of the TRAIN program at the University of Sarajevo, certificates are awarded to the participants as a confirmation that the evaluation criteria have been met. The participation in the program is not compulsory, however it is encouraged.

The teaching process that takes place within TRAIN program through the implementation of modules is evaluated at the end of each cycle which represents summative form of evaluation. Advantages of this form evaluation in relation to the evaluation of individual module is that the participants have the possibility to teach from all modules at the end of the performance critically look at the TRAIN program as a whole and I find that TRAIN generally encourages teamwork work, involving all members of the group, and very useful discussions. It is extremely positive practice that should be maintained. Its to much there were also practical examples and exercises that significantly influenced the dynamics of teaching. A special aspect of the TRAIN program that participants like is the balance between subjects that they handle the teaching and research component. In this regard, the entire content of TRAIN is extremely applicable and relevant.

For summative forms that were developed for performance purposes and that evaluate TRAIN are used for the evaluation program in relation to:

- content of the TRAIN program (modules, application in daily work, relevance, etc.)
- teaching methods (used methods, connection of topics, suitability of materials, inclusion of participants, etc.);
- topics that should be additionally integrated into the TRAIN program (e.g. in the form
  - new/expansion of existing modules);
  - cycle organization (sequence of modules, time frame, information, etc.)
  - recommendations for improving the TRAIN program.
- **DIGIEDU** During the pandemic of COVID-19, all higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina had to move the teaching and learning in an online environment. The experiences from this period helped us design the project called DIGIEDU aiming to enhance the quality of teaching through the development of digital and pedagogical competencies of teachers. In the first phase, we conducted the needs assessment to identify the pedagogical and digital competencies required for university professors in order to effectively teach and support University professors, ITL students and primary/high school professors. The assessment was conducted through an online survey as well as a review of current literature on the subject. In total, 541 teachers and students participated in the research. The main topics for education were identified for further development:
  1. Designing a course in a digital environment - familiarization with basic terms, concepts and division of roles
  2. Advanced techniques in learning management systems (LMS)
  3. Working with learning management systems (LMS) - basic
  4. Familiarity with models of technology application in teaching (synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, personalized, etc.)
  5. Designing the course - aligning the work methodology with the learning objectives in the digital environment
  6. Application of digital technology for the purpose of evaluation and assessment
  7. Creation of digital learning objects respecting the principles of accessibility, visual design dr.
  8. Active involvement of students in online classes
  9. Planning and teaching in a digital environment
  10. Application of software applications as digital learning objects



The training related to Pedagogical-digital competencies of education staff and university students was conducted between January 2022 and March 2023, and 337 individuals participated in the program. We offered two types of education: traditional in class and online. The program included 10 in-class modules that were designed to provide hands-on training to education staff and university students on various digital tools and technologies. The modules covered topics such as online course design, the use of multimedia in teaching, and the effective use of learning management systems. The in-class modules were conducted by experienced trainers and were well-received by the participants. In addition to the in-class modules, the program also included 10 online modules. These modules were designed to provide participants with the flexibility to learn at their own pace and at a time that was convenient for them. The online modules covered a range of topics, including online assessment tools, social media for educational purposes, and the use of virtual reality in teaching. The online modules were interactive and engaging, with quizzes and discussion forums to encourage participant interaction and feedback. The online modules are available on the platform and are still in use by the participants ([www.digiedu.unsa.ba](http://www.digiedu.unsa.ba))

With significant support for the whole project period from UNICEF, the remarkable success and surpassing of targets achieved by this project have unequivocally demonstrated its immense potential and value. Building upon the solid foundation laid by this project, extending its principles and methodologies to future initiatives will undoubtedly yield remarkable results and pave the way for further advancements in related domains. By capitalizing on the valuable insights gained from this project, we can establish a robust framework that will drive innovation, foster growth, and unlock new opportunities in the future.

## 2. University of Banja Luka - Organization of teaching enhancement courses

At the University of Banja Luka, the issue of professional development of teaching staff is not regulated. However, during April and May 2023, a series of lectures and interactive workshops aimed at enhancing the pedagogical competencies of the teaching staff began, organized by the Faculty of Philosophy. Approximately 250 teachers and associates from the University of Banja Luka participated voluntarily, and they had the opportunity to learn from experienced professors and experts in various fields of University Pedagogy. They were able to enhance their professional competencies in specific areas of University Pedagogy.

Report on the Evaluation of the Professional Development Program for Improving the Teaching Process at the University of Banja Luka (Summer Semester 2022/23) suggest following: During the summer semester of the academic year 2022/23, the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Banja Luka created a program for improving teaching competencies and organized seven workshops on different topics. The target group were professors and research-teaching assistants at the University of Banja Luka, which employs more than 700 members of academic staff across 18 organizational units conducting 146 study programs across three cycles of study. The topics were selected based on an expert assessment of the needs of the teaching staff, and syllabi were created to ensure that the workshops lasted two hours and were practically oriented with as many practical learning outcomes as possible. The implementation included 12 lecturers (only one workshop was led by a single lecturer). Besides lecturers from the

Faculty of Philosophy in the fields of pedagogy (4) and psychology (5), one lecturer from each of the additional three faculties (Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Law Faculty, Faculty of Electrical Engineering) was also included.

The topics were as follows (in the order they were held):

1. Defining learning outcomes at the course and unit levels.
2. Encouraging higher levels of knowledge, creative and critical thinking in students.
3. Application of interactive learning techniques in teaching.
4. Rhetorical skills in teaching.
5. Communication with students.
6. Evaluation of student achievements.
7. Collaborative digital tools in teaching.

The University Senate, after reviewing the created curriculum, approved the execution of the program in the meeting held on March 30, 2023. Moreover, a decision was made that assistants were required to attend the training to meet the conditions for election to higher scientific-teaching titles. Partly because of this, the workshops were exceptionally attended. The first workshop had 120 participants, thus exceeding the standard capacity of the amphitheater where the workshops were held. Consequently, four of the next six workshops were held in two sessions with two groups each. Workshops were usually held on Fridays from 13:00, as this was a time when a higher turnout of participants could be anticipated. The number of participants per workshop ranged from 96 (Collaborative digital tools) to 159 (Communication with students).

The evaluation of the workshops was conducted via online questionnaires after each workshop. A link for the anonymous evaluation was emailed to participants along with additional materials accompanying the workshop. The evaluation consisted of three closed questions, where respondents on a four-point scale of responses ("Not at all", "To a small extent", "Moderately" and "Very") rated three different aspects:

Regarding the open responses, the most common comment was about the need to include senior professors as participants, who was assessed by the participants as neither knowing nor giving importance to the subject of the workshop. This was particularly emphasized for the workshops on Learning Outcomes and Evaluation of Achievements, where assistants (who made up the majority of participants) have far less of a role than responsible professors who decide both on the conceptualization of the subject and on evaluating students. The second most common comment pertained to the need for examples from the workshops to be more adapted to specific scientific-teaching fields. Although the lecturers tried to provide a variety of examples, participants emphasized that not everything is applicable in their areas (e.g. arts fields, subjects in natural and applied sciences). The third remark related to technical conditions, in the sense that the workshops were held in the amphitheater due to the large number of registered participants. Two workshops were held in one session, and a significant number of complaints about them were directed at the

excessive crowding and stuffiness of the rooms. For the other workshops, the complaint about technical conditions referred to the inadequacy of the room for workshop work. Finally, a large number of participants believed that it is necessary for the workshops to last longer to allow for the presentation of a larger number of practical examples. All in all, the program can be evaluated as successful; however, one should take into account the feedback and optimize the future endeavors based on it.

### 3. Rectors' Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina initiative - TRAIN PLUS

Guided and encouraged by successful implementation of TRAIN program at University of Sarajevo, the Rectors' Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina (rectors of 8 public universities in BiH) established the Commission for the development of the framework for professional development of academic staff. University of Sarajevo was appointed as coordinator of the process. Each university appointed two representatives to this Commission. The Commission started to work in June 2018. In September 2018 the King Baudouin Foundation provided financial support in the amount of 15.000 EUR for the implementation of the project "Enlargement of the TRAIN program at other BiH universities" which directly supported the work of Commission. This narrative report provides an overview of implemented activities.

Commission members of each public university selected their trainers for each module (8 modules) and in June 2019 at the University of Sarajevo UNSA trainers provided training of trainers for their colleagues from other universities in BiH. As a result of this activity a pool of trainers at BiH has been created. The training was attended by 53 representatives of 7 public universities who also received certificates for their attendance.

The intensive work of the TRAIN+ Commission members resulted in establishing the similar teaching enhancement programs at other public universities.

#### **Bulgaria: -**

**Greece:** In this paragraph we will refer to the two universities participating in MAGNET, namely UPAT and DUTH, since no data from other universities have yet been released. The programs organized at this stage by UPAT and DUTH have as their content a variety of subjects that are considered to be of interest to teaching staff, as revealed by the needs analysis study carried out within the MAGNET project and by previous joint research by UPAT and DUTH. They mainly focus on teaching methods and techniques, the role of teaching staff in universities, e-learning and its applications, the design and evaluation of a university course, the flipped classroom, or other innovations in teaching in higher education. They also focus on issues of concern to the academic community such as the impact of Artificial Intelligence and the use of ChatGPT in teaching.

In both universities, so far about 15% of the teaching staff have participated but participation rates are expected to increase significantly over the next three years due to the funding of the activities for both CTL from national and European funds. The programs have so far been evaluated by the participants based on the evaluation systems developed in both CTLs. On a 5-point Likert scale, the percentage of positive opinions on the various quality issues of the programs is over 85%, while on the question

whether they would recommend to other colleagues, almost all the participants (94%) choose the positive answer. These percentages indicate not only the satisfaction of the participants but also the penetration of this new institution in higher education. Obviously, important steps are still necessary to fully accept and integrate the new institution, such as stronger communication to all academic units and offering a wider range of programs.

**Kosovo:** The Center for Excellence in Teaching is functional within the University of Pristina. This center provides training for all academic staff. Also, the Center occasionally offers training to staff from other universities in the Republic of Kosovo. CTE offers two levels of training:

- First level (basic) – two days.
- Second level (advanced) – two days.

The Regulation for the advancement of academic staff of UP determines certification from the above training mandatory as part of the staff promotion process. Other public universities and some private colleges have also been following such an approach recently.

CET consists of a work regulation, office, and training hall with modest technological equipment. It also includes qualified and internationally certified trainers who offer the following modules:

- Basic Module: Theory of Learning; Learning Styles; Classroom and group management; Presentation Skills; Interactive techniques of teaching; Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Advanced Module: Activation Methods in Higher Education; Inquiry-based teaching; Action research; Syllabus Design; Develop Learning Outcomes; Assessment and Standards in Higher Education.

Although a Center for Teaching and Learning is to be formally established through the MAGNET project, the International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M) has been part of various pedagogical trainings offered to its staff. Most notably, all staff has received pedagogical training through the Erasmus+ CTPCIE T2P project. Moreover, some individual staff members have received additional pedagogical training through other international institutions in forms of trainings, coaching, or fellowships. In IBC-M as well, completion of a pedagogical training is a prerequisite for gaining whichever academic title during the academic staff promotion process.

**Montenegro:** UDG develops a very unique model of education and has a very clear research orientation, as well as a strategic orientation towards the development of enterpreneurial characteristic of its studies. As we have already pointed out, the primary aim of studying at UDG (based on the study model according to "Professor's equation"  $S = z \cdot i^2$ ) is to enable student - through acquiring knowledge and intensity of life during studies (where the latter, according to Professor's equation, is more important and enables conversion of knowledge gained into abilities) – to be able to follow the global processes in the world around him/her, to notice changes or change tendencies, as well as potential problems and conflicts that go together with these

changes, and to be able to accept the responsibility of solving such problems, either through creating products and services in their own companies (during the educational process we put an emphasis on this) or as an “expert on uncertainty”, who will offer his/her expertise to employers on the global market. These very individuals, having those abilities and the character of a researcher who sees changes and is ready to accept responsibility to manage such changes, are competitive on the global market.

Managing the vision of University development over the last seven years resulted in change and improvement of teaching process and curricula during 2015-2023. These changes reflected the tendency to apply all comments and recommendations by IEP into the teaching process at UDG, in accordance to existing internal capacities, external conditions, and, most importantly, the development vision of UDG. UDG is an entrepreneurial innovative university whose model of studies is based on Rector’s concept – Professor’s equation  $S=z \cdot i^2$ , by which the theoretical and philosophical character of studies at UDG is expressed.

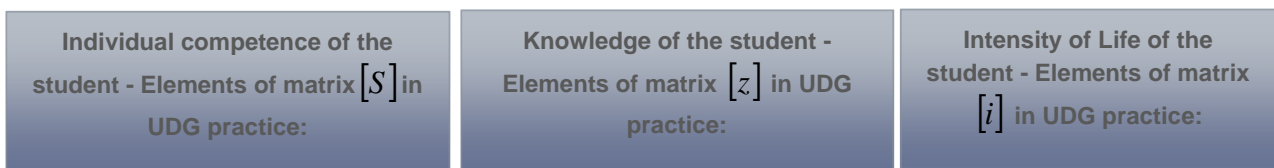
The process of organization and improvement of teaching at UDG, based on things mentioned above, will be shown in the following paragraphs through the activities done both at university and faculty level.

a) Innovative model of studies Professor’s Equation  $S=z \cdot i^2$

Elements of practical implementation of UDG education model are presented below in the form of vector model, which is UDG’s practical answer to the question: How the knowledge can be converted into individual competence and ability?

### Professor’s Equation as Vector Model

$$[S] = [z] \times [i]^2$$



The ability of an individual understood as the goal of education (not education for specific profession), emphasizes the need for education system which will “produce” (as an outcome) intellectual i.e. creative entrepreneurs. This means that each individual, no matter what he or she does, should be entrepreneurial and creative. Quick changes and moving from one job to another, rapid technology changes and globalization require the ability of an individual, not concrete knowledge for specific job. Global age emphasizes the importance of individual capacity to accept and overcome life challenges.

b) Round-table discussions with the aim of improving the quality of studies and teaching process at UDG

In the period from May 2015 to July 2023, 30 round-table and training conferences discussions with the aim of improving the quality of studies and teaching process at UDG were organized. The round-table discussions are intended for all students, professors, associates and employees at UDG, all those who are directly or indirectly involved in the teaching process at the University. The total number of attendants in 30 round-table discussions is 2839 students, associates and professors.

The chronological view (and explanations) of the round-table discussions held in 2015-2023 is shown below.

