

## **D1.1 – REPORT ON THE STATE-OF-THE-ART IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO AND ALBANIA AND COMPARISON WITH EU PRACTICES**

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## **PROJECT: MARDS - Reforming doctoral studies in Montenegro and Albania – good practice paradigm**

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## 1 Preamble

This report has been done within the project MARDS, which is focused on improving and establishing sustainable capacities in field of doctoral studies in Montenegro and Albania. Its main objective is to initiate reconstruction of doctoral studies in line with Salzburg Principles and the Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training in order to establish sustainable and modern Pilot Joint Doctoral Schools between two partner countries that will serve as an example of “good practice” for the West Balkan Region. The analysis of the legal and organisational context of doctoral education in the two partner countries Montenegro and Albania as well as the way in which doctoral training is structured and functions in these institutions serves as a basis for the further implementation steps of the MARDS project.

Methodology. All the partner countries institutions, two from Montenegro and four from Albania (for the full list please see the Table 1, below), received the survey with a number of questions within main areas of interest. The survey has been structured in a way to gather a wide range of relevant information starting from the national legal frameworks, institutional policies and regulations, to specific information on the level of doctoral programmes on the level of individual institutions.

An objective was also to collect at least some basic quantitative data to better understand the systems and to observe some subjective impressions of the information providers related to the level of satisfaction with the existing system (please see the Apendix 1, Survey "Report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices"). The survey consists of seven main topics plus the eight that opened the possibility for additional information that institutions might have considered to be relevant, but not sufficiently covered. Those seven topics were:

- **legal framework,**
- **guidelines and regulations;**
- **strategy and vision;**
- **statistical data; research capacity;**
- **structure of doctoral education;**
- **selection and admission;**
- **supervision.**

Out of six potential respondents, we recieved both from Montenegro, and four filled in surveys from the Albanian institutions partners (one submitting the survey after the first version of the report has been written), although, at the same time we recieved the additional one from the institution\* that is not an official partner of the Project (for detailed overview check the Table 1).

The recieved feed back and collected data have been unbalanced in terms of quantity of information and how well they were elaborated. This is in particular issue with a list of legal and policy documents lacking description. At the same time they were either not available on-line or there was a language barrier. Some questions have not been answered at all or very modestly.

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\* University Aleksander Moisiu, as a non partner institution, provided their answers in the same document with the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi“.

Therefore, we opted for two-folded approach. We performed analysis of all the obtained information and statistical data and prepared overall report (Extended Summary) followed with the individual replies to each of the questions of the Survey. Please, note that while in some cases we left the verbatim reply we received, with no intervention in content or language, in some other instances we joined or dropped some individual replies in order to avoid too much of redundancy. Also, it should be mentioned that not always partners within one country necessarily agreed on all the data, interpretations and statements. Their views sometimes differed significantly, and we were not in a position to take sides and/or to intervene in the content. In addition, in a few instances we wrote a short common interpretation of the obtained data/information.

One project partner from the EU institutions (University of Maribor) has also devoted time to provide answers. This is a valuable contribution, however due to the focus of the report, collected information will be used for further discussions and exchange of experiences that will be part of other project activities.

**Table 1.** The list of partner country institutions and respondents of the Survey

Partner	Institution	Survey info provided by
P1	University of Montenegro **	Prof. dr Predrag Miranović <a href="mailto:pedjam@ucg.ac.me">pedjam@ucg.ac.me</a>
P6	University of Donja Gorica	Milica Vukotic <a href="mailto:milica.vukotic@udg.edu.me">milica.vukotic@udg.edu.me</a>
P7	University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"	Prof. dr.Arjeta Troshani <a href="mailto:atroshani@unishk.edu.al">atroshani@unishk.edu.al</a>
P8	Polytechnic University of Tirana	Elfrida Shehu, <a href="mailto:elfridashehu@upt.al">elfridashehu@upt.al</a>
P9	University of Vlora	Kristofor Lapa <a href="mailto:kristoforlapa@gmail.com">kristoforlapa@gmail.com</a> Enkeleint-Aggelos Mechili <a href="mailto:mchili@univlora.edu.al">mchili@univlora.edu.al</a>
P10	Metropolitan University of Tirana	Betim Cico <a href="mailto:betim.cico@gmail.com">betim.cico@gmail.com</a>
	University Aleksander Moisiu, Durres, Albania (UAMD)	Contributed as a non-partner institution

\*\* Two surveys from the University of Montenegro were received: one describing the situation at the university level, and the other at the faculty level. Replies from both surveys were taken into account when writing this report, but only one survey (university level) is attached in Appendix 2.

## 2 Extended summary

Doctoral education has been going through the reform process in both countries, Montenegro and Albania, similarly as in other European countries, though due to the number of constraints the system is still lagging behind when compared with a doctoral education in the institutions across EU countries. On one side, ministries saw the need to focus on doctoral education, and on the other side, universities are still struggling how to develop the whole system, to make it efficient, stable and of high quality. There are number of objective reasons for such a situation, and while some of them are relatively easy to tackle, the others are intertwined in a comprehensive social and economic context and they require much more work and engagement of different stakeholders - inside and outside the higher education system.

***Legal framework, guidelines and regulations.*** Both countries have relevant documents, in particular specific legally defined framework conditions for HE, which also deal with doctoral education. However, these laws are mainly concerned with other levels and aspect of education system. While the law in Montenegro treats doctoral education in a very modest way, defines only a few aspects and pays little, if any, attention to doctoral students, supervisors, the role of the institution, etc., the legal framework for doctoral education in Albania is even less pronounced. Given the very limited number of information and fairly poor insights into existing documents (due to language barrier), it is nonetheless obvious that doctoral education has been only very superficially treated within the system of HE, with insufficiently elaborated regulations and not going beyond formal aspects. Such a legal background could limit the role and responsibility of universities and it could become a constraint in further development of the research system.

Apparently, Montenegrin institutions have made considerable efforts to change the doctoral education system and have already established units, bodies and university documents as a strategy, policy and/or regulation for doctoral education. However, it seems that more focus has been placed on planning and developing relevant documents than on actually changing the system. An issue might be that it is mainly an implemented top-down approach, as well as the fact that a change in leadership does not necessarily have continuity in pursuing the same priorities. Such context could have a negative impact on reform process.

Unfortunately, the Albanian institutions did not enroll new cohorts of students for more than four years, a decision that has been made by the relevant Ministry due to the fact that institutions did not meet all the requirements defined by the Ministry and relevant legislative framework. Such a situation was causing high level of dissatisfaction among academic staff on one side, while on the other, it slowed down further steps in developing the system.

However, we should also mention that two countries differ significantly in size and number of universities that potentially might offer doctoral education (or that already have doctoral education in place).

