



**UNIVERSITETI - UNIVERSITY - UNIVERZITET**  
**"HAXHI ZEKA"**

Senate

Ref. 348

Datë: 18.02.2020

---

## **ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Peja, 2020

## **1. Introduction**

In May 2017, the Steering Council of the University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja has approved the Strategic Development Plan for University 2017-2022, this plan in its second objective foresees the preparation of the "Academic Development Plan of UHZ academic staff".

The University is responsible for creating a work environment that enables all staff members to develop and apply their capabilities and abilities to support the University's "Haxhi Zeka" mission and vision.

The aim of drafting "Academic Development Plan" is to identify key staff development activities aligned with the current University strategy, also to reflect the overall development needs of individuals, in particular to support staff facing the changes. Progressive development and overcoming challenges, through Academic Development Plan, intend to enhance and support academic excellence practices in the University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja, through leadership, professional skills, research and teaching, by working with the staff in these areas:

- Teaching and mentoring
- Research and publications

The Academic Development Plan supports the dissemination/distribution of the university's lectures and teaching plan. Currently at the University "Haxhi Zeka" there are 70 full-time academic staff members, of which 41 are professors and 29 assistants. For realization and fulfilment of contemporary standards, the University "Haxhi Zeka" has established the advisory team for the promotion of academic development.

The Academic Development Plan is a very detailed plan of measures and activities, which helps university staff members to be developed professionally and to improve the quality of their work. It creates equal opportunities for all academic staff and it includes all its categories.

The University "Haxhi Zeka" treats the academic staff as one of its essential resources. The University is dedicated to help each staff member to be developed professionally during their work at this university, also he is dedicated to help his staff in their continues professional development, knowing that the direct beneficiaries of this development are the students and society.

The aim of the University is to identify and continuously recognize the needs of staff for professional development and enable them to develop continuously, so the beneficiary of this investing will be students and society.

### **Vision and mission**

*Vision:* The aim of the University "Haxhi Zeka" is to become an important centre of academic development, quality education of students and sustainable development of academic staff.

*Mission:* The aim of the University "Haxhi Zeka" is to increase the professional level of the academic staff, by creating equal opportunities for academic development to be competitive in European higher education.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

### **2.1. Management responsibilities**

The Rector of UHZ is responsible for the implementation of the Academic Development Plan, as well as for monitoring the implementation and coordination of all academic staff activities. It also ensures that academic units have planned, designed, implemented and supervised the Academic Development Plan as well as implemented it. For the level of plan implementation in academic units, the ADP

coordinators of academic units report to the Rector, respectively the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, at least twice a year. Also, at least once a year, meetings with the management of academic units are held, including Vice Deans for Academic Affairs and the office responsible for academic development. On the other hand, Deans of academic units draw up a report on academic staff development level, outlining needs for new actions. After proposed policies are discussed with the University management, and, after their approval, it become part of the ADP. Then, Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, together with relevante office, orginize training sessions on new policies.

Beside this, the University also has the Office for Excellence in Teaching (OET). This office identifies needs and develop resources for the promotion of teaching and learning at our institution. OET supports academic development for all academic units in order to improve student learning through the effectiveness of enhanced teaching. The OET strives to provide programs and resources in areas such as instructional technology, distance learning and online learning, also critical thinking and classroom management. The OET Coordinator works in collaboration with other University offices in order to inform academic units via email about academic development opportunities, the distribution of teaching resources, and the coordination and provision of local workshops and various events.

### **Evaluation of Academic staff**

The UHZ academic staff performance evaluation process provides significant opportunities for staff to achieve personal and professional goals that are consistent with the strategic and operational plans of the academic units. This process supports the creation of a continuous culture of learning and performance improvement across all UHZ academic units and also it is an essential contribution in promoting academic staff in particular.

In order to accomplish this goal, the university take the following measures/actions:

- Functional mechanisms for measuring academic performance as set out in the manual for academic staff performance evaluation;
- Training of academic staff in the development of individual development plans;
- Develop and approve a manual for measuring academic staff performance.

UHZ foresees a budget for the creation and operationalization of performance appraisal mechanisms.

Measuring indicators are as follows:

- The mechanism for measuring academic performance (status: operational);
- Individual academic development plans (status: developed and approved by the unit deans);
- Manual on the academic staff evaluation (status: implemented by all academic units).

### **Ratio of academic staff**

UHZ as a relatively new university has consistently increased the number of academic staff. The trend of accepting new academic staff, by increasing the number of advanced academic staff such as Prof. asoc. dr and Prof. dr., will continue for the next 5 years, which will contribute to the creation of doctoral science programs.

To meet this goal, the university take the following actions:

- Increase the number of academic staff with a doctorate degree by 30% from the current level;
- Increase the number of staff with academic degree Prof. asoc. and Prof. dr. by 10-20%.