07.05.2015.	14.05.2015.	04.03.2016.	08.06.2016.	08.12.2016.	07.04.2017.	18.04.2017.	06.07.2017. 07.07.2017.	09.11.2017.	28.12.2017.
<b>Developing Entrepreneurial-Innovative Thinking at UDG (UDG Entrepreneurial spirit)</b>	<b>The 7th round-table discussion "How to understand the Almanac of UDG teaching"</b>  Topic: "How to further develop and improve the entrepreneurial-research function at UDG among the teaching staff"	<b>Rector's Hearing I</b>  Topic: "Interpretation and collection of ideas - mental pillars: the Almanac and " The History of Future"	<b>Rector's Hearing II</b>	<b>The 9th round-table discussion "How to understand the Almanac of UDG teaching"</b>  Topic: "New ideas and innovations in teaching at the UDG"	<b>The round-table discussion series "Education of Educators"</b>  Topic: Innovative pedagogy	<b>The 10th round-table discussion "How to understand the Almanac of UDG teaching"</b>  Topic: The vision of today's university after 2030 (by 2050)	<b>Cetinje discussions</b>  Topic: The review of the curricula of UDG study programs	<b>Education of teaching staff</b>  Topic: Quality system and ranking of universities, professors, associates and employees atUDG	<b>The round-table discussion: "My innovations in teaching"</b>  Topic: Presentation of innovation in teaching in the field of "Economics and Development"
<b>Number of attendants:</b>  25 professors, assistants and younger associates	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  212 students, professors, associates and employees atUDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  224 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  150 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  206 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  185 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  140 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  321 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  130 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	<b>Number of attendants:</b>  246 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG

05.07.2018.	01.06.2019. → 31.5.2020.	01.07.2020. – 31.12.2021.	31.08.2021. – 31.10.2021.	1.9.2022. – 31.1.2023.	26.01.2023.	08.02.2023.	27.04.2023.	17.05.2023.	21.06.2023. 5.7.2023. and 20.7.2023.
Cetinje discussions II  Topic: "The discussions on i2 in Professor Equotion"	The electronical discussion Idea of University in Future – in April 2020 was started online discussion about University after COVID	Seminar "35-"  Topic: "Psychophilosophical" The History of Future" for young associates	Training conference „University in the future of miracles“ – Superconneted, digital media and techno life	The development of experiment – innovations in teaching – Economics and Development  Topic: "New ideas and innovations in teaching at the UDG"	The round-table discussion series "Class as a work of art"  Topic: Innovative pedagogy	The round-table discussion series "Class as a work of art"  Topic: The cooperation with Arizona State University – Analysis and implementation new teaching methods	The round-table discussion series "Class as a work of art"  Topic: The review of the curricula of UDG study programmes and innovations in teaching	The round-table discussion series "Class as a work of art"  Topic: Operationalization of idea – Why class should ne as an work of arts	The round-table discussion series "Class as a work of art"  Topic: Innovative pedagogy, presentation of ASU repository
Number of attendants:  345 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  120 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  40 associates and employees and teaching assistants at UDG	Number of attendants:  175 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  450 students, 30 teaching, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  75 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  140 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  80 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  130 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG	Number of attendants:  246 students, professors, associates and employees at UDG



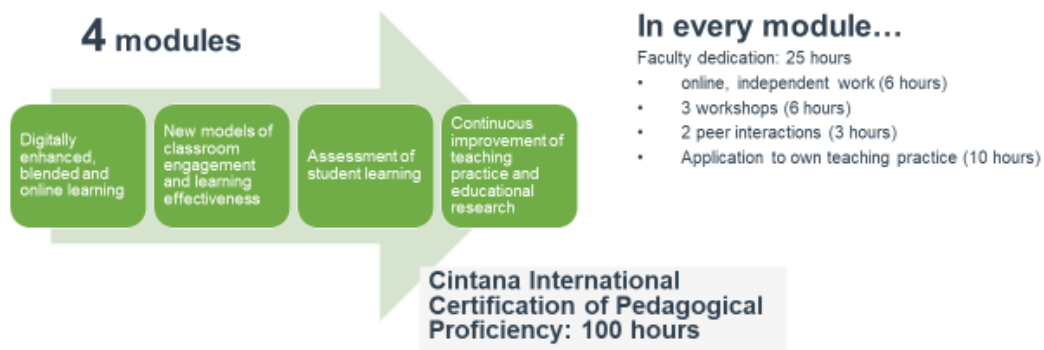
### c) ASU cooperation and online courses

Within cooperation with ASU<sup>27</sup>/CINTANA network UDG has participate in several activities related to the teaching enhancement. University of Donja Gorica, through its partnership with Arizona State University and Thunderbird School, collaborates in promoting Thunderbird 1 mil learners program in order to increase access to high-quality education worldwide as well as to encourage an overall contribution to society. The program consists of three pathways that learners can choose from depending on their level of education:

- Foundational Program – Content for learners with any level of education. It consists of 19 modules covering global entrepreneurship, digital, innovation skills, strategic planning, financial analysis and management, marketing, human resources, ethics, funding and access to capital, scaling for growth, and more.
- Intermediate Program – Content at the high school or undergraduate education level. Courses include management, accounting, marketing, big data, and entrepreneurship.
- Advanced Program – Content at the graduate education level. Courses include leadership, entrepreneurship and sustainable business, data analytics, digital marketing, and global accounting.

Furthermore, 42 professors and associates actively participating in Digitally Enhanced, Blended, and Online Learning - ULATINA/UDG - Cintana Faculty Development Program and now 46 UDG professors and associates participating in the new module 2 of the Cintana Faculty Development Program, about New models of classroom engagement and learning effectiveness interacting with professors and associates from Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (UAG), Mexico. The modules aims were to the principles of blended and online learning, recommendations and best practices for enhancing the digital components of teachers classroom, best practices for classroom engagement and assessment.

### Cintana certified pedagogical training



<sup>27</sup> <https://www.asu.edu/>

**Republic of North Macedonia:** At the national level, apart from the requirements defined by the Law on Higher Education, specific teaching enhancement courses which are designed to address teaching and learning at HE setting are not described or offered. Apart from undergraduate courses which address teaching methodology and pedagogy and which are part of the curriculum, there are no specific teaching and methodology courses which address University teaching and pedagogy requirements.

In the past, teaching enhancement courses at institutional level were provided through the Instructional Support Center (ISC), which provided assistance and instruction for the University lecturers. The pedagogical support was offered to the experienced lecturers and lecturers at the beginning of their careers alike. Sessions included practice and insight into classroom management, teaching approaches, continuous assessment, exam writing utilization of learning management systems and similar software, error correction, ways of delivering feedback and foreign language instruction. The courses and the support were provided by the coordinator employed at the ISC and other members of the University academic staff. The staff was encouraged and stimulated to participate through slight reduction of teaching hours, which can be a mechanism applied presently.

**Serbia:** There are no institutionalised courses for the advanced training of teachers at the university level.

## 2.2. NATIONAL-LEVEL OR INSTITUTIONAL REGULATIONS ON TEACHING ENHANCEMENT

**Albania:** There are currently no specific regulations in Albania regarding teaching enhancement, including mandatory training courses for entry-level teaching staff, policies for staff development.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The national framework law on higher education does not recognize the teaching enhancement as the condition for promotion. Therefore, the training courses are not obligatory in most of the public higher education institutions. However, the accreditation requirements stated by Agency for Higher Education and Quality Assurance in BiH include the need for professional development of teachers. The criterion 3 “Teaching and Learning” and Criterion 5 “Human resources” explicitly require the institutions to prove that they provide the opportunities and incentives for professional development of the teaching staff.

In Sarajevo Canton, the Law on Higher Education (36/22) in the article 140. state that higher education institutions are obliged to analyze the evaluations results of teaching and research academic work, as well as of the work of scientific research staff as part of the ongoing process advancements. Based on the analysis, a plan for quality improvement should be determined, i.e. professional training plan and program of all employees, especially from the domain of ethics, pedagogical methodical and digital competences with the aim of ensuring the quality of all business processes of the higher

education institution. The Statute of University of Sarajevo recognizes the right of teaching staff for continuous improvement. Even further, the Statute states that the quality of teaching is one of the criteria for academic promotion, which implies that teachers are in the position to secure the teaching quality measured by students' evaluations.

The University of Banja Luka's Development Strategy for providing a more favorable environment for research recognizes the need for ensuring opportunities for professional development and advancement. It's worth noting that the Development Strategy of the University of East Sarajevo also defines the policy of upgrading the teaching staff. Professional development and advancement of the teaching staff are regulated by the Code of Professional Ethics (Article 8), which obligates the academic community to continuously improve. However, it is noted that "faculties and academies do not have a defined plan for constant allocation of funds for scientific, professional, and pedagogical development, but funds are mostly allocated in line with available financial resources."

The goals related to the professional development of teachers at the University of East Sarajevo were set in the Development Strategy for 2007-2013, where the goal "Continuous improvement and development of material, human, and financial resources" is clearly stated. The success of its implementation is demonstrated by indicators such as the "Number of teaching staff participating in pedagogical improvement" and the "Number of teaching staff participating in professional development." The Strategy states that "organizational units and the University support scientific research and artistic work, as well as the professional development of the teaching staff, providing conditions for conducting scientific research and artistic activities in line with material and other possibilities. Often, these funds are insufficient, taking into account the University's budget and its own resources allocated for research and artistic work, which automatically implies the commitment of the state, or entity, to the improvement of research and the arts."

**Bulgaria:** The Medical University of Plovdiv

- develops and implements a policy to realize the interconnection between scientific research and training within the national and institutional context.
- guarantees the observance of academic freedoms and creates conditions for intolerance towards acts of discrimination and academic fraud. The institution has a Code of Ethics for Academic Unity and a committee ensuring its implementation by the academic community.
- Assures the effectiveness of the internal system for assessment and maintenance of the quality of education.
- has effective procedures for internal quality audit and an operational commission for coordination and control.
- creates the necessary conditions to support learning for the development of students by providing them with academic knowledge and skills that contribute to their educational growth and that can be applied in their future careers.

- is building an organization to maintain and develop modern methods and forms of teaching of the educational material. The training of the students responds to and adheres to modern methods of teaching and assessment of their achievements.

Medical University of Plovdiv collects and analyzes information about:

- the available educational resources, including financial ones, to support the career development of students and graduates as an irrevocable goal in the strategy of the Medical University of Plovdiv;
- the effectiveness of the methods applied in the internal system for assessment and maintenance of the quality of the training of the academic staff as well;
- the implemented procedures for approving, monitoring, and updating the study documentation and the study programs;
- student satisfaction with the quality of education, reported in regular surveys at least once a year.

**Greece:** In Greece, apart from the laws concerning the establishment and operation of CTLs (see 1.1), there are currently no other regulations for teaching enhancement. It would certainly contribute to the development of CTLs if there were legislative regulations, such as making it mandatory to attend programs before appointment or the next semester after appointment, as well as the inclusion of program attendance in the development of teaching staff. However, at UPAT and DUTH CTL have now been incorporated into the Regulations and Organizational Structure and the same is happening or will happen very soon in other Greek universities.

**Kosovo:** At the national level, the criteria and procedures determined by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency are valid in the teaching enhancement process. Whereas, at the university level, institutional regulations have been drafted which are in function of improving the quality of teaching. It is mandatory for HEI teachers to have followed some training courses in the field of teaching, either from international institutions or from within their respective institutions.

**Montenegro:** Conditions and criteria for promotion to academic titles<sup>28</sup> represent main act and regulations for all institutions in Montenegro. This Act defines terms and conditions for promotion to academic titles at Higher Education institutions pursuant to Article 11, Paragraph 2, item 3 of the Law on Higher Education ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", no. 44/14, 52/14, 47/15, 40/16, 42/17, 71/17, 55/18 and 3/19).

Into academic title shall be promoted a person who:

1. holds a PhD in philosophy for the field of promotion, i.e. higher education for artistic courses and courses related for them on the faculty and academy for fine, applied, music, dramatic arts and architecture (hereinafter: artistic discipline);
2. acquired tested pedagogical skills, defined by the Council of organizational unit of the highest number of course lessons, or field of the competition

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<sup>28</sup> Government of Montenegro, 2019, Conditions and criteria for promotion to academic titles

announced; meets requirements for promotion into title for an adequate scientific, or artistic discipline with international comparability, in accordance with this Act; 4) has recognized artistic works, for disciplines of art.

When it comes evaluating pedagogical competences of a candidate, the selection criteria are:

- Scope and content of knowledge about the field in which the candidate performs pedagogical work;
- Ability for modern organization of educational work and success in conducting lectures, exercises, seminars, consultations and exams;
- Professional, pedagogical and methodological value of scientific papers, textbooks and manuals;
- Mentoring in preparation of graduate, specialist, master's and doctoral theses;
- Evaluation of overall pedagogical work.<sup>29</sup>

At University of Donja Gorica one more condition has set on institutional level regarding conditions and criteria<sup>30</sup> – Dedication to innovative model of studies at UDG, including: participation in teaching enhancement, participation in research and innovative project proposals, new innovative teaching approach „My innovations in teaching“ etc.

**Republic of North Macedonia:** In the Republic of North Macedonia, the Law on Higher Education defines the rules of appointment of the teaching staff and the rules of promotion and reappointment. The Law defines the criteria, the requirements, and the status of entry level teaching staff, as well as requirements for academic promotion and academic appointment. Those rules include relevant education and defined GPA in both graduate and undergraduate studies, mandatory research output for tenured academic positions, define journals where the research output is presented (Web of Science and impact factor journals) and recommend service to the discipline and professional activity. At undergraduate level, the entry-level teaching staff must complete the following courses: Teaching Methodology, Pedagogy, Educational Psychology (names of the courses can vary depending on the faculty programs).

At institutional level, the criteria for promotion recognize the priorities of:

- Teaching
- Research
- Service
- Applied professional activity

However, there is a gap between the requirements applied for the entry-level teaching staff and the experts in the field (Medicine, Health Sciences, Architecture), who teach at certain Faculties. For this category of experts, there are no requirements in teaching expertise and teaching requirements. For most of the staff in this category, professional development sessions and teaching support is needed. One way of providing this

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<sup>29</sup> Government of Montenegro, 2019, Conditions and criteria for promotion to academic titles

<sup>30</sup> UDG, 2022, Conditions and criteria for promotion to academic titles

support is establishing an institutionally based Center for Teaching and Learning. HE Institutions, according to provision stipulated in the Law and the Statute of the University for delivery of its operation, the university can set up university medical center, university outpatient facility, university sports center, university veterinary clinical center, agricultural university institutes, research centers and continuous education as lifelong learning and other forms of units' activities). The University having units of various study fields as a part of its structure can structure the units of the university in university fields, divisions, or other forms. For the purposes of delivery of activities, the university can sign contracts or agreements with university medical centers and other facilities, if necessary, for the provision of higher education or with other facilities and companies whose work is significant to the work of the university and for the completion of primary applied work.