While the institutions from Montenegro, a public and a private university, reported on the existence of the full range of participating university institutions involved in the creation and decision on the doctoral education system, its procedures and its quality, in Albania there is a much higher degree of government involvement with a lower degree of freedom at the institutional level. Accordingly, as a result of a new law, universities are still at the very beginning of developing their own strategic and political documents, and they have a much smaller selection of established institutions and units that could be well prepared to deal with various aspects of doctoral education.

**Strategy and vision.** All the institutions that provided information from both countries confirmed the existence of some kind of strategic document at the institutional level. Montenegrin institutions have documents that comply better with similar documents in other European institutions, however, an issue is the implementation of these strategies to everyday life and actual life of doctoral education. As one respondent from Montenegro noticed, there is a strategy, but it has been never adopted by the Senate as the responsible body. Of course, this is a serious issue for the optimal functioning of the doctoral education. However, since the objectives of the strategy document are related to a number of other issues such as research capacities, infrastructures or other specificities of the system, they reflect such a situation and are more specific to the country.

In both countries there is a discrepancy between the national strategies that deal with higher education and research and their institutional strategies, as well as the fact that the national strategies and regulatory documents do not recognize all the specifics and needs of individual institutions, and this, consequently, causes dissatisfaction. The possibilities to take valuable measures are unbalanced. In some cases, they are not developed at all, in others, as in Montenegro case, they are defined, and institutions determine the number of indicators that could be followed and monitored.

It seems that the system is still fragmented and, at the same time, too much dependent on the governmental decisions, which is certainly the case in Albania. Institutional strategies do not emphasise doctoral education sufficiently. This might hinder an institutional development in a long run.

**Statistical data.** The statistical data presented show a very different situation for both countries. While there are no new students enrolled at all in Albania (at least in public universities) due to the Ministry's decision in the past (2013), institutions in Montenegro admit new students every year. Nevertheless, there is only a relatively small number of graduates there. This gives reason to critically question the number of enrolled students per subject area as well as the reasons for a relatively large number of enrolled students in certain subject areas. In fact, it would be relevant to carefully analyze the figures given. Therefore, a detailed analysis with more background data should be provided in order to make a qualitative statement and point out possible difficulties regarding the underlying process. The system needs to be optimized in the medium term to include a suitable number of new doctoral students, corresponding to the actual capacity for research and supervision, but also taking into account the need for doctoral graduates in specific fields. On the basis of the data and information received, it does not appear that this is an existing practice.

For the development of new knowledge and the strengthening of the research system at the national level, it is certainly counterproductive not to allow the admission of new doctoral students, as is currently the case in Albania.

**Research capacity.** The concept of research capacity has been differently analyzed across institutions and countries, and to some extent differently when compared to the other European institutions. Usually, research capacity is defined by three components, (1) human resources and (2) facilities and up-to-date equipment, and (3) adequate funding. Provided information did not cover all those aspects, moreover, no concrete figures have been provided. However, it seems that some fields in Montenegro have much better capacity, while institutions in Albania struggle with many aspects of their research capacity. In Montenegro, a soft spot that might require more attention, is to explore additional ways of improving the capacity in the humanities. Considering at national level a need of having national relevant research in this area, especially considering the size of country, some national planning of research priorities could facilitate further development. We should not neglect and forget that adequate research capacity is a prerequisite for doctoral education. If there are insufficient research capacities, there will be no high-quality doctoral training, since research is the core of doctoral education.

While international mobility is more than welcomed in the first and second cycle of studies, in the case of doctoral education mobility, it should be very carefully planned and implemented. If not, it could prolong the study and not necessarily contribute to the research and doctoral research project. It must be targeted at the concrete research project and should also be used to compensate for possible bottlenecks in research capacity at the home university.

**Structure of a doctoral programmes.** All information provided on the structure of the programmes refers to a large extent to the national regulations and institutions relevant for QA. The framework conditions are characterised by a very low degree of freedom of action, which is granted to the institutions in order to decide on suitable structures for them. There are a number of formal procedures reported by both countries. ECTS is used, although a relatively small proportion is intended for taught courses, as reported for Montenegro. Most respondents focus on the number of courses taught, the definition of a research topic and the defence of the thesis. In both countries, a doctoral candidate is also required to publish a thesis. Some doubts have been expressed about its relevance of ECTS (Montenegro). More specific courses in theory and methodology were considered very relevant (Albania). The information from an institution in Montenegro, which was specified by the Rector according to the model for doctoral programmes, is completely unusual and exceptional for the European context. Albanian institutions reported that there was still considerable uncertainty about the design of doctoral programmes.

**Selection and admission.** It is reported from both countries and their institutions that the selection and admission criteria are determined by the authority responsible for doctoral education and the respective law. The Master's degree is a prerequisite, and while in Montenegro one institution bases the admission primarily on the grades in the MA programme, the second introduced an interview as an additional instrument of qualitative selection, which can also lead to candidates not being accepted. Interestingly, no institution needs a research exposé and does not emphasize the importance of intellectual wealth or research capacity, but is decided either according to formal criteria or according to a kind of general evaluation of the candidates. The role of the supervisor is also small from the outset and there is no direct link between the candidate and the supervisor from the outset. Although a responsible body decides on the admission of a new candidate, in Montenegro there is no obligation for a professor to accept a particular candidate. In Albania, there are limits for supervisors as to how many candidates they can have, and it depends on their academic status. This has not been mentioned for supervisory authorities in Montenegrin institutions. Indeed, Albanian institutions reported very limited experience, if any, due to relatively new regulations and a six-year gap in the enrolment of new PhD students, in particular in public universities.

**Supervisors.** The criteria for supervision and the motivation to assume supervision vary from institution to institution and from country to country. Most respondents reported a financial reward as a strong motivator, but also the career development criteria linking supervisory duties to promotion can play a role. While at one institution the criteria for admission as supervisor are very demanding and have been set by the university itself, namely to be an active researcher with a significant volume of publications, at the other institution the criteria are much more modest and require only two published papers. Even more interesting is the fact that the final word for the defense of a doctoral student is given to the individuals, a supervisor on one side and the director of the program on the other (although the role also has a relevant organ). In other words, such an institution is quite privatized and far away from any EU practice.

No institution reported specific skills or training offered to supervisors. Nor did anybody explicitly report on team supervision which becomes increasingly common in larger parts of Europe. However, the focus was on



assisting in fulfilling research capacities and the possibility of having a supervisor from another institution abroad.

**Additional issues.** Institutions from Albania emphasized the necessity of a further internationalization process of the universities and in particular of doctoral education. This process could make it possible to strengthen research capacities and build better networks from which research in general could benefit. As a form of internationalization, the possibility of joint doctoral programmes was highlighted, the institutions of which are also supported by legislation.

