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EPOKA UNIVERSITY QUALITY POLICY

Epoka University Quality Policy respects on universal values of higher education, academic autonomy, and rights of academic and administrative staff, and students.

This document covers policies regarding main principles and standards of quality management system in use at Epoka University. These standards established on the basis of the University's Strategic Plan are considered as principal criteria for achieving the vision of the institution. Institutional performance, henceforth, will be evaluated on the basis of these standards.

Standards are principal criteria for all units and individuals. Meeting standards could be adapted in different ways in different units. Therefore, each unit needs to specify and apply the way to meet the standards. Application directives regarding policy statements in this document are prepared by the concerned units.

This quality policy document is prepared in accordance with EFQM quality model in conformity with main principles of European University Association, and European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, and Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education in Albania.

DEFINITIONS

Top management: means rector, vice rectors, deans, , , administrator of university.

Manager: means top administrators of academic and administrative units.

Leader: means individuals known for their expertise of knowledge in certain fields or for their creative personalities, and pioneering in quality projects.

Management information system: means a set of resources, procedures and staff that collect process and disseminate information within an organization. The system supports decision making processes by providing information stored in a common data base.

Job description: is the definition of all tasks, authorities and responsibilities, working conditions, and hierarchical position of a job, and definition of all qualifications like education, skills, and personality to perform that job.

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1. MANAGEMENT

1.1 MISSION

The University has a mission constituted by the participation of academic and administrative staff and leaders of its units. The mission is determining and leading for institutional activities and institutional priorities. The mission has been approved by the office authorized to manage and follow up activities of the institution.

1.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organizational structure is explanatory for communication channels among different units, and processes for decision making, consulting, approval, and follow up. Decisions are based on arguments and written down.

There is communication, cooperation and coordination among different units involved in educational activities to ensure that education is carried out on a standard curriculum designed for students' needs.

Connection and coordination among educational and research activities are strengthened by communication among leaders of related units.

Common board and committee meetings are held to ensure cooperation and coordination among units.

Minutes of all meetings are prepared and written down.

1.3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND IMPROVEMENT

All units determine their strategic goals and objectives under the umbrella of institutional mission, and plan and carry out all required activities to achieve these goals and objectives.

All units evaluate the effectiveness of their activities in achieving planned goals and objectives on the basis of collected data, and update them if necessary.

All units follow up sustainability and permanence of improvements ensured.

1.4 RESOURCE NEEDS AND PRIORITIZATION

Top management communicates with leaders of units to determine required facilities, infrastructure, tools and equipments, human resources and other resources to ensure

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that quality of education, research and service activities are improved in accordance with the goals and objectives.

Priorities are determined in accordance with the mission, goals and objectives of the institution by the participation of top management and leaders.

1.5 RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Top management allocates necessary resources to ensure that activities are carried out in accordance with priorities, and the quality is improved.

Performance measurement and evaluation data and results are determinative in resource allocation.

2. STAFF

Written job descriptions that determine tasks, authorities and responsibilities, and qualifications of staff are prepared and periodically updated.

Criteria for appointment and promotion for staff are determined and approved by the authorized university organ(s).

The university staff is competent in their respective fields of interests. Training needs are determined and necessary in-service training is provided to ensure that they sustain their competences. Authorization of staff for different tasks is based on their competences and qualifications. Performance of staff is periodically appraised. In performance appraisals, content of job descriptions are used as basic criteria.

Performance appraisal results are determinative for staff to be authorized for tasks in the future. Staff is informed about performance appraisal results.

2.1. HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

Human resources of units to carry out future activities in accordance with the strategic plan are planned. Human resource planning is based on possible changes and workloads in accordance with the strategic plan. Record keeping regarding human resource

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practices for each staff is ensured. For this, a human resource information system is established.

2.2. ACADEMIC STAFF

Academic staff responsible of education and research activities has competence in conducting education and research activities. Their competences are supported by appropriate resources and training. Teaching staff is subject to performance appraisal, and is informed about performance appraisal results.

2.3. ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Administrative staff is evaluated and appointed to open positions in accordance with qualifications specified in job descriptions.

Appropriate measures are taken to strengthen the required qualifications of administrative staff.

3. RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONS COOPERATED WITH

In case of necessity, the university cooperates with its stakeholders and other institutions in accordance with its mission, goals and objectives.

3.1. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

One of the most important factors affecting the quality of services that the institution has to perform in accordance with its mission is the quality of facilities used to perform these services. Quality of facilities is closely related to all kinds of safety of employees and students. The university prepares appropriate plans safe management of facilities, and applies them.

These plans, as being inclusive for others, are as follow:

- Emergency Plan,
- Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan,
- Maintenance, Repairing, and Follow Up Plans for Course Devices,
- Maintenance and Repairing Plans of Classes, Laboratories, and Offices,

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- Maintenance, Repairing, and Follow up Plans of Facilities (e.g. elevators, air conditioner, heating devices, energy systems),
- Maintenance and Update Plans for IT Hardware and Software,
- Safety Plans for Hazardous Materials and Chemicals.

Inventory of all facilities and equipments is prepared. Inventory system is appropriate for follow up facilities and equipments.