UHZ provides a budget for increasing the number of academic staff and promoting them in academic degrees.

Measuring indicators are as follows:

- Number of academic staff (status: increased by 30%);
- Number of advanced staff in academic degree.

## **2.2. Individual responsibility**

Academic staff is primarily responsible for the careful design of the Individual Academic Development Plan (IADP), as well as ensuring that the activities envisaged and approved by this plan will have an impact on improving their academic life and career development in effective and efficient way.

Academic staff members should continually reflect on their achievements from the previous IADP, review it, and also propose changes and additions, in order to ensure that their goals for academic development are achieved.

The purpose of academic staff development is to provide a staff member with the opportunity to analyze their development needs, set specific short- and long-term goals, and decide which opportunities best meet those needs and goals. The process of academic staff development plans should stimulate self-analysis and sustainable planning. The staff member begins with a self-assessment and goes on to set goals and determine the best development activities that will help staff members meet their goals whether through achieving scientific and academic degrees, technological skills, industry experience or attending professional conferences and seminars. Using individual academic development plans as a guide to develop the skills and attributes of employees to advance in their careers, the ADP also assists supervisors to support staff member development. The supervisor can provide employees with training in developing goals and creating a timeline as well as providing necessary resources. The supervisor should also monitor the progress of academic staff toward their goals.

## **2.3. Plan review**

The Academic Development Plan is reviewed and supplemented before the start of each academic year by the responsible office in collaboration with the academic unit coordinators and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs. They propose, to the UHZ Senate, changes/additions of academic policies for the following academic year.

## **2.4. Identifying Academic Development Needs**

Supervisors and academic staff should use the annual performance appraisal to review previous achievements, skills, and identify training needs. At the time of assessment, the supervisor and employee set goals for the coming year. Goals are job related, such as increasing service levels, or goals which can be designed to improve employee skills or education and also to challenge employees for the next step in their career. The intercultural competence of employees and how to improve intercultural competence should be discussed and included in the evaluation process. Otherwise, supervisors should analyze academic staff skill levels today to determine where improvements are needed in order to continue to be an innovative teaching institution.

### **3. TEACHING**

#### **3.1. Welcome of new academic staff**

The Welcome ensures that new staff at our University receive the information needed to be a productive member of the staff team. The University "Haxhi Zeka" has developed a welcome program to provide supervisors with an easier mechanism for creating the right tools before the first day of new staff.

The Academic Development Department conducts an orientation meeting for new academic staff, which lasts one to two hours, in which to the new staff are shown essential employee policies and necessary training.

To the new staff are provided two orientation days. The orientations days are organized immediately before the beginning of the semester in order to receive sufficient information, which has the effect of overburdening new faculty members as they are about to enter class.

The University offers appropriate training on electronic systems and university policy and procedures and in particular their work assignments. The semester meetings will be held with all the staff including new staff and academic development plans, types of training etc will be discussed.

All new staff should attend the welcome session in their first week of work. During this session a visit to the University campus is organized in order to meet colleagues and students.

#### **3.2. Teaching**

The curriculum and teaching envision that change is extended to the culture and practice of teams and groups, departments, and faculties, but supported by structures to prioritize ways of working that reflect best practices and support for cultural change. This Plan reflects collaborative work with academic colleagues within and outside the institution, including professors, assistants, future doctoral students, leaders. The Academic Development Team will also work with institutional services and the Union of Students. The purpose of the team is to provide an efficient, effective and transparent service that is able to respond to and support individual, faculty and institutional needs related to the development of good academic staff practices.

Before the beginning of the academic year, the university organizes one-day workshops on teaching techniques for the new staff, who also have the opportunity to express their skills for teaching experience. More experienced staff should assist new staff in syllabus preparation, classroom management / exercises, completion of administrative documents, etc.

#### **3.3. Improving teaching quality**

The University "Haxhi Zeka" is a community of academic staff, administration, students and other stakeholders. Advancement in teaching and learning is a priority and can only be achieved through the cooperation of community members. UHZ is also a lifelong learning center for its staff, providing conditions that enable them to advance their pedagogical capacities with the student in the center of attention. To ensure that students' teaching and learning are of the highest quality, UHZ is committed to creating a structured system of identifying the academic development needs of each academic staff, as well as monitoring whether they are addressed.

To accomplish this goal, the university will undertake the following measures/actions: Training of academic staff on the designing and revision of syllabuses in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework; Training of staff to review and design study programs according to market

needs and according to new accreditation standards; and student assessment. UHZ foresees a budget for carrying out these activities or seeking donor support.

Measuring Indicators: One training a year for all UHZ full-time academic staff; One training a year for trained program responsible; " Train for Trainer " training modules on advanced teaching methods developed;

### **Programs**

UHZ reviews existing study programs and will develop new programs in order to address labor market needs and new developments in society and culture within and out of the country.