In the Montenegrin context, it was emphasised as an important challenge to take measures to motivate master students to apply for a doctorate. Data show that their interest in continuing education at doctoral level is waning and that the doctorate itself is becoming less attractive. In addition, it was noted that more efforts should be made in the course of doctoral training to organise different trainings, to develop additional skills and better prepare for different career paths and thus make a better contribution to society. This demand follows the debate on transferable skills that has been going on in Europe for two decades. Although in principle recognised in large parts of Europe, it can be stated here that from a European perspective less than 50% of doctoral students in Europe still have access to such training and therefore the situation in Montenegro is not special. Nevertheless, it is important to address the topic and develop appropriate offers.

**Conclusion.** In both countries and their higher education institutions, the process of reforming doctoral education to make it more compatible with other institutions/doctoral systems in Europe was launched a few years ago. There have been a number of changes, particularly at the structural level. However, many of these changes had been led by governments and corresponding ministries, and relatively little room for manoeuvre was given to individual universities. The level of universities autonomy is relatively low. This applies even more to Albania than to Montenegro. Equally recognised is the need for urgent reforms in the doctoral field and critical debate both at institutional level and among individual academic staff. In any case, continuity in the development process must be recognised as a critical success factor in order to achieve a level of doctoral training comparable to that of well-developed systems. To this end, there are a number of institutions in Europe from which one could learn as good examples.

A particular challenge is that the system is still very fragmented in both countries. Many pieces of the puzzle needed to complete the whole puzzle of quality doctoral education are still missing. In fact, this has a profound impact on the quality of doctoral education and it could further contribute to the brain drain and the low motivation factor (among other social and economic factors).

## **3 Survey – collection of individual reports on the level of country/institution**

### **3.0. Survey - collection of individual reports on the level of country/institution’**

#### **"EVALUATION OF THE EXISTING DOCTORAL EDUCATION POLICY AND STANDARDS IN MONTENEGRO AND ALBANIA AND COMPARING WITH EU PRACTICES"**

##### **1.0. LEGAL FRAMEWORK, GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS**

What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?

1.1. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education

##### **MONTENEGRO**

National legal framework of higher education in Montenegro is shaped by Law on Higher Education, adopted in 2014 and amended in 2017. The reform of higher education observing the principles of the Bologna Declaration was initiated by the Law on Higher Education, adopted in October 2003. At the time of adopting the 2003 Law on Higher Education there was only one (public) university in Montenegro (University of Montenegro), whereas at present there are also four private universities, several independent private faculties and one independent public faculty.

Law on Higher Education establishes the Council for Higher Education as the body responsible for improving the higher education area. The Council members are appointed by the Parliament of Montenegro. According to the Law it is the body responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of higher education in Montenegro. The Council served as accreditation body until the changes in the Law on Higher Education from 2017, when Agency for the Control and Ensuring Quality of Higher Education is established as the body which conducts study programme accreditation procedure and issue a certificate on accreditation of the study programme.

Changes in the Law changed the model of studies, which has been 3+1+1+3, into 3+2+3 which will be mandatory model of studies from 2020/2021. e universities did not change, neither the provisions related to PhD studies. Private universities have to follow all legal requirements as state universities, however they have no any funds from the state. PhD studies are required to last 3 years (180 ECTS) and can be organized only as academic programmes (see the scheme below), students need to pay a fee, and the enrolment is based on a competitive basis, according to the results achieved at Master’s academic studies (article 96). According to the provided information, University of Montenegro has a Statute that defines responsibilities of various stakeholders and bodies (Rector, Senate, Faculty, Centre for Doctoral Studies, Committee for Doctoral Studies) in the process of acquiring a PhD diploma. Similarly, University of Donja Gorica has acts and regulations that are in line with Law on higher education and relevant national regulations (UDG Statute, statutes of all the UDG units and Rulebooks of PhD studies). Law on Higher Education regulates the fundamentals of higher education, requirements for conducting the activities, types of study programmes, organisation principles of institutions conducting this activity, rights and obligations of academic staff and students, quality assurance, financing of higher education, as well as other matters significant for the performance of higher education activities.

**Table 2.** Montenegro HE structure

PhD studies 3 years – 180 ECTS	8th year	
	7th year	
	6th year	
Master studies 2 years – 60/120 ECTS	5th year	Master studies 2 years – 120 ECTS
	4th year	
Undergraduate studies/Bachelor Degree 3 years – 180 ECTS	3rd year	Undergraduate Studies/Bachelor Degree 3 years – 180 ECTS
	2nd year	
	1st year	
Academic Study Programs		Applied Study programs

## ALBANIA

Doctoral education in Albania is based on the Law no. 80 (2015) "On Higher Education and Research in the Institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Albania", however no substantial information has been provided. Apparently, Government and referent Ministry issues some documents focused on doctoral education, but it seems that those are partial documents and it is not clear how well it has been defined the structure of doctoral education, or requirements or the role of different stakeholders as well as their rights and responsibilities.

Examples of some existing documents are:

- **Decision of Council of Ministers No. 112, (2018); For the definition of the criteria of the scientific grade “Doctor and the state standards for the academic titles”;**
- **Instruction No.31, (2017) (“On Determining Criteria, Documentation and Procedures for Opening, Reorganizing and Closing Study Programs by Higher Education Institutions;**
- **Decision of Council of Ministers No. 710, (2017) “On the approval of National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation”, 2017-2022;**
- **National Quality Standards for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Albania.**

Individual universities have the main policy papers, such as the Statute and the Strategic Action Plan (e.g. PUT).

*1.1. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

Universities from both partner countries reported that individual institutions do have some documents which are focused on doctoral education, as well. While all the universities in both countries have Statutes, there is a difference in number of documents and their focus of different regulations related to doctoral education. While, for example, University of Montenegro has developed some years ago Rules for Doctoral Education, as well as University of Donja Gorica, Polytechnic University of Tirana is in a process of defining the criteria of the scientific degree “Doctor and the state standards for the academic titles”. Other partner universities from Albania reported to have regulations for doctoral programmes. (note: this is interpretation of the report author)

University of Donja Gorica is emphasizing that PhD studies and their organization are being covered by important strategic documents of UDG and are considered as important part of UDG long-term development having in mind strategic orientation of UDG to become research and innovative institution. All institutional regulations are in line with national legal requirements however it defines certain specific rules which make UDG PhD studies unique and recognizable in the higher education area.

*1.2. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

At the university of Montenegro a system for doctoral education has been elaborated from the top university governing to the level of faculty and responsible bodies in the process.

Here is the example how it works:

**Senate** is responsible to adopt a General Act to determine the Rules of Study at all levels and Rules of Doctoral Studies in particular. Senate also performs other tasks prescribed by the Rules of Doctoral Studies.

**Faculty** proposes the number of students for enrolment at all levels of studies; it proposes to the Management Board the amount of tuition fee for PhD studies; it also performs other tasks prescribed by other General Acts of the University in connection with PhD studies.

**Centre for Doctoral Studies** is an internal organizational unit of the University of Montenegro, which is responsible for administrative realization of doctoral studies.