**Serbia:** The professional development of teachers and associates in primary and secondary education in the course of their work is achieved through various programs for advanced training with the goal of gaining professional skills that are required for effectively functioning as teachers in a given educational institution and for the professional advancement of teachers, and the legislative framework for career entry (conceptualizing internships, conditions for gaining and maintaining a license) has been improved. However, it is evident that there is a lack of a well-developed system for advanced training of university teachers in the fields in which they should be advancing their pedagogical and methodological skills.

### 2.3. TEACHING ENHANCEMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION

**Albania:** In all Albanian HEIs, the academic staff engages in teaching activities, scientific research, support services for the development of the higher education institution, counselling for students and/or other different activities.

Law No. 80/2015 'On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in The Republic of Albania', defines the categories of academic staff: a) professors; b) lecturers; c) assistant-lecturers. Career advancement for academic staff in HEIs is based usually on the above categories, where professors - a title that can be obtained based on some specific achievements - are at the top of the hierarchy.

While in the public HEIS the above rule is almost impossible to break, the private ones are more flexible regarding career progression, depending on the institution's culture, policies and visions. But even at the second case, career progression rarely is based on teaching enhancement. Usually, if one is holder of a PhD obtained abroad is evaluated as a valuable asset to advance in Albanian higher education system.

In general, there is not any relevance between teaching enhancement and career progression. The Albanian higher education system is not designed to support professional growth of academic staff as good teachers.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** At University of Banja Luka, in the analyzed documents and regulations that govern the procedure of advancement in academic ranks, there is no link established between teaching enhancement and career progression.

Although the quality of teaching was not recognized at University of Sarajevo as criterion for career advancement, the new Law on Higher education, article 131 states that additional criterion for career enhancement are also teaching abilities and contribution which includes: work with students on extracurricular activities (introduction of free modules, preparation of students for participation in competitions); innovating the teaching process (introduction of new forms of teaching and learning, new subjects, involving students in the research, encouraging students to present publicly); participation in activities for improvement of teaching and strengthening of intercultural experience students (analysis and study of the teaching process, participation in seminars/round tables/professional education and conferences related to this topic); additional load in the teaching process that regarding mentorships for final work/art work presentation, participation in final defense commissions; participation in internal program evaluation and participation in the work of the commission for revising the study program. The operational criteria are in the process of designing at the University of Sarajevo and in the future, the quality of work with students will be important part of career enhancement for teaching staff.

**Bulgaria:** The professional development of the educators at the Medical University of Plovdiv leads to a promotion.

**Greece:** Generally, there is no relation to career progression either in the legislation or in the tradition of higher education in Greece. Only when applying for a tenure position, someone could provide the statistical results of the teaching evaluations from students that were conducted inside the institution, but there is no evidence that these evaluations really make a difference.

**Kosovo:** HEIs in Kosovo have individual regulations and procedures that aim to facilitate staff promotion and career progression. Considering the requirements of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, most HEIs have aligned, at least in broad lines, institutional requirements with those of the Agency. Furthermore, they enhance those processes also through various international collaborations, projects, and best practices. In general, there has been huge development in recent years in terms of criteria set for academic staff to be employed or promoted. Compared to some years ago, most criteria are much more demanding which, in turn, require higher quality from academic staff.

**Montenegro:** As is mentioned above UDG teaching enhancement and career progression are based on the Almanac of studies - concept of philosophy and vision of UDG studies that involve new teaching methods and development of both students and teaching staff. This material aims at changing the classical model of studies  $S = P + V$  with the new model  $S = z \cdot i^2$ . Some principles in Almanac of studies:

- The changes in teaching methods are influenced by technological changes and changes in demand. Still, the generation gap and changes in the modern world must be taken into consideration by any UDG professor and teaching assistant. UDG teaching methods must be adjusted to modern generations of students, since every generation has characteristics of its own!
- How to understand the differences between generations and implement them in UDG teaching model? Think about why it is detrimental for development of UDG to think that younger generations are becoming worse? (In order to



overcome such mindset, set of seminars will be organized in guidance of neuroscience experts. For self-education, I recommend the book of Eric Jensen "Teaching with poverty in mind".)

- It also requires professors to innovate constantly. All lectures and teaching methods must be adjusted to new generations! The classical approach of not changing the method of teaching and structure of lectures might be fatal for the quality of studies! Each lecture must be the story for itself! Each lecture must be unrepeatable! Therefore, routine must be avoided! Students must be provided with examples from life.

Furthermore, every professor and teaching staff at University of Donja Gorica is encouraged to participate in conferences, seminars, workshops and training with aim of teaching enhancement and career progression. Also, both, teaching and career progression are recognized as relevance not only for personal development but institutional development. Professors and teaching assistants are encouraged to participate in exchange programs, mobilities involving both training and teaching, especially in the framework of Erasmus+ international credit mobility signed between UDG and other institutions. Last year, almost 60 teaching staff (professors and associates) participate in exchange program.

**Republic of North Macedonia:** At institutional level, the University seeks to support effective staff performance. For academic staff, this is done through procedures such as an annual learning and Teaching Observation Scheme\_and the active consideration of students' opinions from the Student Evaluation Survey. All staff members are required to take part in the individual Staff Evaluation Process\_and all these processes are linked to an integrated Staff Development Procedure offering internal and external opportunities for professional development and training.

One of the mechanisms ensuring teaching enhancement is teaching observation, conducted through the Quality Assurance Office and the Faculties management staff. The observation process is defined by a set of rules, which is generated by the Quality Assurance Office. The focus of the observation process is:

- to support the University's strategic aim of continuous improvement and development of learning and teaching
- to provide evidence of quality assurance at Faculty and University level
- to ensure that the students' learning experience is of the highest quality across each faculty.
- to acknowledge excellent practices and facilitate the sharing of good practice across each Faculty and the University
- to support continuous, individual staff development
- to inform other relevant processes, such as the annual self-evaluation process, and the Rule on Promotion to Academic title
- to ensure that learning and teaching is inclusive and addresses the University's commitment to equal of opportunities.



- to serve as a motivational tool for increased staff performance through its role in the University Rank and Remuneration (R&R) Policy.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the career progression at institutional level depends directly on the teaching enhancement and teaching performance. The Rule on Promotion to the Academic Title and the appendices of the form require the data from Teaching Observation. Apart from the rule, the remuneration policy for the academic staff includes the average grade from the teaching observation.

**Serbia:** The professional advancement of teachers in the Republic of Serbia at all levels of education is achieved in accordance with legal requirements, according to specific levels and types of advancement, with a commensurate pay increase.

## 3. OBSTACLES AND ENABLERS FOR ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 3.1. OBSTACLES

**Albania:** The main obstacles can be summoned under this list: limited resources, outdated curricula, pedagogical approach, faculty development, access to technology, Competition, Demographic Changes, Accreditation and Quality Assurance, Language Barriers and Lack of Research Culture. But, while it is easier to address the obstacles, we cannot affirm with the same security the ways to overcome them.

#### **Obstacle No 1: Limited Resources**

*Many HEIs in Albania face budget constraints, which can affect their ability to invest in modern teaching methods, technology, and faculty development.*

Suggestions for overcoming: Increased funding from both sides of this sector, public or state HEIs and as well of the private (for public or state HEIs those funding are the obligation of government); seeking partnerships with international organizations; exploring alternative revenue streams (for example, partnership with industry or other sector of economy that are suffering the absence of human resources).

#### **Obstacle No 2: Outdated Curricula**

*Some HEIs may still have curricula that do not align with current industry needs, creating a theory-practice gap.*

Suggestions for overcoming: Addressing this challenge requires regular curriculum reviews and collaborations with industry to ensure relevance, encouraging faculty to incorporate real-world case studies and practical applications into their courses; improving the professional practice: there is a lack of investments by universities to have more staff as supervisor for student practice. Usually, the Albanian HEIs apply the "expert approach", that is to appoint one of the academic staff for a group of students, as supervisor. In general, the role of expert consists only in making an evaluation at the end of the practice, not helping in improving experiential learning techniques, setting personalised objectives or integrating theory with practice, because usually this course is under evaluating by the departments (Nathanaili, 2023).

#### **Obstacle No 3: Pedagogical Approach**

*There may be a traditional mentality that teaching methods and pedagogy are necessary only in pre-university education.*

Suggestions for overcoming: Encouraging a culture of continuous improvement in teaching methods, which includes faculty development programs and establishing of CTLs, can help overcome this obstacle.

#### **Obstacle No 4: Faculty Development**

*A lack of emphasis on faculty development can hinder the adoption of innovative teaching practices.*

Suggestions for overcoming: HEIs can overcome this by investing in training and workshops for faculty to enhance their pedagogical skills, mostly through CTLs; share best practices and success stories among faculty to inspire change; develop online learning platforms and resources to support remote and blended learning.

#### **Obstacle No 5: Access to Technology**

*Insufficient access to modern technology and digital resources can limit the effectiveness of teaching and learning.*

Suggestions for overcoming: HEIs should prioritize technology infrastructure improvements and ensure that both students and faculty have access to necessary tools.

#### **Obstacle No 6: Competition**

*Competition from other European and global HEIs can be a challenge.*

Suggestions for overcoming: Albanian HEIs can focus on improving their ranking through research and international collaborations.

#### **Obstacle No 7: Demographic Changes**

*A declining youth population can lead to reduced enrollments, impacting funding.*

Suggestions for overcoming: HEIs should consider diversifying their offerings, such as offering online courses or targeting international students to maintain or increase enrollments; implement scholarship and incentive programs to attract and retain students.

#### **Obstacle No 8: Accreditation and Quality Assurance**

*Ensuring that HEIs meet international quality standards is crucial for attracting students and resources.*

Suggestions for overcoming: Overcoming obstacles in this area involves accreditation processes from well-known foreign agencies and ensuring continuous quality improvement; strengthen internal quality assurance mechanisms for continuous improvement, with a new shift, from identification to improvement.

#### **Obstacle No 9: Language Barriers**

*In a globalized education landscape, language proficiency is essential.*

Suggestions for overcoming: HEIs can address this by offering language support programs and increasing the availability of courses in English or other widely spoken languages for academic staff.

#### **Obstacle No 10: Lack of Research Culture**

*Developing a strong research culture can enhance teaching and learning quality.*

Suggestions for overcoming: Encouraging faculty to engage in research and providing incentives for publication; promote a research-oriented mindset among students through mentorship and research opportunities.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

- Lack of a legal framework regulating professional development in higher education.
- Insufficient theoretical knowledge and practical training models for University Pedagogy for teaching staff.
- Reduced interest of the teaching staff in professional development, particularly for teaching enhancement.

**Bulgaria:** Higher education does not provide a system for regular quality assurance.

**Greece:** Certainly, the main obstacles are linked to the institutional deficits and the lack of institutional penetration, but also to the financing of their activities. As mentioned, funding from national and European funds was very crucial and helped CTLs to grow. However, any interruption of funding will be the biggest obstacle for the near future if it happens and will also cancel any positive developments so far.

**Kosovo:** Main obstacles in implementing strategic plans related to the learning and teaching component are as follows:

- There should be additional financial incentives for quality increase
- Some HEIs have a high level of centralization, meaning there are difficult procedures in place which hinder achievement of results within optimal time.
- Some HEIs might need additional academic and administrative staff to ensure higher quality and improved teaching and learning. This implies also limited possibility to monitor and evaluate the implementation of strategies.
- There is still no specific strategy at national level which concretely determines the criteria and indicators for advancing the teaching process.

**Montenegro:** According to some recommendations and comments on national level, *the lack of efficient governance structures* is an obstacle to serious attempts to introduce innovative approaches, bringing in the latest methods and ideas from the rest of Europe.

Another obstacle is related to Pedagogical Approach - there may be a traditional mentality that teaching methods and pedagogy are necessary only in pre-university education and suggestion can be to encourage a culture of continuous improvement in teaching methods, which includes faculty development programs and establishing of CTLs, can help overcome this obstacle.

Furthermore, a lack of emphasis on faculty development can hinder the adoption of innovative teaching practices. HEIs can overcome this by investing in training and workshops for faculty to enhance their pedagogical skills, mostly through CTLs; share

best practices and success stories among faculty to inspire change; develop online learning platforms and resources to support remote and blended learning.

E-learning exists in some institutions, but the use of digital platforms and similar in teaching and learning is very uneven or non-existent, also due to lack of infrastructure and the small size of many institutions. In this regard, there could be a role for government to support institutions by coordinating and investing in the appropriate infrastructure.

Another obstacle is the student questionnaires for quality assurance, which are reported to be narrowly focused on teaching and do not include the whole of the learning experience. This is an issue, as the situation is favorable for such a leap forward, as there is a broad European discussion and innovation at the same time as the Montenegrin national system is undergoing reform.

**Republic of North Macedonia:** Nationwide, higher education institutions are confronted with several obstacles. Higher education does not provide a system for regular quality assurance. The procedure for recognition of higher education qualifications is complex. Usually, the procedure takes a long time period to be completed and is burdened with many administrative requirements. In general, the Higher education system is overregulated, which affects the autonomy of universities.

The Government and the universities fail to offer sufficient opportunities for professional improvement of the teaching staff, as well as for academic career development and mobility, and financial support for research; universities lack young staff due to the legal framework and failure to provide funding for new job positions; the student-professor ratio is high.

In the field of Higher education there are many challenges that are still affecting this sector:

1. Insufficient quality of certain faculties and universities is accompanied with non-functioning system of accreditation and evaluation of universities; some study and subject programs do not match the labor market needs; there still occur such phenomena as plagiarism in the students' and professors' papers; the system of practical training of students is improper. The Board of Accreditation and Evaluation fails to provide efficiency and functionality. Due to those reasons it will be required for this body to be reformed by means of establishing separate bodies for accreditation and for evaluation of higher education. With regards to accredited programs, there is a lack of efficient mechanisms to allow for assessment accreditation criteria compliance, following the period of granting accreditation of a study program. In this aspect, there is a lack of processes for monitoring the criteria compliance between the periods of granting accreditation and re-accreditation.
2. Higher education does not provide a system for regular quality assurance. A model of state exam was introduced. This model was against the principles of higher education and directly affected academic freedom of universities. Even in the procedural aspect, this model was inefficient and contradictory, and thus difficult to implement. Consequently, this state exam model was never implemented.

