

DESIGN OF THE THIRD CYCLE STUDY IN MACEDONIA AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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SUMMARY

This paper will present the needs, academic aspects, ways of preparation for accreditation and function of Cycle Three of studies in Macedonia, based to Bologna Process. This is not an easy job and includes in itself many uncertainties. The idea is to explain through methods of research of the Universities in Macedonia, projects for this, to explain the transfer from the model of working and defending PhD works as an act toward the three-year cycle, as a new system which is hardly known as a theoretical model. It appears academically as a new challenge, new quality.

As a conclusion from this paper, some other issues will come to surface, as organizational staff dilemmas and those of public policies in the area of higher Education in Macedonia. The recommendations will be about new steps that are to be taken for functioning of this new study model.

Key words: Doctoral Studies, accreditation, evaluation, Quality assurance, Research, Mobility, Interdisciplinarity

1. NEW QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THIRD CYCLE STUDENTS

The issue of doctoral studies has become one of the major issues in higher education academic debates in the Western Balkan countries. This is as a consequence of that because in Macedonia and surrounding countries the Bologna process has begun to be implemented only a few years ago and that in some countries early and in some later with different implementation dimensions and dynamics. In the first years after the signature of Bologna Treaty we had a more concentrated attention and like in the transfer to the bachelor system of Macedonia and later the third cycle. Now, apparently in the focus of academic-scientific debates is third cycle system. Last year, 2007/2008, graduated the first generations of students according to 3 +2 system. Bologna Process means a whole system according to cycle's systems, 3 +2 +3.

There will be a principal question to what stage is this process is implemented in Macedonia and which are concrete steps that institutions of higher education and the Ministry of Education and Science have taken in order of the development of third cycle studies? We can freely say that the process is in its initial phase. Government of R Macedonia in 2008 brought the Law on higher education which clearly stipulates in Article 136, universities are the institution which must develop a system of studies in three cycles. The new Law on higher education entered in

force from 1st January this year, and most of institutions of higher education in Macedonia have made the first steps in creating a system of doctoral studies according to Bologna Process. University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje has established a working group which has held several meetings and has a short leading platform. They as well at Tempus are developing a project in this direction. South East European University in Tetovo for more than 1 year is working in this direction, has held several workshops with experts from abroad and has created the framework document for the technical platform, structure and quality assurance program in third cycle. By the end of 2008 in the Agency for Accreditation of Macedonia has submitted materials for accreditation of the new doctoral studies programs which should begin with work in the academic year 2009/2010.

Thus the plan of South East European, by 2009, is to offer doctoral studies. Specification of this program is the new approach, which is based on the basic principles of the Bologna Process and Principles of Salzburg European knowledge society.

The aim of SEEU doctoral program is to educate young academic leaders in the field of sciences and technologies of communication, business administration, public administration, political science, law, communication, etc. This program is dedicated to students, who have finished master studies and want to be more prepared for a higher career in relevant areas for the needs of information and digital societies. Peter J. Bentley to PHD students is saying ` A PhD is one of the most ambitious and exiting things you can do in your life. Upon successful completion you will be a doctor- and a world authority in your chosen area. `(Bentley,P.J.2006)

Graduates from this program will reach an advanced level of knowledge in their chosen fields and will gain original academic and scientific skills. The program is structured from a genuine interdisciplinary composition, subject to necessary electoral research work and publishing capacities. All of this will result with abilities to come to a dissertation work, of high quality and scientific work. Students will be encouraged and supported to have critical and creative thinking. More significant to them will be to develop their skills for managing with changes and make successful career in their future activities. They will be prepared for local, regional and global labor market.

2. THE NEW PROGRAM OFFERS MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE DOCTORAL STUDENTS

This program presents a great challenge for SEEU, its development strategy in essence makes the passage for gaining the title doctor of science from a traditional way to a highly quality and transparent way.

Doctoral students as focal point will have research centers and universities around and the base of their work will be international projects such as Tempus, FP 7, Cost, Baliselus, Erasmus Mundus, etc. Through individual projects and student mobility plan which will be realized and they will be part of active, creative and independent research program.

3. PARTNERSHIP WITH DIFFERENT SECTORS

This is a new program that includes verified research experience American and European. This program will prepare specialists for career research, teaching, decision making, leadership in government, business seniors, institutions, foreign companies.

SEEU will enable the implementation of the so-called Joint Degree by establishing partnership with well known doctoral schools as those in Western Europe and the U.S. This

will enable the mobility of students, professors, curricula, exchange of experiences and knowledge and best practices.