**Committee for Doctoral Studies** is a permanent university body which deals with all the issues related to the organization of doctoral studies, procedures and curricula; it gives opinions and suggests proposals for decisions to be adopted by the Senate.

**Government (responsible Ministry).** If the University of Montenegro wants to organise studies in cooperation with a domestic or foreign Higher Education Institution, for example to issue a Joint or a Double PhD diploma, it has to obtain consent of the Government before the start of the programme.

**Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education** conducts the accreditation procedure of a study programme (doctoral study programme in particular) and issues a certificate on the accreditation of the study programme.

Similarly with some institutional differences in naming bodies and minor procedural differences is at the University of Donja Gorica.

The Senate is the main responsible body which defines the general framework and rules of Doctoral studies and adopts strategic documents at UDG level where development of doctoral education and PhD research is very important part of strategic development. Faculty Council, consisted of all professors and lecturers at UDG Faculty Unit makes the Decision on Founding and Organizing Doctoral Studies and proposes the Rulebook of PhD studies at the level of Faculty. UDG Senate has to approve both document and it adopts the Decision on Acceptance and Adoption of the Decision of the Faculty of Doctor's Studies on the Organization of Doctoral Studies and Rulebooks.

Rector and Rector Collegium are also defining some general rules which can imply on PhD level of studies, however PhD studies and their organization can be discussed on some Rector Collegium sessions.

UDG internal regulation also establishes the body called the Committee for Doctoral Studies at the level of Faculty. This Committee is a separate body of doctoral studies and is the body interconnected with the Council of the Faculty. The Faculty Council appoints also the Chair of this Committee. The responsibility of the Committee is to initially adopt PhD proposals, doctoral thesis, etc. approved by the Mentors Advisory Committees according to the requirements of the Rulebook and send it to Faculty Council for final approval. The Committee is responsible to enable functioning of PhD studies according to the provisions of the Rulebook.

Mentors Advisory Committee is established and appointed as a separate body of doctoral studies for each candidate according to the Rulebook. This Committee is of a mentor and at least two members of the Committee. The Mentoring Committee serves as advisory body to each student PhD studies, and give expert advices which can help student to conduct his research activities, improves them in certain direction. Members of Mentors Advisory Committee and the Mentor work intensively with doctoral candidates.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, Ministry plays an important role in defining the framework, mainly from the legislative perspective. At the same time Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL) is the institution responsible for the national quality standards.

The procedure is bottom up: Firstly, a department proposes the programme to the University Senate: University Senate approves it and send the proposal to the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Education makes the final decision after the approval from the Accreditation Board.

In general the University of Vlora (UV) is very well organised as a Higher Education Institution on the existence of documentations. UV has an active statute that was approved from the Academic Senate in 2014 .

*1.3. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

Academic staff at both the University of Montenegro and University of Donja Gorica find the regulatory framework is adequate. The Rules of Doctoral Studies are clear and accompanied by the guidelines for both candidates and mentors, so that each party knows what it is expected to do and what standards of quality should be achieved. The only drawback is the expected length of doctoral studies (three academic years) which is almost impossible to achieve, at least in humanities and social sciences, having in mind that the candidates are expected to have a paper published in a journal indexed in SSCI or A&HCI databases before he or she can submit the thesis for evaluation.

Furthermore, certain solutions in Higher Education Law are not good. For example, the University of Montenegro has no (or very limited) freedom to select candidates for doctoral studies according to its needs. The University has to accept everyone based solely on their marks at Master level studies. Another point of concern is that the Higher Education Law “discriminates” the PhD students at public universities, since they are the only ones who should pay the tuition fee.

## **ALBANIA**

On the other side, academic staff from Albanian institutions emphasize that the implementation of the legal framework is not without difficulties. It has been observed that the Ministry should take into account specific needs and differences among universities. It would be important to take into account also institutional priorities and specific objectives institution has. The system is overburdened with bureaucracies.

The general framework/internal regulation for each University is proposed by the heads of departments and approved by the academic senate.

In the process of Doctoral studies are involved several bodies. First of all is Ministry of Education. It has the main role in accepting or refusing openness, closure and/or reorganization of closing a doctoral programme. Additionally, based on this framework, the Higher Education Institutions are able to provide doctoral studies. The second most important body is Academic Senate. It has the main role to approve or to reject openness of a doctoral programme based on the proposal of the Faculty and/or Department. The faculty/main unit, in the regulation of the third cycle of studies, defines the specific criteria in order to be a doctoral student.

*1.4. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?*

## **ALBANIA**

The regulatory framework is drafted by the academic staff of MTU and has been revised several times by them. This framework provides all the information needed to set up the program structures and assure the transparency and quality.

Albanian education system and in general higher education system is in devolution. The country has passed many problems and obstacles in this field and since 2013, the shutdown of registration in any doctoral studies provoke a new situation. Since 2013 many things changed. A new law, different sub-laws and instructions made more clearly the situation in this field. Additionally, there are no specific guidelines for joint doctoral

programmes that could be offered by two Albanian Higher Education Institutions or in collaboration with international institutions.

### *1.5. If data or information is not available, why?*

Institutions in both countries reported that they have available data.

## **2.0. STRATEGY AND VISION**

*What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?*

### *2.1. What are the most relevant issues?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

It has been reported that most of the institutions have some well defined strategic objectives. Below they are presented for each institution individually, though careful reader will notice that there is a significant overlap among institutions and between countries.

University of Montenegro developed a strategy for doctoral education as one of the activities within the REDOS project, financially supported by the WB. Strategic objectives were defined as follows:

- A. To set doctoral education standards by using comparative data and learning from good practices in order to assure quality culture in doctoral education;**
- B. To foster research capacity and to optimize university potential for research; to stimulate national, regional and international cooperation by facilitating the training and education of young researchers;**
- C. To adopt changes in the structure of doctoral studies and their implementation in order to be comparable with other doctoral studies across Europe and to reach higher level of efficiency of doctoral programmes;**
- D. To develop specific systems for quality assurance in doctoral education that need to be supported by the governing and management of the institution and linked to other relevant structural documents and policies such as research strategy, internationalization strategy, university financing policy;**
- E. To develop career support for doctoral candidates bearing in mind that doctoral education must take into account individual interests and motivation as well as to prepare doctoral candidates for a wide range of careers, both in academia and non-academia working environments;**
- F. To increase visibility of individual researchers and areas of their expertise**

There were measurable targets set, but Strategy was never adopted by the Senate (in 2017 there were turmoil in the university management, Rector was removed by the Governing Board, so I believe this was the only reason why the Strategy was neglected.