3. The procedure for recognition of higher education qualifications is complex. Usually the procedure takes a long time period to be completed and is burdened with many administrative requirements.
4. In general, the Higher education system is overregulated, which affects the autonomy of universities. At the same time, university/faculty management is insufficiently participatory, with a high decision power concentrated at the management structures, and students' participation in the university (faculty) governance is still nominal and mostly formal. The National Council as an autonomous expert body has been foreseen in the existing Law on Higher Education, however it has not been established yet and currently there is a lack of any body that would carry out its' tasks. The need for an autonomous and expert body whose powers would be in the area of higher education quality assurance, assessment, development and promotion is pressing. In addition to establishing this body, there is a need for strengthening its structure and powers in the area of funding higher education.
5. For the purpose of stimulating students, the National Council should have powers in adoption of references and criteria for stimulating talented students and awarding scholarships to students with above average achievements in their studies.
6. There should be more focus on opportunities for cooperation among universities, without drawing divisions between public and private universities, unlike the case of the Rector Conference of Public Universities and the Rector Conference of Private Universities as a form of cooperation. In this aspect, it is necessary to strengthen the role of the Inter University Conference, and to clearly define powers the Inter University Conference has as part of the process of reviewing and harmonizing issues of common interest.

**Serbia:** In the education and professional development of teachers at the University of Arts in Belgrade, there has been considerable development of teaching methodologies (especially at the Faculty of Music and Faculty of Fine Arts). Said methodologies could be additionally improved by organizing lifelong learning programs (LLL programs) and programs based on psychological, pedagogical and methodological science. It would also be very useful to organize education to improve the digital skills of teachers at the faculties in a way that would keep pace with modern trends in education policy and pedagogical practice. If suitable conditions can be provided, teaching can also be greatly improved by programs rooted in interdisciplinary principles, which would be developed and conducted through cooperation between faculties.

### 3.2. FACILITATORS

**Albania:** In order to make the difference we need to foster a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning; to encourage faculty and administrators to prioritize and value pedagogical excellence. We have to invest in ongoing professional

development for faculty; provide workshops, training programs, and resources to help academic staff to stay updated with best practices in teaching.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

- Strategic documents point to the development of university study programs based on outcomes and the promotion of competencies.
- Participation in international projects and the exchange of best practices and theoretical approaches effective for professional development are encouraged.

**Bulgaria:** Medical University of Plovdiv creates the necessary conditions to support learning for the development of students by providing them with academic knowledge and skills that contribute to their educational growth and that can be applied in their future careers.

**Greece:** Development so far is perhaps the main facilitator. As mentioned, a significant proportion of the teaching staff have participated in programs and of these most of them are also requesting new programs. So, the idea of training of teaching staff has already spread in the UPAT and DUTH community. The actions by the rectorates and senates of the two institutions are also important, as they have fully integrated CTLs in the institutions following the provisions of the law.

**Kosovo:** Main facilitators include:

- KAA determines the criteria that must be met in order to accredit a program, where quality in teaching is also part of them.
- Academic development and mobility of Universities' teaching staff and students is improved in the context of European Higher Education Area and international higher education environment.
- HEIs are involved in a large number of international projects which enable learning from best practices and experiences in various areas, including also the implementation of interactive teaching strategies.
- Autonomy of universities is guaranteed by law.
- Cooperation of HEIs with the key stakeholders has been strengthened.
- Efficiency of use of financial resources allocated to Higher education has been increased.
- Sustainable support to, and effective targeting of, research and innovations are in place.
- Most HEIs have created strategies which, if properly implemented, are good indicators for raising the quality of teaching. Teaching is one of the strategic priority areas in Kosovo HEIs' institutional strategies.

**Montenegro:** The main facilitators are:

- Taking part in the European discussions about innovation in teaching and learning and creating the conditions (e.g. the human and financial resources) for implementing such innovations in a systematic manner on institutional level.

- Broaden the concept of practical learning beyond internships with companies and develop project-based learning with a wide set of social partners including NGOs and local/national authorities

At University of Donja Gorica – institutional level:

- Innovative model of studies and continues improvement of teaching methods,
- Continuous trainings, workshops, round-table discussion about innovation in teaching.
- Participation in EU projects in the framework of teaching and learning enhancement process.
- Cooperation with ASU/CINTANA network and more 13 universities in network – using ASU repositorium.
- Relevance on enhancement of teaching and career progression of professors and teaching assistant.
- Improvement of infrastructure.

**Republic of North Macedonia:** Apart from the challenges identified in Higher Education, several aspects which facilitate the progress of HE can be identified:

- Effectiveness of the learning process in universities is increased through better focus on every student.
- With the establishment of bodies such the Accreditation Board, minimum requirements towards the content and outcomes of Higher Education are established.
- The opportunity for selecting the study subjects has been extended by means of replacing the university list of optional subjects, including an opportunity to add optional subjects from other university units.
- Information on graduates' further educational and/or employment pathways, incorporated in the self-evaluation reports allows to take evidence-based policy decision.
- Academic development and mobility of Universities' teaching staff and students is improved in the context of European Higher Education Area and international higher education environment.
- The Higher Education system is continuously informed about the up-to-date demand on qualifications and skill needs to be used for Higher Education policy development.
- Availability of higher education for those with physical disabilities is improved.
- Autonomy of universities is guaranteed.
- The National Council for Higher Education has been established, its structure and powers have been strengthened, particularly regarding funding of higher education. For the purpose of stimulating students, the National Council has powers in adoption of references and criteria for stimulating talented students and awarding scholarships to students with above average achievements in their studies.



- Functional participation of students in the decision-making processes at the university and faculty levels is enhanced. Student organizations are based on the principles of democratic participation of students and transparency in their operations, and student bodies (student assemblies) are part of the universities and their units, thereby being functionally integrated in the activity of universities and their units.
- Cooperation of Universities with the key stakeholders (business community, BAEHE and University Senate) are strengthened;
- Efficiency of use of financial resources allocated to Higher education is increased;
- Sustainable support to, and effective targeting of, research and innovations are in place.
- Efficiency of use of financial resources allocated to Research and Innovation is increased; 5.3. Scientific research is in line with the contemporary needs of technology development

**Serbia:** Overcoming the aforementioned issues is greatly facilitated by the fact that the University of Arts in Belgrade is home to resources that could be employed in the further education of teachers, especially university teachers. This mainly refers to existing expertise in the fields of methodological science, pedagogy and psychology which could be incorporated into the development and implementation of specialised courses, seminars, webinars, etc.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS – NATIONAL REPORT

### 4.1. SWOT ANALYSIS

Country/ Institution	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Albania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The updated legal basis in accordance with the European one and the code of quality in Higher Education that forces institutions to work to increase the quality of teaching.</li> <li>• Participation in international organizations and in the EHEA</li> <li>• ICT skills in the use of technology in effective teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Public higher education institutions, which have faculties of education, also have centers for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEI administrators are seen as weak links in the system. The need is to strengthen and improve the education management system with particular emphasis on building the systems to include establishing of CTL.</li> <li>• The absence of quality researchers: Albanian universities are known for the absence of quality research and innovations.</li> <li>• Institutions has indicators to assess quality, but no a definition of quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of blended learning courses appropriate for pedagogues at different level of their carriers to provide training in specific methods of teaching and learning.</li> <li>• HEIs can expand their global reach through collaborations, enhancing quality and diversity.</li> <li>• The rise of online learning presents an opportunity for HEIs to improve accessibility and flexibility.</li> <li>• Participation in European Union initiatives can lead to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory-practice gap between curricula</li> <li>• The inherit mentality that teaching methods and pedagogy are necessary only in pre-university education system.</li> <li>• Other European and global HEIs pose stiff competition for students and resources.</li> <li>• A declining of youth population has led to a reduction of enrolments, impacting funding.</li> <li>• Most of the HEIs from the private sector has the status of for-profit.</li> </ul>

	<p>teaching and lifelong learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rich tradition of Albanian Education system that enhances teaching and learning quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The projects supported by the EU are usually for capacity building.</li> <li>• Many HEIs face financial constraints, affecting infrastructure and resource allocation, including the operation of CTLs.</li> <li>• Inequality (HEIs located in Tirana versus those in other cities): There's a disparity in quality assurance implementation across HEIs, with some lacking adequate resources for improvement.</li> <li>• Foreign Language is a barrier for most of the HEI academic staff, impacting their overall experience. The Albanian HEIs has not a language policy, to give study programs a more</li> </ul>	<p>improved funding and quality enhancement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a national ranking can attract more international students and faculty.</li> <li>• MAGNET project, with the MOOCs and BALKANETUP.</li> </ul>	<p>Accreditation processes from well-known foreign agencies have a high prize, usually not afforded from the local HEIs.</p>
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		<p>international profile by considering the option of English as a medium of instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate mentoring system during professional practice, which deepens the gap between the skills that the study program provides and the requirements of the labor market (Nathanaili, 2023).</li> <li>• Mobility programs in frameworks of Erasmus+ programs are usually one-direction: the number of students enrolled in Albanian HEIs that goes for a certain period in a host foreign HEI is larger than vice versa.</li> </ul>		
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<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina : University of Sarajevo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already developed professional training programs for teachers</li> <li>• Teachers who have completed the training are spreading a good word</li> <li>• An established system of educators</li> <li>• A significant number of teachers at the university who can teach modules in the field of education improvement.</li> <li>• A university development strategy covering learning and teaching.</li> <li>• The statute of the university that recognizes the establishment of the Office for the Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively low interest of teachers in professional training in the area of the teaching process</li> <li>• Absence of a system for evaluating participation in professional development programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in international projects aimed at developing teachers' skills and new study programs.</li> <li>• An accreditation process that requires evidence of the institution's professional development</li> <li>• Continuous student evaluations that contribute to increasing awareness of the importance of professional development</li> <li>• Contribution to the implementation of the reform within the institution of higher education</li> <li>• Establishment of a uniform approach to professional development</li> <li>• Carrying out self-evaluation in order to improve teaching and research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of legal obligation for professional training or sanctions</li> <li>• Absence of support from management/management structures of the faculty (absence and reorganization of duties)</li> </ul>
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	<p>Development of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of established education by other universities and international community</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Bosnia and Herzegovina : University of Banja Luka</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening new international collaborations through various international cooperation programs and projects that have intensified in the recent period.</li> <li>• Spatial capacities with significant potential (underutilized) and a large number of complementary study programs.</li> <li>• There is a significant number of trained personnel, but there is a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of spatial capacities (in terms of an adequate number of offices, laboratories, and rooms for undisturbed scientific work) and continuous and adequate funding for the development of scientific staff capacities.</li> <li>• More coordinated interdisciplinary programs that expand the educational capacities of the University.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Above all, the significant spatial capacities that would enable further development of the University. Maximizing spatial resources would increase the number of teaching and scientific staff, as well as the students themselves.</li> <li>• Establishing new institutes and scientific units aimed at the professional development of teaching and scientific staff. This would open up opportunities for the sustainable development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient and discontinuous funding</li> <li>• Violation of university autonomy</li> <li>• Weak collaboration with faculties and the response of academic staff within the new center</li> <li>• The only possible risk is that "some," and it can be assumed who, perceive it as competition.</li> <li>• However, true academics must gather around science and education, which have ethics at their core, they must</li> </ul>

	<p>need for new staff to meet the requirements of developing new study programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing new research bases, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska, contributes to increasing material resources.</li> <li>• Teaching staff are inclined towards personal and professional development.</li> <li>• Academic personnel already possess deep expertise in their fields, which can serve as a foundation for further development.</li> <li>• Teachers have practical teaching experience,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most significant limitations lie in financial resources and infrastructure deficiencies. Additionally, there is a growing shortage of teaching staff.</li> <li>• There is a lack of dialogue, academic discourse, coordination, motivation for improvement, and efficiency, etc.</li> <li>• Some other universities have a higher degree of autonomy and better cooperation and coordination of activities with the relevant Ministry. They exhibit more initiatives.</li> <li>• Resource limitations stem from a lack of funding and the</li> </ul>	<p>of the University, which would continually produce its own personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensifying project activities, projects, and programs of international and regional cooperation would facilitate greater mobility of academic staff and increase the University's reference and strength.</li> <li>• There is a need to fight for the autonomy of faculties and universities, to respect the principles of the Magna Charta Universitatum. Space should be given to freedom of thought, speech, research, criticism, etc. The selection should focus on the best, not on obedient followers, sycophants, and subordinates.</li> </ul>	<p>gather around the TRUTH, regardless of the fact that in these turbulent times, the truth is suppressed with all forces and means, and they don't let it come to light.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be more sessions, roundtable discussions, workshops, conversations, agreements, not just the formal adoption by faculty and university bodies. We must fight for substance, and certainly, the legal form and procedure must be respected. So, less monologues of leaders and more conversation and dialogue of all academic staff.</li> <li>• Literally and uncritical implementation of the Bologna process, without respecting the legacy and specificity of education in the Republic;</li> </ul>
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	<p>which can contribute to knowledge transfer to younger colleagues in their daily work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic institutions have their own human resources necessary for development.</li> <li>• Many teachers are motivated to improve their competencies to provide better education to students.</li> </ul>	<p>politicization of its allocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortcomings in the process of professional development of teaching staff are due to politicization and nepotism to a significant extent during academic advancement.</li> <li>• There is insufficient effort being made regarding the professional development of teaching staff (professors and associates).</li> <li>• There is no organized and continuous professional development for teaching and educational staff.</li> <li>• Teachers often have many responsibilities, including teaching,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is necessary to strengthen the work of the Association of University Teachers and Associates in Banja Luka as a free, thinking, and autonomous association.</li> <li>• Organizing more frequent gatherings, workshops, and roundtable discussions on all the topics you have focused on.</li> <li>• Greater autonomy and encouragement of a creative approach among teachers and educators.</li> <li>• The development of new technologies and tools for learning offers an opportunity to improve education, for example, in the context of online education.</li> <li>• The possibility of international exchange and collaboration with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of adequate training programs and insufficient quality of the offered training programs</li> <li>• Inadequacy of training programs for rapid changes in technology and educational methods</li> </ul> <p>Reduced financial resources allocated to professional development programs</p>
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		<p>research, and administrative tasks, which can hinder their professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of systemic institutional support through legal regulation for the professional development of teaching staff.</li> <li>• Lack of an evaluation and rewards system.</li> <li>• Financial resources for professional development are very limited.</li> <li>• Some teachers resist changes and the implementation of modern educational achievements.</li> </ul>	<p>other institutions can impact the development of teaching competencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive changes in national education policies that encourage the professional development of teachers.</li> </ul>	
<b>Bulgaria</b>				