4. PROGRAM OPEN TO ALL

This program is offered for students who are involved in the Bologna system. But is open and accessible for students with better success, for those who have mobility advantages, knowledge of languages and competence in communication technologies

The intensive mentoring process of evaluation and quality of work, of local and international mentors will make the study more fruitful, interesting and successful.

SEEU will allow the mobility of students and post-doctoral stays in well known world centers of higher education, will enable the involvement of students on projects and teaching during their studies.

5. THE NUMBER OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN MACEDONIA

The total number of teachers and collaborators at higher education institutions in Macedonia in the academic year 2008/2009 is 3847 persons.

Out of the total number 2182 are teachers or 56.7%, out of the total number of teachers and collaborators, 1665 or 43.3% are male and 1732 or 45% are female.

Table 1. The number of doctor of sciences according to years

Year	Female	Male	Total
2008	42	45	87
2007	43	39	82
2006	49	36	85
2005	44	48	92
Total	178	168	346

From the table number 1 can be seen that the average of doctor of sciences in the last four years in Macedonia was 86, 5. It can be seen that there is a difference of 10 female doctors of sciences from male.

Table 2. Distribution of the doctor of sciences according to scientific fields

	2008	2007	2006	2005
Social sciences	24.1	36.6	32.3	28.3
Human sciences	25.3	27.9	27.5	16.1
Medicine sciences	25.3	18.3	21.8	15.7
Technical, technology, math and bio-technical sciences	24.3	28.3	17.2	25.3

From the table above can be see the majority of doctor of sciences are coming from social and humanitarian sciences.

6. STUDIES ACCORDING TO OLD AND NEW MODEL

The transfer from the mentor system into three years systems understands a transfer from the old system into the new qualitative system. In this direction we are dealing with the change of the reports. Dr Matt Henn University of Trent Nottingham the monitoring of changes in the last 5 years sees in that doctorate studies in the past have been a relation between the mentor and student where the mentor was the main source of knowledge. But all of this has been without a great support and methodological research. Today things have changed and students today have greater support from outside—from research centers, the coordinators and students from other.

In the past trends have been such that the doctoral work as a disciplinary issue and today the approach is more interdisciplinary one. There is more about supervision and research. Mentoring system was not enabling collaboration and exchange of experiences between students, their cooperation research. The new system in Macedonia foresees, core and elective courses and individual plan of student that is realized through the election of individual part and part of their mobility within and outside the country. The individual part will be presented in different presentations, capacity building and research publications.

New issues which are very important are ethical issues, which should be raised and approved by ethic committee. Intellectual property once was not protected and now since it is exposed to the Internet all time should be much more protected and continuously to develop protective mechanisms for oversight and intellectual property.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE THIRD CYCLE

Third cycle is not like most of the two prior cycles. It should always be over the local and national barriers. By placing the position of mechanisms for cooperation, mobility of students and teachers and quality assessment should be the cornerstones of the programs for the quality assurance in the doctoral studies.

Quality assurance includes selective mechanisms and assessing the qualifications of students, teachers, types and duration of curricula, by expanding in the evaluation of teaching, presentations, research work and thesis, hypothesis presented by the paper and the presentation of his dissertation - and its distribution.

All of this will be accompanied by strengthening the standards for qualification for legalization and selection of teachers and students in third cycle. In the future quality of higher education will be supported in the interactive models of teaching and absorption of knowledge that will be followed by greater mobility of teachers, their responsibility and their career also. But, time transformations will be complemented with a self development of institutions which will be responsible for affirmation and self development in all conditions of the academic competition.

In order to have a overview of higher education circumstances in different countries are reviewed the systems for quality assurance in greater scale and transparency. Our approach to quality assurance scheme should have the following scheme:

1. The existence of the doctoral committee at University level
2. The doctoral committee at University units

3. Mentor work including intern and extern mentors
4. Self-assessment (of the institutions, study programs etc.)

The initiative of organizing the third-cycle studies in Macedonia is in its beginning phase. The initiative approach is based on fundamental principles of the Bologna Process, Law on higher education in Macedonia. This will be a continuation of two prior cycles and simultaneous increasing of quality of higher education and establishing the Joint European House of Knowledge. This is not an easy process. Prerequisites must be met too. The first condition is that scientific research centers at the University are in function in order to achieve the main principle that is new to the new system-doctoral research and present work of independent candidate. This work necessarily requires more collaboration units, faculties, universities. Cooperation with centers of EU and American University, Joint Degree, partnership with community and industry are essential preconditions for the realization of this initiative.

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