At University level, The Almanac of Studies as a strategic development document set the goals and objectives which are furtherly operationalized through PhD level documents and regulations and monitored through new Quality Assurance Framework at University of Donja Gorica supported by the QAF information system that UDG has developed. QAF framework follows several Indicators of Almanac related to PhD studies and their development at the level of faculties on annual basis (number of enrolled PhD students, number of research papers authored by PhD students and their advisors published in relevant journals, number of research projects and grants obtained proposed by PhD students and mentors, number of research projects and grants where PhD students are involved in realization, number and sort of PhD students mobility programs, patents and prototypes created as the result of work of PhD students, number of awards of PhD students, number of national and international books published as the result of PhD research).

## **ALBANIA**

Polytechnic University of Tirana strategic objectives are:

- A. The increase of quality of the realization of doctoral projects at levels that are required by the dynamics of national and international development in the frame of the globalisation of the scientific research with the purpose of increasing the influence and economic-scientific value which currently is low both inside and outside the country.
- B. The existence of a non-suitable infrastructure for the realization of the research part of the doctoral projects.
- C. The researching and providing of new and alternative sources of funding for doctoral projects, this due to the fact that PUT is a Public University with engineering profile and with specific scientific research requirements and due to the fact that our state allocates the GERD indicator (funding for scientific research funding versus GDP) at a low level.
- D. The undertaking of concrete and complete studies regarding academic and infrastructural human capacities in support of the realization of doctoral projects.
- E. The encouragement of awareness and co-operation of the university with relevant business actors in order to highlight the technical and scientific requests of the leading companies in the country, with the aim of specifying the field, themes, funding, realization and assessment of the doctoral projects.
- F. A periodical study of the needs and trends of industries as well as the setting of priority sectors for cooperation, based on the skills and opportunities of PUT to respond to them.
- G. The realization of concrete studies related to the needs of the market and technical & research requests of the companies; classifying them as actual and of perspective.
- H. The maximization of synergies between University and Industry for the realization of doctoral projects, providing mutual benefits: having financial resources and achieving technological development.
- I. The increase of the cooperation with foreign counterparts (universities or research institutes) especially in the realization of the research part of the doctoral projects in order to share experience and laboratory infrastructure.
- J. The introduction of Information Technology into the Control System and evaluation of the authenticity of the doctoral studies.



Doctoral education is considered priority at the University (UNISHK) but there is no action to try to apply at Education Ministry for another Doctorial Program apart from Albanology which remains the only one opened even the territory (being the only state University in Northern Albania) and the economic development of the region is in need of other research focused in priority sectors.

University of Vlora aims to create and support that kind of University that will function properly to the improvement of Vlora region and the south territory, meeting not only the need of the new era, but also by creating prominent scholars and promising students, regardless of their social, economic, or cultural background. The role and mission of the University is based on the four main components that include: Contemporary teaching according to all international standards, the Bologna Declaration and the Albanian Framework of Qualifications, basic and applied research, as well as high quality academic work, effective and efficient public and community services, comprehensive programs of development activities of the Students capacity and the creation of future scientists. The main vision of the University of Vlora is to have a transformative impact on society through continuous innovation in education, research, high creativity and active participation in the country's social and economic development. University of Vlora research strategy is in accordance with the research objectives of the faculties and departments and the relevant Senate decisions (8). Its purpose is to promote the strengthening and improvement of scientific and technological research at an Institution level and to contribute to the creation of the only European Regional Research Area.

Scientific research, as part of it the doctoral program of study, is considered very important part at the University of Aleksander Moisiu, Durres (UAMD), the process of preparing and integrating students with the scientific research and with their specific field of interest is as a process to which is paid very much attention in my institution. In order to well prepare the student our doctoral study program includes the doctoral school, according to this approach the student has some obligatory general and profiled subjects.

University of Vlora research strategy is in accordance with the research objectives of the faculties and departments and the relevant Senate decisions (8). Its purpose is to promote the strengthening and improvement of scientific and technological research at an Institution level and to contribute to the creation of the only European Regional Research Area.

## *2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?*

### **MONTENEGRO**

At national level, the Strategy on the Development of Higher Education set the targets, which can be measured. It is adopted by the Government of Montenegro.

At University level, The Almanac of Studies as a strategic development document set the goals and objectives which are furtherly operationalized through PhD level documents and regulations and monitored through new Quality Assurance Framework at University of Donja Gorica supported by the QAF information system that UDG has developed. QAF framework follows several Indicators of Almanac related to PhD studies and their development at the level of faculties on annual basis (number of enrolled PhD students, number of research papers authored by PhD students and their advisors published in relevant journals, number of research projects and grants obtained proposed by PhD students and mentors, number of research projects and grants where

PhD students are involved in realization, number and sort of PhD students mobility programs, patents and prototypes created as the result of work of PhD students, number of awards of PhD students, number of national and international books published as the result of PhD research).

## **ALBANIA**

At the Polytechnic University Tirana, the main measurable targets in the realization of the doctoral projects are:

- The amount of annual funding for doctoral projects:
  - % of state funding
  - % of private funding
- Incomes obtained from the realization of doctoral projects:
  - At the University level
  - At Faculty / Institute level
  - At Department level
- Number of completed doctoral projects:
  - At University level
  - At Faculty level
  - At Department level
- Number of doctoral projects realized with international collaboration:
  - At University level
  - At Faculty level
  - At Department level
- Number of concrete studies related to the needs of market and technical & research requests of the companies.
- The measuring of the above targets is achieved at all levels of the structure of the Institution.

Due to the lack of the document for doctoral studies, such targets are not yet in place.

*2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

At the University of Montenegro Strategy for doctoral education is presented in a document entitled “Strategy for Doctoral Education” for the period 2017-2022. The document describes the institutional, national and European context of doctoral education as well as the objectives, goals, key performance indicators and recommendations for the five year period defined by the Strategy. There isn’t a concrete roadmap, but there is a concrete Action plan in the form of an internal document of the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

At University level the strategic document, which is presented and discussed at the level of UDG, but also nationally and internationally, set the general goals for the development of PhD studies. Benchmark indicators are set and presented through the document New Quality Assurance Framework of University of Donja Gorica, adopted by the Senate and presented at many university levels, which is implemented from this study year.

The part of this document which define the concrete PhD studies indicators is developed on the basis of UDG Almanac of studies and refers to the development of research and innovative capacity of UDG.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, UPT has just completed the drafting of the overall strategic plan. The Strategic Plan of Doctoral Studies is part of the Overall Strategic Research Plan for Scientific Research.

University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" developed a document of the strategic plan of the University but goals and objectives are not set with measurable indicators.

The University Aleksander Moisiu, Durres developed the strategy on the level of institution, but also as research plan of the university, while UPT has just completed the drafting of the overall strategic plan and currently is at the approving phase.

*2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro, institutional representatives are satisfied with their institutional strategies, though they object the national strategy which is outdated and the fact that institutional strategy for doctoral education has not implemented the Action plan.