<b>Greece</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth operation of CTL for over one and a half year</li> <li>• CTL's experience in project implementation</li> <li>• Sufficient scientific expertise in higher education pedagogy</li> <li>• Positive views from the majority of teaching staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient integration into the academic tradition</li> <li>• A significant proportion of teaching staff with not positive views on the issue</li> <li>• Sensitivity of the institution on funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible new funding</li> <li>• Participation in European projects such as MAGNET</li> <li>• Training of new members of the teaching staff on an annual basis</li> <li>• European policies focusing on student-centered learning in higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible interruption of funding from the State</li> <li>• Non-inclusion of teaching staff training in career progression</li> <li>• Changing priorities at higher education level</li> </ul>
<b>Kosovo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional Department of Higher Education within MESTI.</li> <li>• Functional Kosovo Accreditation Agency.</li> <li>• Existence of Education Strategy 2022-2026.</li> <li>• Institutional regulations in function of quality: pedagogical courses mandatory for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for a more specific strategy at national level emphasizing and specifically targeting higher education.</li> <li>• Financial obstacles.</li> <li>• Centralized HEIs (at least some)</li> <li>• Insufficient policies at national level specifically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New generations of teachers can bring new approaches of teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Good opportunities for a greater number of academic staff and quality assurance officers to get involved institutional, national, and international trainings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New laws at national level might have implications which determine new policies in various spheres.</li> <li>• Frequent changes of governance at institutional and national level.</li> <li>• Limited opportunities for academic staff to get need-specific trainings in pedagogy.</li> </ul>

	<p>academic staff career advancements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional quality assurance offices within HEIs.</li> <li>• Teaching and learning centers or some form of teaching and learning training within HEIs.</li> <li>• Strong inter-institutional cooperation through international projects.</li> <li>• Increased student and staff mobilities.</li> <li>• Satisfactory autonomy level of HEIs.</li> <li>• Readiness of a number of academic staff to be involved teaching trainings.</li> <li>• Good regulations at institutional level for</li> </ul>	<p>targeting the quality of teaching and learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some cases, need for more academic and administrative staff.</li> <li>• Sometimes, complex professional development procedures.</li> <li>• Lack of an award for teaching in the higher education system.</li> <li>• Insufficient financial support at national and institutional level for professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Faculty of Education at University of Prishtina started a PhD program in pedagogical fields 2 years ago and will start a double degree with University of Ljubljana from the academic year 2023/2024. These graduates can get employed in different HEIs in Kosovo who might contribute to the respective Teaching and Learning Centers.</li> </ul>	
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	quality enhancement in teaching.			
<b>Montenegro</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UDG Innovative model of studies</li> <li>• Almanac of Studies</li> <li>• Curricula that focuses on capabilities rather than just knowledge of students</li> <li>• Innovative study programs recognised by the domestic and international labour market</li> <li>• Well-developed network of collaboration with other universities in the country and abroad</li> <li>• Participation in international organizations and in the EHEA</li> <li>• ICT skills in the use of technology in effective teaching and learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience and expertise of EU partners in creating Center for Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Increased international demand for higher education</li> <li>• Cross-border cooperation on the national level</li> <li>• Digital Montenegro - SMART Specialization Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of experience of professors and teaching staff</li> <li>• Lack of experience in online and e-learning</li> <li>• Mobility programs in frameworks of Erasmus+ programs are usually one-direction: the number of students enrolled in Montenegrin HEIs that goes for a certain period in a host foreign HEI is larger than vice versa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of professors's motivation and responsiveness to engage in collaborative activities</li> <li>• A declining of youth population have led to a reduction of enrolments, impacting funding</li> </ul>

<p><b>Republic of North Macedonia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of the learning process in Universities is increased through better focus on every student. Information on graduates' further educational and/or employment pathways, incorporated in the self-evaluation reports allows to take evidence-based policy decision;</li> <li>• Availability of higher education for those with physical disabilities is improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher education does not provide a system for regular quality assurance.-Some study and subject programs do not match the labor market needs-In general, the Higher education system is overregulated, which affects the autonomy of universities. At the same time, university/faculty management is insufficiently participatory, with a high decision power concentrated at the management structures, and students' participation in the university (faculty) governance is still nominal and mostly formal-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centers for Teaching and Learning can be established or reestablished as an essential part of the Research Institutes or Quality Assurance Offices. Those centers would be essential for promoting learning and teaching in HE setting, focusing on lecturers who are experts in the field but lack pedagogical and methodological background.-Functional participation of students in the decision making processes at the university and faculty levels is enhanced. Student organizations are based on the principles of democratic participation of students and transparency in their operations, and-Student bodies (student assemblies) are part of the universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some study and subject programs do not match the labor market needs;-There still occur such phenomena as plagiarism in the students' and professors' papers-The system of practical training of students is improper.-</li> </ul>
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			and their units, thereby being functionally integrated in the activity of universities and their unit-	
<b>Serbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality teaching staff pool</li> <li>• Developed teaching of methodology, pedagogy and psychology for primary and secondary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social attitudes stimulating the development of teacher advanced training courses</li> <li>• Readiness of the international community to aid in the organisation of advanced training for university teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of additional advanced training courses for teachers at the University of Arts in Belgrade</li> <li>• Lack of space for organising courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of resources for organising courses</li> </ul>

## 4.2. FINAL REMARKS

This study shows that a lot of effort in various levels and fields is yet required in Teaching & Learning Enhancement in Higher Education in the West Balkan countries.

In **Albania** the assessment of the quality of scientific research serves as the primary criterion for ranking scientific research institutions. Albanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) need to make investments in the professional development of their academic staff as educators and also need to review their appraisal processes. The incorporation of these suggestions into the accreditation process is essential, including the identification of appropriate methods, standards, and criteria for evaluation.

In **Bosnia & Herzegovina** the national framework law on higher education does not recognize the teaching enhancement as a condition for promotion. Therefore, the training courses are not obligatory in most of the public higher education institutions. However, the accreditation criteria based on the ESG are reflecting pedagogical skills and also professional advancement of the academic staff. The recognition of the importance of the pedagogical skills for academic staff is reflected in involvement in different European projects for capacity building in this area and several initiatives welcomed by the academic staff. Importance of combined pedagogical and digital skills became apparent during the COVID 19 pandemic resulting in new initiatives and **educational** tracks.

The Strategic Framework for Higher Education for the next decade (2021-2030) provides a solid road map for **Bulgaria** and its HEIs to fulfill commitments coming out of EC and international treaties regarding teaching and learning. Nevertheless, still there are no specific strategies and/or detailed policies on teaching and learning enhancement as well as on quality assurance.

From what has been mentioned it is clear that higher education pedagogy was hardly developed in **Greece** until about ten years ago, while none of the country's universities had a CTL, even though the legislation already in 2011 gave the relevant possibility. The scientific development of higher education in Greece started with the organization of a Symposium by the Laboratory of Teaching and Professional Development of Bioscientists / Department of Genetics and Molecular Biology of DUTH, which was followed by the first Panhellenic Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy. The establishment of CTL by DUTH and UPAT has been a booster for funding these activities from national and European funds through the Operational Program "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning" by 2022. With this funding, CTLs were established in all Greek universities and the development of training of teaching staff was initiated. Today higher education pedagogy in Greece seems to have matured as a concept. Relevant activities are now observed in all Greek universities and if the current funding continues, it is estimated that in a few years the institution will be firmly established in Greece.

The documents at the national and institutional level in **Kosovo** open ways and opportunities to develop quality programs and courses related to pedagogical enhancement at the university level. Also, at the institutional level, quality assurance offices operate which convey quality assurance in the field of teaching through mechanisms such as surveys, questionnaires with students etc. Furthermore, most higher education institutions offer training on pedagogical topics through established centres or international projects. In addition to in-house trainings, many teachers are involved in numerous mobilities within international HEIs,

many of which provide some kind of pedagogical skills enhancement possibilities as well as opportunities to be certified in the field of teaching. On the other hand, there are many areas for further improvements. For instance, things such as a specific strategy for higher education at national level, regulations or manuals that guide the improvement of quality in teaching, specific courses to academic staff covering pedagogical topics, institutional regulations of performance appraisal that give significant weight to the teaching approach, and so on would play a very important role in further enhancing pedagogical skills of HEIs' academic staff in Kosovo.

In **Montenegro** the teaching and learning enhancement in HEI of the national level are recognized, but there is need for further improvement into practices in the following period. Rather, HEI are those who develop strategies on institutional level regarding teaching and enhancement. Having that within this project University of Donja Gorica is the only project partner from Montenegro, report was made on the analysis on national level but mostly on institutional level UDG. The University of Donja Gorica is aware that in today's age of global knowledge and technology, placing more importance on teaching and learning is essential to educating graduates who have international, foreign language and intercultural skills and who are capable of interacting in a global setting. Providing professors and teaching assistants with an research-entrepreneurialy oriented curricula, equipping them with skills for a globalized world and encouraging their development as open-minded members of our society, is something that UDG has always been striving to do through our concept of studies, but has reached a time to develop a more systematic approach which will be done through MAGNET project. The successful implementation of all activities is dependent on several factors, and it should be monitored closely. Implementation of the objectives, measures and indicators must be done systematically. The conditions should be improved in a way that teaching and learning become part of the University already emphasized in University principles and strategies and by establishing Center for teaching and learning. There is a need for strong promotion of the foreseen teaching and learning actions within the University. A way must be found to inspire all included into UDG teaching and actions to get engaged.

At the national level in **Republic of North Macedonia** (RNM), specific teaching enhancement courses for higher education are not offered, except for undergraduate courses that focus on teaching methodology and pedagogy. In the past, institutional teaching enhancement courses were provided by the Instructional Support Center (ISC) at the SEEU, which offered pedagogical support to university lecturers. These courses included classroom management, teaching approaches, continuous assessment, exam writing, error correction, feedback delivery, and foreign language instruction. Regarding the Teaching enhancement and career progression in RNM, the SEEU seeks to support effective staff performance. SEEU supports staff performance through procedures like annual learning and Teaching Observation Schemes and student evaluation surveys. Staff members participate in the Staff Evaluation Process, which is linked to an integrated Staff Development Procedure. Teaching observation is a mechanism for teaching enhancement, conducted by the Quality Assurance Office and Faculties management staff. The observation process aims to support the University's strategic aim of continuous improvement, provide evidence of quality assurance, ensure high-quality student learning experiences, acknowledge excellent practices, support continuous staff development, inform processes like self-evaluation and promotion to academic titles, and promote inclusive learning and teaching. The higher education system possesses several notable strengths, such as its emphasis on individualized student learning, enhanced decision-



making processes, and increased accessibility for individuals with disabilities. However, it also grapples with a set of weaknesses, including the absence of a comprehensive quality assurance mechanism, discrepancies between educational programs and the demands of the job market, an excess of regulatory measures, and shortcomings in its administrative structures. Promising opportunities for improvement, including the potential establishment of Centers for Teaching and Learning within Research Institutes or Quality Assurance Offices and the encouragement of collaboration among universities. Nevertheless, it is essential to remain alert regarding potential threats, such as issues of plagiarism, inadequacies in student training systems. Addressing these matters strategically will undoubtedly contribute to the enhancement of the overall quality and effectiveness of higher education.

Based on the prior analysis for **Serbia**, it can be concluded that there is a need to organise additional education in the field of the methodology of teaching, aimed at teachers and associates at the University of Arts in Belgrade. With that in mind, the least pressing need for additional education is among experts from the Faculty of Music and the Faculty of Fine Arts, given that their studies incorporated compulsory courses in teaching methodologies for school subjects. The need for methodological education is noted among students and teachers of the Faculty of Applied Arts and the Faculty of Dramatic Arts. These shortcomings can be addressed by organising a variety of courses, seminars, webinars, etc. under the CTL centres, MOOC and the BALKANETUP platform.

## 5. THE NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

### 5.1. METHODOLOGY

Trying to identify the needs of the faculty of all participating institutions towards their teaching development a survey was conducted between June and September 2023. Faculty from all twelve Higher Education Institutions from the Western Balkans area, members of MAGNET Project answered the questionnaire. The total number of faculty that responded to the survey was 860 according to Table 1. Participants were asked to fill a questionnaire that included open-ended and closed-ended questions and was developed by the University of Patras and Democritus University of Thrace.

**Table 1 Universities**

	N	%
Democritus University of Thrace	159	18,5
University of Banja Luka	127	14,8
University of Sarajevo	100	11,6
University of Arts in Belgrade	22	2,6
University of Patras	102	11,9
"Aleksander Moisiu" University of Dures	65	7,6
University of Donja Gorica	30	3,5
International Business College Mitrovica	19	2,2
Logos University College Tirana	39	4,5
University of Prishtina	38	4,4
Medical University of Plovdiv	119	13,8
South East European University	27	3,1
No answer	13	1,5
Total	860	100,0

## 5.2. THE RESULTS

The main demographics of the survey are depicted in Fig. 1-4. From a total of 860 faculty who participated in the survey 395 were male, 459 were female and 6 preferred not to answer. There seems to be a respective balance between men and women as well as in the age span of the participants (Fig. 2 Age). Most of the participants are 45-54 years old (34%) and the age range with the fewer participants is the up to 34 years old (16%). It is easy to notice that up to 44 years old is the 44% and the 56% is from 45 until older than 55 years old which give us a good age balance.