To meet this goal, the university will undertake the following measures/actions: Train staff to develop new programs in line with labor market requirements; Training of staff for the creation and implementation of joint programs with other local and international universities. UHZ foresees a budget for staff training to develop advanced programs.

Measuring indicators: Staff trained to review existing programs and design new programs according to market needs. Academic staff capable of designing and delivering joint programs.

## **4. RESEARCHES AND PUBLICATIONS**

### **4.1. Researches**

In addition to teaching at the University, staff and students research projects are also implemented. Practical and research work is required in each academic unit as well as the preparation of thesis at the relevant level of study. The research methodology is specific to each research area and complies with applicable and internationally accepted standards. The results are prepared, processed, interpreted and published according to predetermined standards according to the research method. The Office of Teaching Excellence will build capacities and skills, motivating and engaging staff through the provision of sessions on scientific practice, projects to improve and develop academic practice.

### **4.2 . Publications**

UHZ in its Strategic Development Plan, chapter IV, activities 4.1.2 states that each academic unit will have its own specialized journal. The NDP reaffirms the need of the university to develop capacities to establish, edit and index specialized journals of academic units (5 of them); Also as specified in the strategy for scientific research.

#### **4.2.1. Publications in indexed journals in credible databases**

According to the University Statute, a certain number of scientific articles are required for each academic title. The University staff is encouraged to publish them in internationally credible indexed journals in databases such as WEB OF SCIENCES and SCOPUS.

For the purpose of keeping academic staff updated with updates from these journals as well as how to access these journals, the University organizes regular annual as well as individual on-demand information sessions for academic staff. Usually these sessions are open to all, but with a particular emphasis on new staff. The university will financially support the academic staff in attending international conferences and publishing scientific papers within the year.

### **Publishing university books / monographs.**

The University, through the Publications Council, will address the needs of academic units for university books / monographs, which will be used as basic or auxiliary literature in accredited curricula. The management, in collaboration with the Publications Council, will develop a Plan to meet the needs for basic literature for the study programs. In the first three years the books / monographs that will be supported for publication should be included as essential resources in the syllabus and should correspond to the goals of the program.

### **4.2.2. Participation and presentation at international scientific conferences abroad.**

Participation of academic staff at least once a year in international conferences will be subsidized:

- Conferences indexed in WoS and Scopus will be subsidized up to 500 euros;
- International conference with the possibility of publishing in journals available on other platforms accepted by UHZ up to 300 euros.

### **4.2.3. Publications / artistic presentations**

The academic staff of the Faculty of Arts as artistic presentations have their performances as concerts performers. Their appearance at least once a year at concerts abroad (international) will be subsidized as follows:

- Solo and orchestra concerts abroad in the halls of artistic and educational institutions for 500 euros;
- Concerts as participants abroad in the halls of artistic and educational institutions for 300 euros;

### **4.3. Use of ICT skills and learning opportunities**

The development of information technology and its importance in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning has become increasingly important. Basic knowledge about the use of Information Technology is not enough for academic staff to understand the link between content, pedagogy and technology, and to realize this connection. To this purpose, the UHZ staff should develop capacities for the use of ICTs to enhance quality in teaching and learning.

Development of information technology and its importance in enhancing the quality of teaching

**Measures:** Develop training curricula on computer and technology skills development of the academic staff of the University; Access is provided to develop the skills necessary to use mobile technology to improve learning; Every year all IT services improvement are evaluated, as well as the need for academic staff training.

Measuring Indicators: Mobile technology fully supports teaching in and out the classroom. Most of the students practice electronic services.

### **4.4. Promoting innovation**

UHZ in its policies continuously promotes innovation in the teaching and learning process, and to this purpose it encourages collaboration between academic units/departments within academic units in order to create innovative study programs at all levels of study. This is because participating in new processes of innovation requires skills and abilities that enable exchange, acceptance, and co-creation based on trust and cooperation. Innovation in teaching and learning is also possible through close cooperation between the UHZ academic community and external stakeholders such as businesses,

other public and private institutions, as well as with other higher education institutions in the country and abroad.

Measures/activities: To accomplish this goal, the university will undertake the following measures/actions: Establish a Teaching and Learning Committee; Creating a Task Force to Promote Innovation in Teaching and Learning; Drafting a summary of relevant innovative teaching practices successfully applied at international universities; Successful innovative teaching practices within UHZ are documented; Develop an action plan with a stimulating activity for innovation in teaching and learning. Budget / 4 years: 150,000 euros

Measuring Indicators: Commission for Teaching and Learning and the Task Force to promote innovation in teaching and learning is established; Summary of successful innovative teaching practices designed and documented by UHZ practices; Innovative practices implemented in teaching and increasing the number of creative study programs designed and accredited.

Explanation: This regulation translated in English but signed and protocolled in Albanian.