## **ALBANIA**

Similarly, representatives of the Albanian institutions find national strategic documents not to be fully adapted and well developed. For example, they are missing indicators for the performance of the institution and the individual staff. Or, the procedures established by a new legal national framework do not take into account all the relevant factors. This hinders system to be efficient.

We are not satisfied with the current situation. Is very urgent, UV to prepare a specific strategy for doctoral studies.

*2.5. If data or information is not available, why?*

**MONTENEGRO:** Available data.

## **ALBANIA**

Doctoral studies have seven years that have been blocked by the Ministry of Education. Affected by this situation, Metropolitan University Tirana has not established a strategy for doctoral studies.

## **3.0. STATISTICAL DATA**

*How much doctoral candidates do you have?*

*3.1. Please fill the following table*

## MONTENEGRO

**Table 3.** University of Montenegro

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	96	75	70	76	88
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	41	24	30	37	58
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	17	20	19	20	10

**Table 4.** University of Donja Gorica

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	42 (e)	47 (e)	45 (e)	43 (e)	40 (e)
	7 (h)	9 (h)	11 (h)	15 (h)	13 (h)
	7 (l)	11 (l)	12 (l)	12 (l)	12 (l)
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>65</b>
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	5 (e)	0 (e)	0 (e)	3 (e)	0 (e)
	7 (e)	2 (h)	4 (h)	4 (h)	1 (h)
	0 (l)	4 (l)	2 (l)	0 (l)	0 (l)
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	0 (e)	0 (e)	2 (e)	5 (e)	3 (e)
	0 (h)	0 (h)	2 (h)	0 (h)	3 (h)
	0 (l)	0 (l)	1 (l)	0 (l)	0 (l)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

Please note that the number of enrolled PhD students at the PhD program “International Economics”, of the Faculty for International Economics, Finance and Business were quite high in the first and second generation, due to the fact these students obtained their Master’s degree before the reform of model of studies at national level which happened in 2004. when new Law on Higher education was adopted (this Law introduce the possibility to establish private higher education institutions and regulates all education programs in line with the rules of Bologna declaration). Before the change PhD studies were not required to last three years and after the reform was introduced there has been several years when PHD studies were not organized at all in Montenegro, because there was no bylaws and regulation enacted which was necessary to accredit the PhD programs. Thus in 2011/12, 29 students enrolled PhD studies International Economics, at the Faculty for International Economics, Finance and Business and in the following 2012/13, 13 students enrolled this program. Afterwards, there was 5 students enrolled in 2013/14, while there was no enrolment in 2015/16 and 2016/17. During these years there were interested candidates however they didn’t go through enrolment procedure. The situation repeated in 2018/19 study year when there was no single candidate which went through interview as final stage of enrolment procedure where potential candidates have to demonstrate their

devotion to research work and academic capacity to follow UDG PhD studies. Enrolled students, on the other hand, who usually combine work and studying realized they cannot finish studies within three years but prolong it.

In practice out of total number of students who enrolled in PhD program International economics (e), 30 are not active, while at Humanistic studies (h) and Faculty of Law there are 6 and 5 non-active students respectively

## ALBANIA

**Table 5.** Polytechnic University of Tirana

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	24	44	56	61	12

University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"

The total number of PhDs students at UNISHK is 14 (out of which 5 PhDs have completed the defense). In 2011-2012, 11 doctoral students were registered, while in 2012-2013, 3 were registered. From 2013 onwards, no new students have been enrolled at the Institute of Albanological Studies, based on the decision of the Ministry of Education to temporarily close the doctoral school.

*3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?*

## MONTENEGRO

University of Montenegro report that the first row provides the number of active students. There are some inactive students at PhD studies, which are still in the database, but they should be withdrawn from the University. So the numbers indicating a total number of enrolled active doctoral candidates underestimate a little bit the real situation.

Secondly, I will judge the capacity to handle this number of doctoral students in relation to human resources within the University of Montenegro. The number of professors at the University of Montenegro who are eligible to be supervisors (according to the Rules for Doctoral Studies) is roughly one hundred. One may say that the University of Montenegro has the capacity to enrol a maximum of 300 PhD students (3 students per professor).

This is an average estimate (300 students) over all possible disciplines. But if one takes a closer look at the list of eligible supervisors, one may conclude that they are concentrated in a few faculties in natural and technical sciences.

UDG strategic orientation is to build research, innovative and entrepreneurial University and that is why PhD studies are considered as one of the keystones of development. UDG keeps high standards at all level of studies, however wants to build internationally competitive research capacity through PhD studies.

The data given above shows that the number of PhD diplomas awarded is not high which leads us to two conclusions – UDG develops and has high quality PhD studies which require lots of work and investing lot of efforts in order to satisfy all criteria and get the degree (it is part of UDG strategic orientation to develop PhD studies which will be internationally competitive) and potential lack of students' motivation. Students (who usually work) enrol studies believing they will be able to finish them along with their regular job, however, during the course of studies the requirements and hard work, efforts and time which have to be invested in research are becoming the burden (these are students' opinions collected from several surveys conducted at different PhD programs – questions about reason why they are not active students), and they decide to stop or make a break. In practice, they are not active students.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, universities faced a serious challenge with minister decision that is in force for almost five years. Doctoral studies are interrupted since the academic year 2014-2015 by the MESY (Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth) in the framework of reassessment of the actual scientific situation in the HEI in order to formulate and implement the Higher Education Law in Albania.

No. The numbers are not in line neither with the country nor with the University capacity

*3.3. If data or information is not available, why?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

University of Montenegro reported that the data are available.

### **4.0. RESEARCH CAPACITY**

*It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?*

*4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

University of Montenegro is a comprehensive university, with many different research areas that could facilitate multidisciplinary research. The existence of a critical mass for doctoral studies at some faculties (e.g. electrical engineering, natural and mathematical sciences).

A small research community, which can easily facilitate collaboration and networking

UDG is clearly oriented to develop as research, innovative and entrepreneurial University and that is why PhD studies are considered as one of the keystones of development. UDG keeps high standards at all level of studies, however wants to build internationally competitive research capacity through PhD studies. That is why UDG invests in the development of PhD studies. UDG strenghts are in widespread international cooperation, many research projects developed at Univeristy, great research infrastructure (Product Design Laboratory - Product Development Laboratory and Materials Testing Laboratory, The Food Quality & Safety Laboratory, 3 D laboratory, Ideas Lab, CISCO Academy and Laboratory for Digital Forensics–the Cisco Academy, CCNA Laboratory, CCNP Laboratory, PhD Reseach Hub for programs in social sciences and humanities, etc.

Through mobility projects and intensive international co-operation, UDG also enabled PhD students to go on study visits at prestigious universities, including: KOF Swiss Economic Institute, Buckinghamshire New University, University of Torino, Université Libre de Bruxelles, University of Salzburg, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, China, etc. There has been a total of 16 study visits ranged from one month to three years. Bearing in mind that out of a total of 70 enrolled students, 45 are active ones, it can be concluded that nearly 1/3 of PhD students participated in study visits, which was in line with the recommendation on further internationalization. In order to improve the quality of academic staff, we should point out that four of our assistants who are also PhD students atUDG were sent to study outside Montenegro with the obligation to continue teaching atUDG after completing their studies.