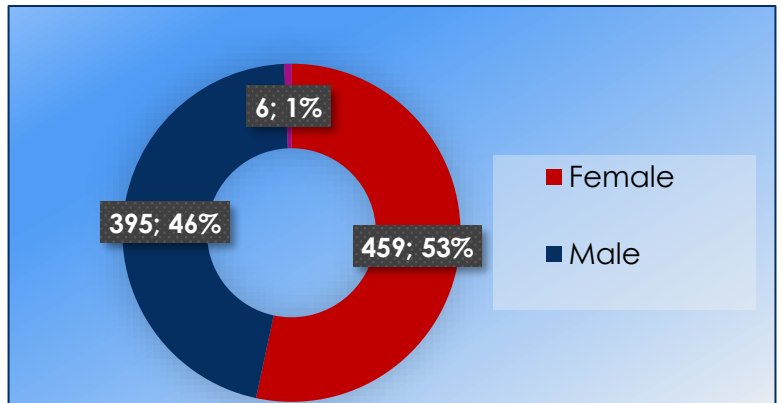


Figure 1 Gender

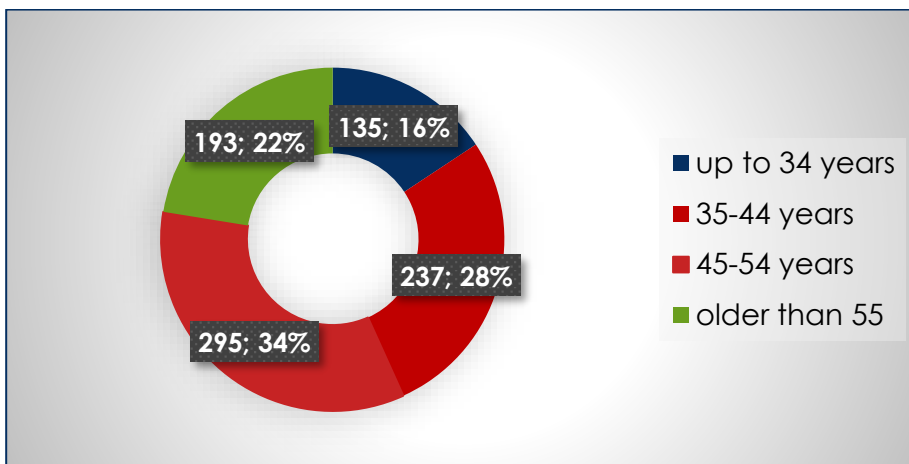
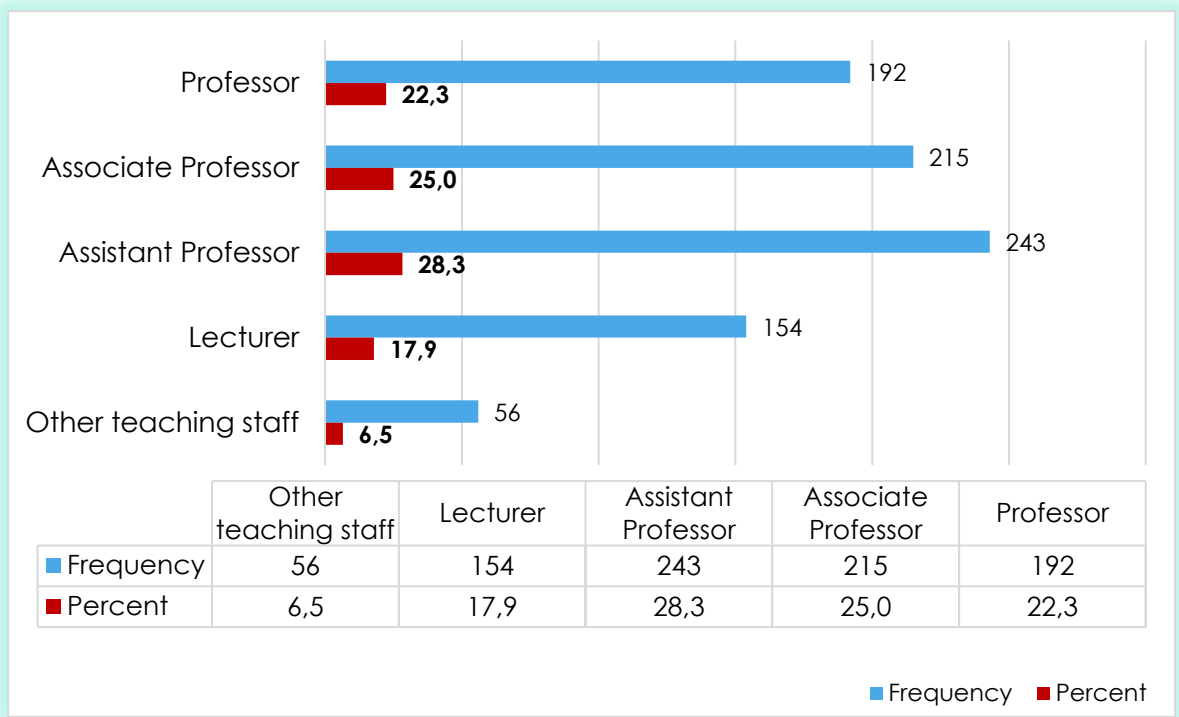


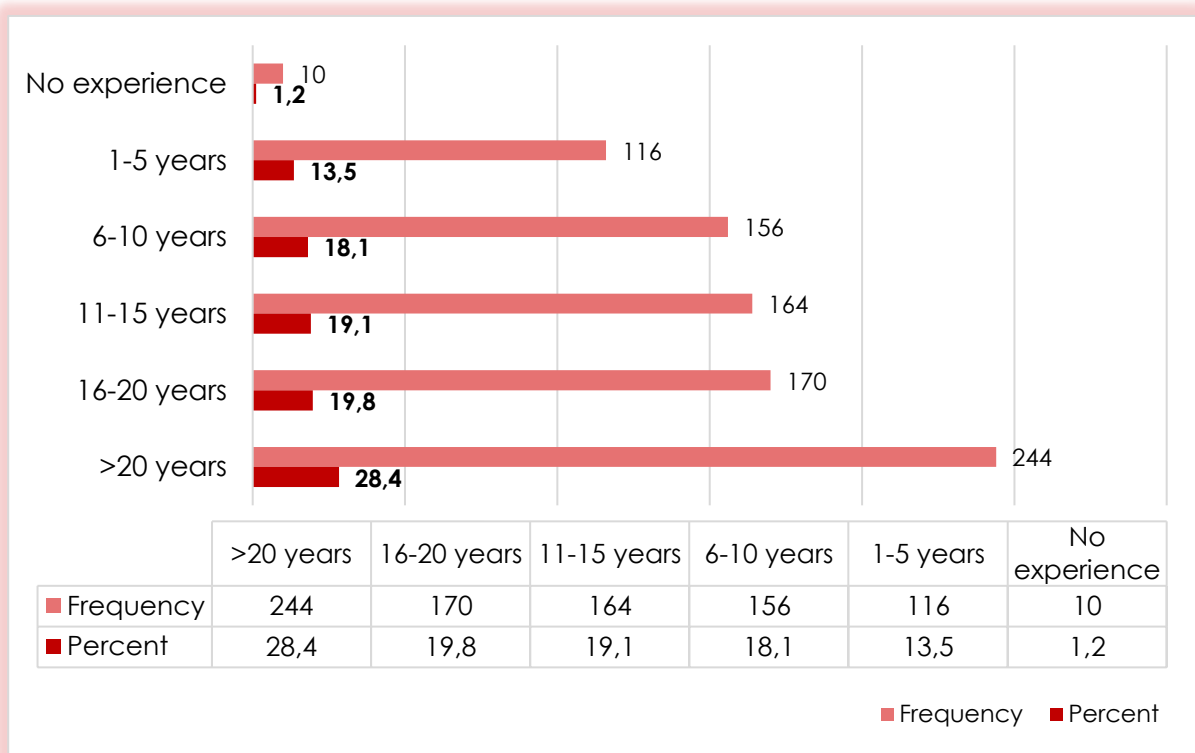
Figure 2 Age

The participants are in the Rank of Assistant Professor (28,3%), Associate Professor (25%), Professor (22,3%) and Lecturer (17,9%). A 6,5% are other teaching staff like non-permanent or specialized laboratory teaching staff e.t.c. (Fig.3)



**Figure 3 Position**

Based on the years of service, most of the participants have over 20 years of experience (28,4%) and this number keeps going smaller as the years of experience decrease (Fig. 4).

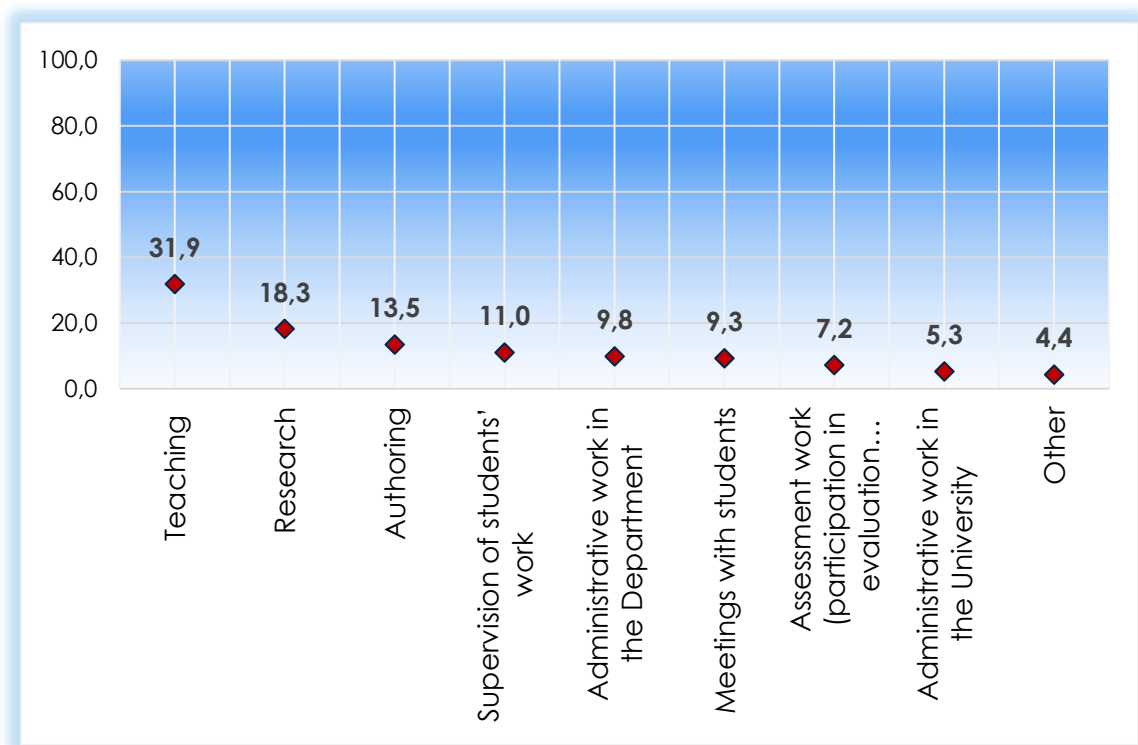


**Figure 4 Years of experience**

The analysis of data with regard to the academics views on their duties and teaching role showed the following: Initially, academics were asked to determine the percentage (between 0 and 100, with a sum of 100%) of the professional time they spend between nine pre-defined tasks / activities, as presented in Table 1. Most of the time of the academics, is dedicated in teaching and research with a mean of 31,9 and 18,3 respectively but the administrative work either at the Department or at the University steals a lot of their working time (mean of 15,1 in total). Their interaction with students, either through meeting or by supervising their work is further down the list (mean of 11 and 9,3 respectively).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (0-100)	Std. D.
Teaching	860	0,0	80,0	<b>31,9</b>	14,217
Meetings with students	859	0,0	50,0	<b>9,3</b>	5,567
Supervision of students' work	847	0,0	60,0	<b>11,0</b>	6,738
Assessment work (participation in evaluation committees, etc.)	854	0,0	30,0	<b>7,2</b>	4,808
Administrative work in the Department	856	0,0	75,0	<b>9,8</b>	8,092
Administrative work in the University	852	0,0	70,0	<b>5,3</b>	6,143
Research	852	0,0	80,0	<b>18,3</b>	10,767
Authoring	379	0,0	50,0	<b>13,5</b>	7,648
Other	313	0,0	70,0	<b>4,4</b>	10,966

**Table 2 What percentage (%) of your working time do you spend for:**



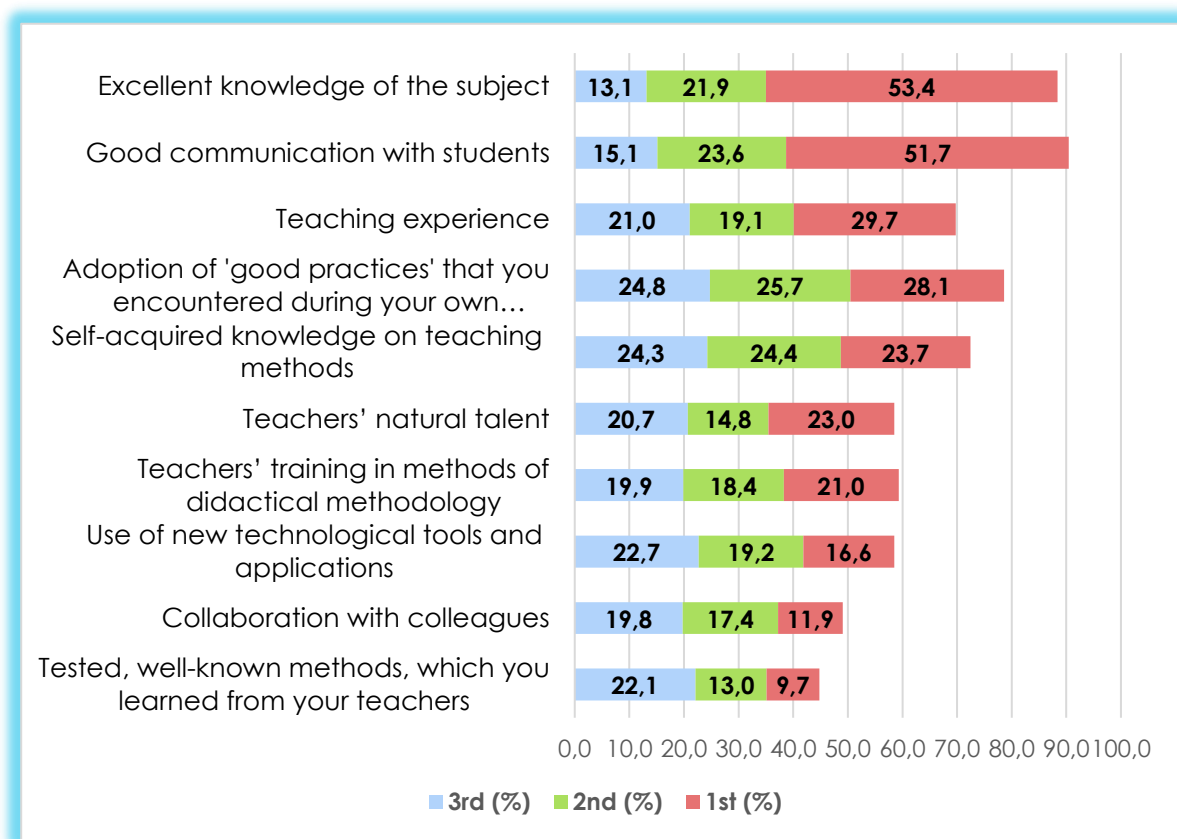
**Figure 5 Percentage (%) of working time (means)**

Moving on to faculty current teaching practices and perceptions of teaching and learning, respondents were asked to choose and rate ten elements, from a pre-defined list, which was formed based on the literature review, on which a "good" teaching is based. From the results, it seems that the main elements on which a "good teaching" is based are according to their first choices, the excellent knowledge of the subject (Total=760, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=459) in combination with the good communication with students (Total =778, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=445). It should also be noted that both the experience (Total=600, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=255) and the adoption of 'good practices' that someone encountered during his/her own educational journey (Total=676, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=242) also considered important. Instead, less important, based again on their first choices, seems to be the collaboration with colleagues (Total=422, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=102) and the methods they have learned from their teachers (Total=385, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=83)

	3 <sup>rd</sup>		2 <sup>nd</sup>		1 <sup>st</sup> the most important	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	1 <sup>st</sup> (%)
Teachers' natural talent	178	20,7	127	14,8	198	23,0
Teachers' training in methods of didactical methodology	171	19,9	158	18,4	181	21,0
Teaching experience	181	21,0	164	19,1	255	29,7
Excellent knowledge of the subject	113	13,1	188	21,9	459	53,4

Collaboration with colleagues	170	19,8	150	17,4	102	11,9
Use of new technological tools and applications	195	22,7	165	19,2	143	16,6
Good communication with students	130	15,1	203	23,6	445	51,7
Tested, well-known methods, which you learned from your teachers	190	22,1	112	13,0	83	9,7
Adoption of 'good practices' that you encountered during your own educational journey	213	24,8	221	25,7	242	28,1
Self-acquired knowledge on teaching methods	209	24,3	210	24,4	204	23,7

**Table 3 A "good" teaching is based on the: (the three most important)**



**Figure 6 A "good" teaching is based on the: (sort by most important (1st) choice)**

The next question investigated the participation of the respondents in pedagogical and/or teaching development activities. It seems that more than half (63.7%) have taken part in some kind of training in pedagogical and / or teaching methodology (Table 5), and an even bigger percentage (77.7%) of the participants (Quite=39.9%, Very Much=37.8%) stated that they are willing to modify the way they teach in order to be more effective in their teaching (Table 4). Approximately the same percentage (70.4%) is still willing to attend some training to improve their teaching competencies (Table 6) and a slightly reduced percentage (65.6%) would like this training to be certified (Table 7).