Application priorities of plans, approximate costs, and resource allocation are decided jointly by unit authorities and top management.

If possible, plans include maneuvers to ensure appropriateness of plans in real situations. Examples are evacuation maneuvers, and operation of generators under heavy duty.

3.2 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATIVE RESOURCES SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The institution ensures sufficiency and appropriateness to educational curricula of resources to support learning process. In addition to teaching staff, students also rely on informative resources that will contribute to their education. These resources are libraries, computer and internet access facilities, advisors and mentors.

The institution organizes and provides informative resources in its libraries and units, and internet access facilities in accordance with needs and expectations of students and researchers. A system of feedback on needs and expectations of students and researchers is operated. The institution continuously follows up, reviews and improves informative resources for education and research.

4. PROCESSES

Basic processes of education, research, and services are defined and managed by each unit in a manner that each employee will always conduct the related process in a

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standard way without arbitrary practices. Principle rules and procedures, record keeping operations and responsible employees are defined.

4.1. EDUCATION

Processes of formation, updating, and approval, and application of academic curricula is defined and managed by participation of students. In definition of processes, learning outcomes and learning needs, educational resources, procedures for following up students' success and development are taken into consideration.

Processes for registration activities are designed and managed in accordance with students' expectations.

Processes for measuring and evaluating student performance are designed and managed in accordance with contemporary and international principles.

Processes of graduation, severance, and documentation are designed and managed.

4.2. RESEARCH

Processes of research planning, supporting, realization, and following up are designed and managed.

Effective and productive use of resources is taken into consideration in these processes.

4.3. SERVICE

Processes of services provided for students, staff and society are designed and managed. Designed processes which include flow charts, responsible staff, performance criteria and procedures related to these are documented.

Process performances are followed up by related unit. Improvement is performed in case of necessity. Principle quality improvement and development techniques are used in improvement and development activities.

Internal and external stakeholders are advised in improvement and development of processes.

5. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Total Quality Management is the main management philosophy of the institution. In this context, the institution sustains quality improvement and development activities.

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5.1 QUALITY CULTURE

The institution accepts quality improvement as a required project to be implemented by all staff in all units. Top management and managers endeavor for diffusion of quality culture throughout the institution. To develop a quality culture in the institution, staff is trained in quality management and quality improvement.

Staff is encouraged and supported to participate in quality improvement activities.

5.2 SYSTEM

Epoka University quality approach is based on plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle.

In PDCA context,

- All improvement activities are planned. Objectives for each activity are determined on the basis of existing data and information regarding the activity.
- Proposals for improvements are based on analysis of problems. These analyses are performed through updated information and methods. Guides and manuals are used in case of existence.
- If planned improvement is related to processes with high volume and high risk, pilot projects are started at selected units and generalized after observation of their impacts.
- Impacts of improvement are evaluated on the basis of comparison of data between start up time and ending up time. Realization of planned objectives is critical. If planned objectives are not achieved, they are updated and necessary measurements are taken.
- If planned improvement achieves expected results, it is generalized and institutionalized.
- Data are periodically reviewed, and impacts of improvement are evaluated as to be sustainable and continuous.
- All process and system changes have to follow procedures above and written down. Decisions on process and system changes are based on data and proof, not on feelings and emotions.

5.3 QUALITY INDICATORS TO BE FOLLOWED UP

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The institution continuously follows up its performance on the field of activities specified by its mission. There is a follow up plan for it.

Performance and quality indicators are determined by managers and leaders of the institution. Methods of prioritization for indicators to be used are written down.

Following performance indicators, as being inclusive for others, are followed up:

- Student entrance quality,
- Student development and success,
- Quality and employment of graduates,
- Evaluation of educational curricula,
- Quality of researches,
- Quality of publications,
- Quality of services,
- Finance management,
- Effective use of resources and capacity,
- Student satisfaction,
- Employee satisfaction,

Performance indicators followed up are analyzed and evaluated by competent staff. Relevant data are compared with the historical data of the institution and the data obtained from other institutions. Appropriate measures and activities are planned on the basis of obtained results.

6. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Management information system supports managerial activities, quality improvement projects, decision making and prioritization processes at the institution. Management information system provides needed information to follow up basic performance indicators.

The type of information for decision making processes needed by the managers and leaders are decided jointly by managers, leaders, Head of ICT Coordination Office, Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance, Data Collection and Analysis Unit,, and Quality Assurance Officer.

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Responsible units for record keeping cooperates for providing data and information to support decision making and prioritization processes of managers and leaders of the institutions, to decide and to determine priorities.

Needed data and information are periodically informed to relevant units. An annual plan including a schedule, responsible staff, methods of data collection and data analysis is prepared and announced for this.

The institution operates a documentation system. This system defines formats, approval, announcement, and operation of documents; access method, update process, abolition and archiving method; authority to access for any documents.

7. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The institution regularly publishes up to date, impartial and objective information both quantitative and qualitative, about the education, the research and services it provided. Public access to this information is ensured.

8. APPLICATION TO EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

External quality assurance processes evaluates internal quality effectiveness of assurance systems. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of internal quality assurance system through external evaluation.

The institution has specific procedures for its units to apply on external quality assurance agencies. Results of external audience are announced within/outside the institution.

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