## **ALBANIA**

Polytechnic University of Tirana has research capacities in all the engineering fields that it covers; mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, architecture and urban planning, geology and mining, mathematical engineering and physical engineering and computer engineering.

Referring to the latest developments and to the demands the most requested fields are:

1. Information Technology
2. Renewable Energy
3. Environment, Water.

University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi has academic staff in the field of economy and business. Academic staff is prepared and well qualified in several Western Universities in Europe and USA with right research capacity to open a doctoral school.

University Aleksander Moisiu, Durres the priorities of the scientific research are established by the each basic units plans periodically, as for the doctoral study program the priorities are in the public administration field, in management, economic sciences, marketing and tourism.

*4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

University of Montenegro reported that they do not have capacity in humanities and doctoral studies in the field of art.

## **ALBANIA**

The big question in Albania is that research is distant to the economic development and to the business community creating a great problem regarding the motivation of the people involved in the research and missing of funding.

From different point of view in order to increase the efficiency and the usefulness of the scientific research in general and doctoral researches specifically, institutions, universities should connect and network with all the actors such as government, local and central government, business, organizations etc. in this field we have to exchange and to learn a lot from successful western experience.

The main problem for the sustainable development of doctorates in Albania is the legislation and the lack of infrastructure. Metropolitan Tirana University, same as other Universities in Albania suffers from lack of research capacity and lack of network research cooperation with international schools. Funding for development of scientific research is limited. On the other hand, the current curriculum offered is not in line with developments in EU countries. The magnitude of these factors impedes the sustainable development of doctoral programs.

- There is a lack of funding for such kinds of studies;
- Haven't been able to sustain a funded program of research over time;
- There is no any specific budget for doctoral studies;
- Only one doctoral programme is offered by the University;
- There are no schools with doctoral programs in the country;
- Never was held any conference on doctoral education at University level;
- Lack of willingness in the past years to open new doctoral programmes;
- Lack of experienced staff;
- Lack of any strategic plan by the University for this field;
- Lack of facilities for research;
- Lack of up-to-date laboratories;
- Small number of graduates.

*4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

The previous answer imply the need for more intensive work in promoting research activities in general public and the need to acquire more funds for research work at national level which would be directed to good quality researchers, which would then serve as the role model for future PhD students. Some campaigns of Ministry



of Science are underway these days which target this problem. At UDG we enable PhD students to enter the program of international mobility, so most of them have the opportunity to go and conduct research abroad. Students have possibility to work at UDG research projects, and cooperate with best experts from their field of study.

At UDG we have special program of studies for undergraduate and master students who wants to go to PhD program after obtaining degrees of first two higher education degrees. These students have special training sessions, courses and seminars which are preparing them for PhD studies, which is a sort of promotion of research among them. It encourages them to orient to research and academic carrier.

*4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

The main concern in the field of humanities is that there is a lack of quality mentors and quality mentorship. Also, there are no research groups. A solution to the problem could be the networking with internationally renowned universities, with whom the University of Montenegro has already signed cooperation agreements.

At UDG we cannot say that we have lack of research capacities with respect to human resources and infrastructure and trying to overcome this through international projects. I'll mention some of the most recent ones. Thanks to the PhDRH@UDG (PhD Research Hub at University Donja Gorica) – the grant for the institutional development awarded to UDG through the project HERIC - INVO - "Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness", the PhD multidisciplinary research centre (UDG PhD Research Hub) started its work at UDG, which brings together PhD students and postgraduate students from all UDG faculties. The purpose of establishing the PhD multidisciplinary research center at UDG is the development of a unique research center for PhD students that will enable them to work together on different programmes and multidisciplinary projects and present the results of their work to UDG partners and academic and business community, thus leveraging the influence of the doctoral research. With project activities, the research equipment used by students and academic staff in their research was modernized and additionally the software tools used in multidisciplinary research (Matlab, SPSS, Eviews) were improved. With the support of international consultants - respected and distinguished professors involved in the project, UDG students, research and academic staff were given, within interactive workshops, the opportunity to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of research processes, research methodologies, the application of adequate research methods and the creation of appropriate samples. By this project, UDG has made the institutional improvement that leads to increasing the quality of research and teaching process not only at UDG, but also in Montenegro and the region.

Over the last two years, UDG has strengthened its teaching staff with experts from the field of applied and technical sciences, which resulted in the opening of the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Thanks to a significant basis of professors, the conditions have been created to establish doctoral studies at several more Faculty units which are in process of accreditation (Faculty of Arts and Communications, Faculty of Information Systems and Technology). In addition to developing the philosophical and educational dimension of the academic staff, a great attention is paid to improving research capabilities of the academic staff. Thus, apart from participating in numerous international projects, UDG organized the academic staff trainings in different areas starting from

Writing Scientific Research Projects (How to Make a Good Application?) & International Research Standards; Methodology of research and writing of scientific papers; Theory of samples for applied research; etc.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, Polytechnic University of Tirana points that the main concerns regarding the research capacities are:

Limited Human Resources

Laboratory base is very limited and

The implementation of the law requires the elaboration of many of its constituent elements by means of the by-laws.

In Albania there is certainly lack of capacity for research, in particular in some areas, but any lack of research capacities can and should be compensated through the collaboration with EU Universities and other Research Centers.

Also, the orientation of the research toward the business community and their needs might be a solution to the motivation of researchers and funding opportunities.

It should be also mentioned that the main issues are methodology, connection, bureaucracy, legal framework in the everyday practices and procedures. In order to resolve this issue firstly we have to learn and borrow the best western experiences and secondly dynamically apply and integrate these models and experiences in our reality.

The doctoral program in Albania has been closed for years. Scientific researchers that aspire to continue the academic world have it impossible to apply in Albania. Beyond legal constraints, technological factors are a strong inhibitor to the development of science. The lack of appropriate curricula for this type of program, as well as the lack of labs/ infrastructure, the lack of access to online libraries limit the quality of the research studies. A good opportunity for doctoral development in Albania is the creation of joint doctoral programs with international universities, which can remove the legal barriers in Albania and offer high academic expertise.

To our view, there is a lack of research capacity and the University should work hard to improve it. Our key concerns are the lack of doctoral programmes offered by the UV, lack of staff, lack of facilities, lack of knowledge/skills from some members of the staff etc.

*4.5. If data or information is not available, why?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

University of Montenegro reported that the data is available.

### **5.0. STRUCTURE OF A DOCTORAL PROGRAMME**

*How is a doctoral programme structured?*

*5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

Structure of a doctoral programme is defined by the “Rules for Doctoral Studies”, a document which is approved by the Senate.