	Frequency	Percent
	35	4,1
Not at all	19	2,2
A little	138	16,0
Quite	343	39,9
Very much	325	37,8
Total	860	100,0

**Table 4 Are you willing to modify the way you teach in order to be more effective in your teaching?**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	42	4,9
A little	188	21,9
Quite	291	33,8
Very much	315	36,6
Total	836	97,2
Missing System	24	2,8
Total	860	100,0

**Table 6 Would you like to attend some training to improve your teaching competences?**

	Frequency	Percent
N/A	45	5,3
No	267	31,0
Yes	548	63,7
Total	860	100,0

**Table 5 Have you participated in any kind of training in teaching methodology issues?**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	122	14,2
A little	141	16,4
Quite	237	27,6
Very much	327	38,0
Total	827	96,2
Missing System	33	3,8
Total	860	100,0

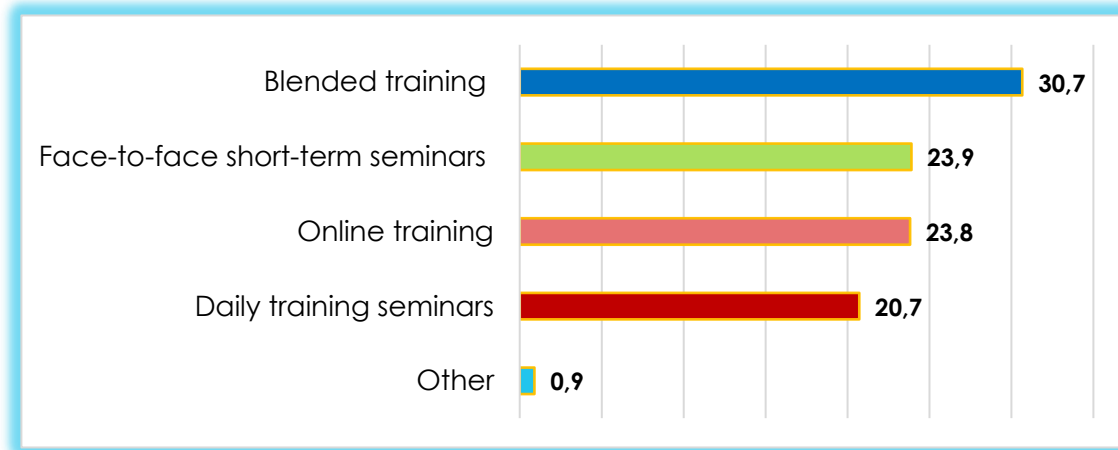
**Table 7 Would you be interested in this training being certified?**



The COVID 19 pandemic has led academics experiment with various forms of learning and teaching. We believe that these experiences have guided their answers to the next question about the form of the training they would like to receive. Their first choice was blended training (43,7% of the participants). The face-to-face short-term seminars and the online training scored almost the same percentage (34,1% and 34,0%) and daily training seminars a little below (29,5% of the participants). This means that academics priorities are flexibility personalization and resilience, things that can become possible through the blended training form of training.

	N	% 1.226 answers	% 860 participants
Blended training (face-to-face meetings and online training)	376	30,7	43,7
Face-to-face short-term seminars (up to 30 hours)	293	23,9	34,1
Online training	292	23,8	34,0
Daily training seminars	254	20,7	29,5
Other	11	0,9	1,3
Total	1.226		

**Table 8 What form would you like such training to take? (You can choose more than one answer)**



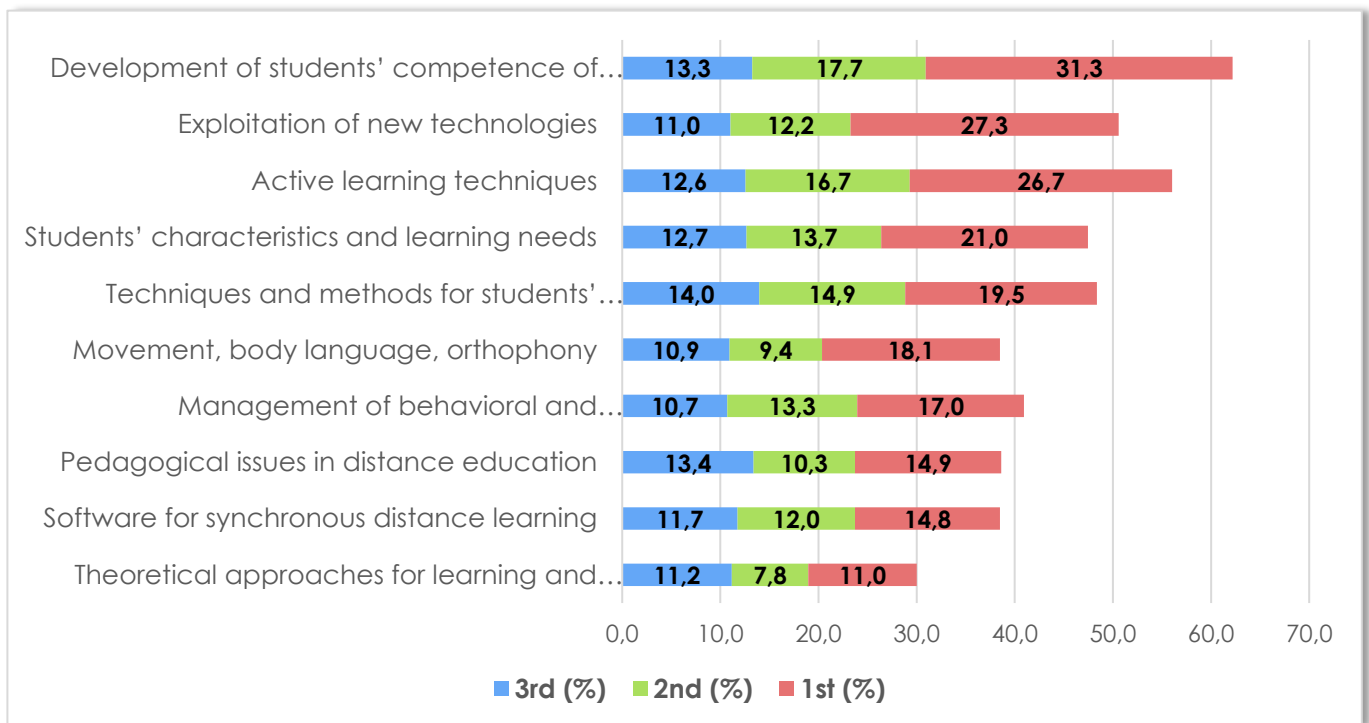
**Figure 7 Type of training (% answers)**

Participants were asked to choose and rate 3 out of 10 topics on which they would be interested in if they would participate in some kind of training (Table 8). From the results, it seems that the main topics on which they would be interested in are the development of innovative and critical thinking skills in students (Total=535, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=269), utilization of new technologies (Total=435, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=235), active learning techniques (Total=482, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=230), students' characteristics and learning needs (Total=408, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=181), techniques and ways of evaluation and feedback of students (Total=416, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=168),

management of behavioral and communication problems (Total=352, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=146), pedagogical issues in distance education (Total=332, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=128), training for a synchronous distance learning software (Total=331, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=127), movement, body language, orthophony (Total=331, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=156) and theoretical approaches to learning and teaching (Total=258, 1<sup>st</sup> choice=95).

	<b>3rd</b>		<b>2nd</b>		<b>1st</b> the most important	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Theoretical approaches for learning and teaching	96	11,2	67	7,8	95	11,0
Exploitation of new technologies	95	11,0	105	12,2	235	27,3
Pedagogical issues in distance education	115	13,4	89	10,3	128	14,9
Management of behavioral and communication problems	92	10,7	114	13,3	146	17,0
Software for synchronous distance learning	101	11,7	103	12,0	127	14,8
Active learning techniques	108	12,6	144	16,7	230	26,7
Development of students' competence of innovative and critical thinking	114	13,3	152	17,7	269	31,3
Techniques and methods for students' evaluation and provision of feedback	120	14,0	128	14,9	168	19,5
Students' characteristics and learning needs	109	12,7	118	13,7	181	21,0
Movement, body language, orthophony	94	10,9	81	9,4	156	18,1

**Table 9 Topics would you be interested to be trained in: (the three most important)**

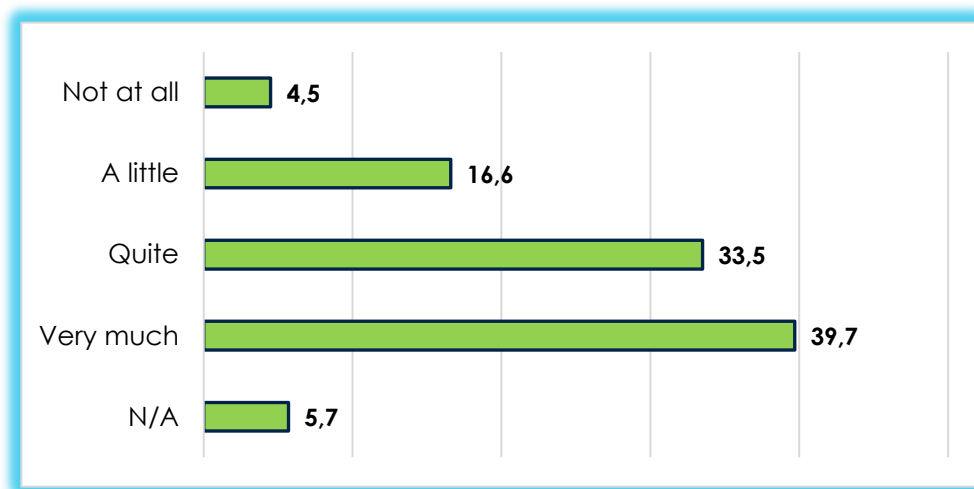


**Figure 8 Topics would you be interested to be trained in: (sort by most important (1st) choice)**

Most of the participants seem to be convinced of the necessity of a CTL operating in a University (73,2% Very Much and Quite) whereas a 21,1% don't believe in its usefulness (Table 10).

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	39	4,5
A little	143	16,6
Quite	288	33,5
Very much	341	39,7
Missing System	49	5,7
Total	860	100,0

**Table 10 Is it necessary to have a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) operating your university?**



**Figure 9 Is it necessary to have a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) operating in your university?**

Finally, participants were asked to rate four services that they would like the CTL to offer (Table 11). From the results, it seems that more than half of the participants (54,9%) strongly believe that a CTL should focus on the exchange of experiences and good practices, provide supporting material to help teaching (43,7%) and educational programs for the academics to attend (40,9%). Again, the possibility to communicate and collaborate with colleagues is their last choice but with a high percentage (37,8%).

	1. Not at all		A little		Quite		4. Very much		N/A		Mean (1-4)	Std. D.
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Educational Programs	31	3,6	112	13,0	310	36,0	352	40,9	55	6,4	3,2	0,826
Possibility to communicate and collaborate with colleagues	35	4,1	123	14,3	317	36,9	325	37,8	60	7,0	3,2	0,842
Supporting material (articles, videos, etc.)	22	2,6	106	12,3	303	35,2	376	43,7	53	6,2	3,3	0,793
Exchange of experiences and good practices	14	1,6	57	6,6	270	31,4	472	54,9	47	5,5	3,5	0,703

**Table 11 The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) should offer:**

### 5.3. CONCLUSIONS

There is a relatively equal participation from the three upper ranks of teaching staff (full professor, associate professor, and assistant professor) and less representation from the lecturers. Participation in the sample increases with increasing years of teaching experience, whereas the opposite might be expected. It seems that the more time working as a professor in higher education the more interest increases, rather than decreasing, either through boredom or burn-out. Participants spend more time on teaching than on administration, research, or other duties. Teaching alone accounts for one third of their working time, and if we include the peripheral activities of teaching (meetings with students and supervision), we assume that they spend half of their working time in teaching related activities and duties. Regarding participants' views on what influences 'good teaching', about half of them consider good teaching to be a matter of natural talent (i.e. they put this dimension in the top three), while again about half of them consider it to be the result of appropriate training.

More than a third of the participants note that they want "very much" to be trained, while less than 5% are negative about possible training in new teaching methods and techniques. Regarding the need for training, we find it necessary to note that about one third of the participants had no training at all on teaching through their career in higher education. The certification of this training is an issue that seems to concern the participants to a large extent, since about 30% say that they are not interested in certification.

Participants' views on the preferred mode of education are very interesting since it does not appear that any one mode garners most of the preferences, and none of the preferred modes is rejected. The classical way of face-to-face training of short duration (up to 30 hours) or daily training seminars gather the preferences of about one third of the participants, as much as online training. Almost half of the participants (43.7%) prefer blended training, i.e. a combination of face-to-face meetings and online training.

