

VERITAS

STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE THIRD CYCLE BASED ON SALZBURG PRINCIPLES

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VERITAS is at its final stage of developments before the external review. And with this purpose several activities have been conducted to ensure the smooth flow of the review process.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS, PUBLICATIONS, DEVELOPMENTS. ANOTHER YEAR STARTED WITH VERITAS

Year three of VERITAS project launched with the wrap up of previous year activities and with new developments. A new phase for the project was the development of the academic programs at AM HEIs.

The major achievements for previous year are the following:

- Development of the University road maps
- Development of the Strategic plans per institution on PhD education

- Study visits to EU partner institutions to share the experience on PhD education

All the activities carried out are the basis for the development/revision of the programs and external review.

With this purpose the following first steps were planned and implemented during the period of January –July 2016:

- Summary the results on study visits

- Development of the full package for PhD academic program
- Discussions and finalization of the credit system for PhD education in Armenia
- SWOT analyses for the self-evaluation of the piloted PhD programs



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Ph.D.

PHD PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED AND REVISED AT 11 HEIS

PhD program drafts are discussed among the consortium.

Drawing on the capacity buildings, trainings, workshops and initial developments, conducted within the project in the last 2 years, as well as on the experience shared by EU partners, AM HEIs embarked on the development/revision of the PhD programs.

The draft concept of the programs is discussed among the consortium members to see whether the general points required for the program design are in place.

With this purpose another two meetings were conducted together with the RA SCC and MoES representatives to discuss the implementation of the credit system for the Third Cycle. The proposals will be embedded in the Guide and applied for the programs.



THE PROCESS FOR THE EXTERNAL REVIEW HAS BEEN LAUNCHED: ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED

The external review process for the PhD programs in Armenia within the project started in 2014 with the preliminary planning of the activities and selecting PhD programs per institution for pilot. However, the official launch was announced during the study visit.

Once the universities embarked on the revision and development of their PhD programs the management team together with the lead partner of the WP and QA agency started discussions and planning the external review for 2016.

It was agreed to first establish three working teams: 1. the working groups at each of the universities to conduct self-assessment, 2. expert panels involving university experts of the

field, a PhD student, 1 EU expert from the partner institutions and a coordinator appointed by ANQA, 3. a team of reviewers responsible for the monitoring of the process at the universities involving WUS, WP LP, RA SCC, EQ, MoES representatives and one member from the PC HEI.

All three groups will have their responsibilities at certain stages of the external review process: to prepare the self-assessment report and submit to ANQA and expert panels who will conduct desk-review and site visits to respective HEIs and write the final report with recommendations for further improvements. The group of reviewers will monitor the activities during the site visit process and write a procedural report.

By the official submission of the Self-assessment reports and site visits, the universities are to conduct SWOT analyses on the current state of the affairs with regards to PhD education at the institutions against the developed ANQA criteria and standards, while ANQA team will finalize the standards and come up with the written schedule for the visits and template for the self-evaluation.

Preliminary agreement was also made on the deadlines for the activities:

- universities nominated the group

for self-evaluation and a team of experts (2 from each) and sent the official letters;

- the self-evaluations by the HEIs should be submitted by **1st of December 2016**; and
- site visits are scheduled for **February 2017**.

Taking this into consideration the management team together with the consortium decided to request the extension from Brussels and the proposal will be sent before the official closure of the project.



STUDY VISIT: LESSONS LEARNT. THE BOOKLET IS PUBLISHED

The booklet is available in Armenian and English

The booklet presents a brief overview of the results from the study visit conducted by the Armenian Consortium members during the 2 weeks in November (14-29 November 2016),

Purpose

The visit aimed to familiarize the Armenian partners of Tempus VERITAS project with PhD education in different countries. It is noteworthy that unlike Bachelor and Master Programs, PhD education and its organization differs greatly from country to country depending on various factors such as the government regulations, recruitment and admission of PhD students, funding, university profile, etc. Thus to sum up the experience gained during the visit the booklet was developed and disseminated among all AM partners as well as among other stakeholders from other institutions.



SECOND MONITORING VISIT BY ERASMUS+ OFFICE IN ARMENIA

The second monitoring visit of the project was conducted by the ERASMUS+ office in Armenia twofold: first at Yerevan State Medical University on 25th of March 2016 with participation of all partner institutions and second, at each of AM PCI from 04th to 22nd of April 2016. The office representatives had meetings with the management team and discussed general issues and project management. Next, they conducted meetings with the staff involved in the project as well as with the Research unit members. The main aim of the meetings was to discuss the current developments, major achievements, as well as challenges with regards to the implementation of postgraduate education. The recommendations from the NEO will be reflected in the report submitted to EACEA which will be circulated among all partners and further improvements will be taken into consideration.



WHAT IS NEXT IN VERITAS...

Officially VERITAS is in its final year of implementation. But taking into account the fact that the PhD education redevelopments and the process of external review is quite new in Armenia and will need extra efforts to meet the objectives, the consortium together with the management team will extend the project and the request with the work plan and justification will be sent to EACEA (Brussels) for approval. Meantime the following activities will be accomplished:

- A. SWOT analyses at 11 institutions for PhD programs against ANQA standards
- B. External review: self-assessment by HEIs, desk-review, site visits and final reports by the expert panels
- C. Additional trainings and workshop on supervisors
- D. Publication of a Guide on PhD education and QA standards
- E. Dissemination conference sharing the experience and project achievements with the stakeholders of the field.



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