To explore the topics that participants would like the training to include, they were asked to complete the first three options in the questionnaire. In this way it was possible to identify the subjects that were very necessary (first preference) and for each subject how important it was considered to be to be included in the first three items. The subject with the highest number of preferences as first choice was the development of students' competence of innovative and critical thinking, then the active learning techniques followed by the exploitation of new technologies. It is very remarkable that the first two choices do not directly concern possible difficulties of the teaching staff but the involvement of students and the development of additional skills (and even from the category of soft skills) by them. The two subjects that garnered the fewest options were software for synchronous training and pedagogical issues in distance education, perhaps because the teaching staff was exposed to these subjects extensively during the pandemic period. Therefore, if one could make a hierarchy or give a weighting to the training subjects it would be: Development of students' competence of innovative and critical thinking, Active learning techniques, Exploitation of new technologies, Techniques and methods for students' evaluation and provision of feedback, Students' characteristics and learning needs, Movement, body language, use of voice in teaching. These subjects could be included in the MOOC-type courses to be developed in the MAGNET project, certainly together with subjects arising from the national contexts.

Finally, on the question what kind of activities could be offered by CTLs, all possible options attracted high percentages from the participants. Teaching staff members consider both educational programs and the

provision of supporting material important, but also consider it important that the CTL serves as a focal point for communication and collaboration with colleagues and for the exchange of experiences and good practices.

Combining all these findings we can consider that the teaching staff members from all the participating countries' universities consider their training necessary, they would be interested if this training was accredited, they need a hub that would function not only as a training center but also as a focal point for networking and communication between them, while the most appropriate form of training appears to be blended learning and face-to-face training.

## 6. MASTER PLAN

The fundamental changes in employment over the past 50 years imply a rise in the demand for exceptional cognitive and interpersonal skills. Graduates are entering a world of employment that is characterized by great uncertainty, complexity, and interdisciplinary working. University education must prepare students for entry to such an environment and equip them with appropriate skills, knowledge, values and attributes to succeed. Universities across the globe are increasingly pressed to find ways of proving their worth not only in the preparation of students, but also how they are linked to business and industry. It is a difficult task for institutions to interpret and respond pedagogically to the challenges of this new working environment, and it can be done by changing the forms of teaching and learning patterns, like project-based learning. In practice, institutions will have to learn how to best serve the student community since they have become the focal point of the learning approach. Based on these, the role of higher education teachers is clearly changing. In addition to being, first and foremost, a subject expert acquainted with ways to transmit knowledge, higher education teachers are now required to have effective pedagogical skills for delivering student learning outcomes. They also need to co-operate with students, colleagues from other departments, and with external stakeholders as members of a dynamic learning community. The new teaching and learning paradigms in higher education imply among others a continuous upgrade in pedagogy, use of technologies and assessment models aligned with student-centered learning as well as the creation of innovative learning platforms and assessing the impact and the effectiveness of the teaching delivered.

It is also very interesting to see the importance that quality assurance seems to have in the enhancement of teaching and learning. Accreditation procedures seem to have put pressure on many HEIs, which, trying to comply with the respective criterion of academic have started considering ways to improve teaching delivery.

As a proactive measure, it is hopeful to see that despite the lack of a national strategies for teaching and learning in 7 out of 8 countries, about half the institutions that participate in MAGNET project have implemented their own institutional teaching and learning strategies and have designed mechanisms and instruments to improve the quality of their education. With diminishing resources and increasing competition, the challenges may seem hard to overcome, but nevertheless higher education institutions can, and are, based on their autonomy, doing much to foster quality teaching and improve student learning outcomes. The obstacles that hold back the enhancement of teaching & learning can be summarized, based on the National Reports of the participating countries, in the following:

- Limited resources, both financial and human
- Lack of a robust and stable quality assurance system
- Reduced interest of teaching staff in professional development
- Language barriers, which is an important issue in the Western Balkans
- Insufficient access to technology
- Little opportunities for cooperation among HEIs in the wide European area

In the frame of MAGNET project, the following Master Plan aims to address the above challenges by overtaking the following actions:

1. **Raising awareness of quality teaching.** The MAGNET project, through a series of Workshops, seminars and lectures, aim to engage all important factors in each participating HEI by underlining the importance of learning and teaching as a core mission and advocate for learning and teaching activities to be geared towards student learning and success.
2. **Establishment of CTLs** in all participating Institutions. Every participating institution is obliged to establish a CTL that, although it is not a space for formal quality assurance, they often support program review, curriculum mapping, and curriculum development in addition of supporting the mission for ongoing educational and faculty development.
3. **Provide a formal and effective venue for discussions** and experience sharing on teaching and learning practices (e.g., a Centre for Teaching and Learning), that is visible and valued by the academic community, either at institution, department, or program level. The needs analysis survey helped us identify the different faculty groups and this will help institutions tailor professional development to meet the needs of each group. For instance, newly recruited faculty might need to receive initial training, either before commencing teaching or during the first year, whereas full-time faculty might need support to manage changing workloads and emerging technologies in teaching. The MAGNET project through the Balkan Network for University Pedagogy (BALKANETUP) can support institutions in their efforts to meet the needs of all different groups by providing the tools and exchange of good practices between all participating institutions.
4. **Develop Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) in all languages** to remove language barriers. Each participating institution will develop a MOOC in its own language and English. These MOOCS will be offered through the learning platform to everyone, easing the difficulties of the faculty to academically communicate with their colleagues and other stakeholders.
5. **Allocation of professional learning resources towards technology.** The delivery of MOOCS with the method of blended learning will give faculty the possibility to keep up with continuous technological advances. This can be regular, scaffolded and sustainable inside the frame of the MAGNET project.
6. **Create a community of practice in the Western Balkan Region.** The BALKANETUP is a learning and practice community comprising of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTLs), scholars and HEI academic staff members, higher/adult education experts and stakeholders as well as organizations working in the fields of University Pedagogy, Adult Education, and Lifelong Learning interested in teaching and learning in Higher Education in the Western Balkans region. The BALKANETUP aim to strengthen the relations among its members in order to promote the exchange of best practices in teaching and learning through the implementation of modern, innovative, transformative, competency-oriented and student-centered teaching strategies in HEIs. The BALKANETUP is, therefore, a supportive and sharing community of educators committed to improving their practice and enhancing the quality of education for their students. This community provides an active context that permits its members to learn from each other, to share their knowledge, experience, and best practices.

From all the above it is clear that the national reports' findings and the results of the needs analysis are fully aligned with the main objectives of the MAGNET project as these were set in the preparatory phase.



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## SYNOPSIS TABLE

Country	National strategy for teaching and learning	Institutional regulation for teaching enhancement	National teaching prize in Hed	Facilitators for enhancing learning and teaching	Obstacles for enhancing learning and teaching
Albania	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– foster a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.</li> <li>– encourage faculty and administrators to prioritize and value pedagogical excellence.</li> <li>– invest in ongoing professional development for faculty.</li> <li>– provide workshops, training programs, and resources to help academics stay updated with best practices in teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– limited resources</li> <li>– outdated curricula</li> <li>– pedagogical approach</li> <li>– little emphasis in faculty development</li> <li>– insufficient access to technology</li> <li>– Competition</li> <li>– Demographic Changes</li> <li>– Accreditation and Quality Assurance</li> <li>– Language Barriers and</li> <li>– Lack of Research Culture</li> </ul>
Bosnia & Herzegovina	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strategic documents point to the development of university study programs based on outcomes and the promotion of competencies.</li> <li>– Participation in international projects and the exchange of best practices and theoretical approaches effective for professional development are encouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of a legal framework regulating professional development in HEd.</li> <li>– Insufficient theoretical knowledge and practical training models for University Pedagogy for teaching staff</li> <li>– Reduced interest of the teaching staff in professional development, particularly for teaching enhancement.</li> </ul>

Country	National strategy for teaching and learning	Institutional regulation for teaching enhancement	National teaching prize in Hed	Facilitators for enhancing learning and teaching	Obstacles for enhancing learning and teaching
Greece	●	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fully integrated CTL's in HEIs</li> <li>– Culture of continuous training</li> <li>– Institutional support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– institutional deficits</li> <li>– lack of institutional penetration</li> <li>– limited financing of T&amp;L activities</li> </ul>
Republic of North Macedonia	●	■	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Autonomy of universities is guaranteed.</li> <li>– Establishment of the National Council for Higher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Higher education does not provide a system for regular quality assurance.</li> <li>– Complex procedure for recognition of HEd qualifications</li> <li>– Overregulated HEd, little place for autonomy</li> <li>– more focus on opportunities for cooperation among universities</li> </ul>
Bulgaria	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Creation of the necessary conditions to support learning for the development of students by providing them with academic knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Higher education does not provide a system for regular quality assurance</li> </ul>
Kosovo	●	■	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Teaching enhancement as one of the accreditation criteria</li> <li>– Improved academic development and mobility of Universities' teaching staff in the context of European Higher Education Area and international higher education environment</li> <li>– HEIs are involved in many international projects which enable learning from best practices and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Little financial incentives for quality increase</li> <li>– high level of centralization</li> <li>– Lack of academic and administrative staff to ensure higher quality and improved teaching and learning.</li> <li>– no specific strategy at national level</li> </ul>

Country	National strategy for teaching and learning	Institutional regulation for teaching enhancement	National teaching prize in Hed	Facilitators for enhancing learning and teaching	Obstacles for enhancing learning and teaching
				<p>experiences in various areas, including the implementation of interactive teaching strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Autonomy of universities is guaranteed by law.</li> <li>– Cooperation of HEIs with the key stakeholders has been strengthened.</li> <li>– Efficiency of use of financial resources allocated to Higher education has been increased.</li> <li>– Most HEIs have created strategies which, if properly implemented, are good indicators for raising the quality of teaching.</li> </ul>	
Serbia	●	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– existing expertise in the fields of methodological science, pedagogy and psychology which could be incorporated into the development and implementation of specialised courses, seminars, webinars, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of resources for organising courses</li> </ul>
Montenegro	■	■	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Taking part in the European discussions about innovation in teaching and learning</li> <li>– Broaden the concept of practical learning beyond internships with companies and develop project-based learning with a wide set of social partners including NGOs and local/national authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The lack of efficient governance structures to introduce innovative approaches.</li> <li>– Pedagogical Approach - a traditional mentality that teaching methods and pedagogy are necessary only in pre-university education.</li> <li>– A lack of emphasis on faculty development can hinder the</li> </ul>

Country	National strategy for teaching and learning	Institutional regulation for teaching enhancement	National teaching prize in Hed	Facilitators for enhancing learning and teaching	Obstacles for enhancing learning and teaching
					<p>adoption of innovative teaching practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The use of digital platforms in teaching and learning is very uneven or non-existent, also due to lack of infrastructure and the small size of many institutions.</li> <li>- Another obstacle is the student questionnaires for quality assurance, which are reported to be narrowly focused on teaching and do not include the whole of the learning experience.</li> </ul>

- = available
- = not available

## QUESTIONNAIRE



# Erasmus+ Programme (ERASMUS)

## Project: 101083006

Managerial And GovernNance Enhancement through Teaching  
(MAGNET)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/erasmus-edu-2022-cbhe-strand-1>

Teaching Staff  
Questionnaire



MAGNET Project  
Co-funded by EU

**Gender:**

Male  Female

**Age:**

up to 34 years

35-44 years

45-54 years

older than 55

**Position/Rank:**

Professor

Associate Professor

Assistant Professor

Lecturer

Other teaching staff

**How many years of teaching experience do you have in Higher Education?**

No experience

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

>20 years

**What percentage (%) of your working time do you spend for:**

	0%.....100%
Teaching	
Meetings with students	
Supervision of students' work	
Assessment work (participation in evaluation committees, etc.)	
Administrative work in the Department	
Administrative work in the University	





Research	
Authoring and publications	
Other (please specify) .....	

*Total: 100%*

**Do you think that a "good" teaching is based on the** *(Please rate on a scale 1-10, with 1 for the least important and 10 for the most important)*

	1 -----> 10
Teachers' natural talent	
Teachers' training in methods of didactical methodology	
Teaching experience	
Excellent knowledge of the subject	
Collaboration with colleagues	
Use of new technological tools and applications	
Good communication with students	
Tested, well-known methods, which you learned from your teachers	
Adoption of 'good practices' that you encountered during your own educational journey	
Self-acquired knowledge on teaching methods	
Other, (please specify):.....	

**Any problems that you face during your teaching are due to the:**

	Not at all	A little	Quite	Very much
Infrastructure				
Physical space for teaching				
Time schedule of the lectures				



Curriculum				
Your own incomplete knowledge of teaching methods and techniques				
Lack of personal interest in teaching				
Your teaching planning				
Level of your communication with the students				
Students' behavior				
Prior incomplete knowledge of the students				
Students' difficulty in understanding the cognitive content				
Students' attendance rate in the courses				
Lack of interest from students				
Cooperation with collaborators				
Lack of knowledge regarding the use of modern technological means and software				
Other, (please specify) .....				

**Are you willing to modify the way you teach in order to be more effective in your teaching?**

Not at all      A little    Quite      Very much

**Have you participated in any kind of training in teaching methodology issues?**

YES    NO

**Would you like to attend some training to improve your teaching competences?**

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much



**Would you be interested in this training being certified?**

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much

**What form would you like such training to take? (You can choose more than one answer)**

- Daily training seminars
- Face-to-face short-term seminars (up to 30 hours)
- Online training
- Blended training (face-to-face meetings and online training)
- Other, (please specify).....

**Which of the following topics would you be interested to be trained in? (Please rate on a scale 1-10, with 1 for the least important and 10 for the most important)**

	1 -----→ 10
1. Theoretical approaches for learning and teaching	
2. Exploitation of new technologies	
3. Pedagogical issues in distance education	
4. Management of behavioral and communication problems	
5. Software for synchronous distance learning	
6. Active learning techniques	
7. Development of students' competence of innovative and critical thinking	
8. Techniques and methods for students' evaluation and provision of feedback	
9. Students' characteristics and learning needs	
10. Movement, body language, orthophony	
11. Other, (please specify): .....	



**Do you think it is necessary to have a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) operating your University?**

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much

**Do you think that the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) should offer**

Educational Programs

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much

Possibility to communicate and collaborate with colleagues

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much

Supporting material (articles, videos, etc.)

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much

Exchange of experiences and good practices

Not at all      A little      Quite      Very much

Other, (please specify).....

**Would you like to add or comment anything else regarding the above questions or other topics related to higher education teaching?**

.....

*You have completed the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your contribution to our research.*