The structure of the program of PhD studies is defined in curriculum and information lists for each discipline. This documentation is submitted within the documentation for accreditation. It is initially approved by the Faculty Council, along with the decision on establishment the new program, and approved by Senate. The documentation is then going through accreditation procedure (in the past Council for Higher Education, and now Agency for Quality in Higher Education appoints Committee for Accreditation consisting of relevant experts from the field). The Committee gives proposal to Council/Agency to approve the program and issue licence on accreditation. After program is accredited the structure is published at the website.

## **ALBANIA**

The Decision of Council of Ministers No. 112, Article 1, point 4 stipulates that: The candidate applies individually to the approved study program in the fields of research, offered by the base unit or the main unit. The base unit approves the individual research programs of the candidate only for those fields that belong to the approved doctoral programs that it offers. When the research fields are intertwined between two or more base units; in accordance between them; one of the base units is assigned responsible for providing the candidate’s research program.

The structure of the program of PhD studies is defined in curriculum and information lists for each discipline. This documentation is submitted within the documentation for accreditation. It is initially approved by the Faculty Council, along with the decision on establishment the new program, and approved by Senate. The documentation is then going through accreditation procedure (in the past Council for Higher Education, and now Agency for Quality in Higher Education appoints Committee for Accreditation consisting of relevant experts from the field). The Committee gives proposal to Council/Agency to approve the program and issue licence on accreditation. After program is accredited the structure is published at the website.

In Albania, the structure should have been defined in accordance of the Law of Higher Education and on the Rules and Decisions of Education Ministry.

According to the law Nr. 80/2015 ‘Education and research in higher education institutions in the republic of Albania’, the organizational autonomy and selection of personnel is guaranteed through the right: a) to self-govern, to select governing bodies, to organize the structures and to regulate the ways of exercising their activity through their internal acts drafted in accordance with this law and other legal, sub legal acts in force; b) to set criteria for admission of students to study programs, in accordance with this law; c) to conclude agreements with legal, public and private persons, domestic or foreign, for the development of teaching, research, qualification, innovation, and other legitimate activities; c) to independently determine the number of personnel, the criteria and procedures for its selection, as well as to determine the salaries of the staff, in accordance with the institution's form.

### *5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro, out of 60 ECTS in the first year of doctoral studies, a minimum of 40 ECTS are coursework that comprises five courses, of which one is obligatory and the other four are elective.

At the UDG, the studies are organized in accordance with the legal regulations that include a total of 6 semesters, 30 ECTS per semester. During the first two semesters, students attend classes and take examinations, while other four semesters are dedicated to research work and preparations for their doctoral thesis.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, it is still not clear if PhD students should follow any course or they should develop only scientific research. ECTS is not applicable in doctoral studies, though definition is evasive in the legal framework. Actually, our requirement is 60 ECTS divided in general courses and profile field courses.

In order to obtain a doctoral degree at the University of Vlora, a total of 180 ECTS is required. The first year the PhD students need to fulfil 60 ECTS with some obligated courses (according specialization) and the rest 120 ECTS are obtained by the thesis.

*5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

At the University of Montenegro,

- Doctoral candidate must pass all the exams before the approval of the thesis title.
- Doctoral candidate must defend, in front of the nominated committee, the results of initial investigations and the thesis title as well, before the title is approved by the Senate.
- Before presenting a PhD thesis for evaluation, a doctoral candidate must publish a paper in international journal indexed in SCI, SCIE, SSCI or A&HCI lists, as a first author. The paper must contain the basic results from the thesis.

Doctoral candidate must defend a PhD thesis.

The work of each student is supervised by two or three mentors, one of whom has to work outside UDG according to the model of doctoral studies developed by the Rector. In order for a lecturer to be a mentor, it is necessary for him/her to have adequate references from the study area that is the area of PhD research. Apart from lectures, examinations, speaker`s platforms, debates, participations in scientific-research projects and mentoring consultations, the PhD candidate goes through the following stages: (I) Thinking about the problem and the hypothesis of research from a theoretical and methodological point of view, (II) Mini Thesis and its Defense; (III) Writing PhD thesis. During the work on PhD thesis, the candidate is obliged to hold three lectures in front of the commission made up of experts from various fields in order to defend the methodology and results of his/her research. The student should write at least one paper in a international or national journal in order to defend a doctoral thesis.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, at the PUT the doctoral scientific degree is obtained after the successful defending the dissertation thesis at the conclusion of doctoral studies in the field of higher education and scientific research, according to the criteria and within the deadlines set by the legislation on higher education and scientific research.

The main unit; according to the regulation of the third cycle of studies; defines the specific criteria:

- a) That the candidate must complete in order to be accepted or to transfer the studies in the study program, according to the research field;
- b) For the annual evaluation of the progress of the candidates and the continuation of the work for the development of the research project during the period of doctoral studies;
- c) That the candidate must complete before the final defence of the dissertation thesis;
- d) When doctoral studies are interrupted, postponed or suspended;
- e) For the payment deadlines for the entire program cycle.

The basic criteria that the candidate has to complete before defending the dissertation are:

- a) The candidate must have realized as first or second author (when the first author is the scientific leader) at least 3 (three) referrals, 2 (two) of which are delivered in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the European Union member states, the OECD or the G20; accepted on a preliminary scientific evaluation basis and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;
- b) The candidate must have published at least 3 (three) scientific articles in scientific journals, of which 2 (two) must published or accepted for publication in indexed journals of OECD, EU or G20 countries, that have an editorial board; where, at least in one of the articles the candidate must be the first author and in the second article be a second author.

The candidate compiles the dissertation according to the format approved in the third cycle regulations. The dissertation should bring theoretical and / or empirical innovations in the relevant field of research as well as contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge. The dissertation is prepared in Albanian language and its summary (2000-4000 words) in one of the five European Union languages: English, French, German,

Spanish or Italian, in printed and electronic format. The dissertation is approved by the scientific leader before submission.

The candidate submits the dissertation, as defined in the above paragraph, together with the file, to the head of the main unit, who then delivers it to the basic unit for evaluation within 15 (fifteen) days from the submission date. After the evaluation from the base unit, the dissertation and the candidate's file are delivered to the Commission for Scientific Doctoral Award, within 30 (thirty) days. If the file is positively evaluated, the Commission, within 30 (thirty) days raises the jury for the dissertation's assessment. The jury sets the date for the defending of the dissertation within 15 (fifteen) days of its formation. The dissertation is presented to the jury, which makes the evaluation. The jury compiles the evaluation report and submits it to the Commission for Scientific Doctoral Award, which takes the decision to award the "doctoral" degree within 10 (ten) days and submits it to the head of the main unit for further procedures.

The basic criteria to be fulfilled by the candidate before defending the dissertation are:

- a) Have realized as the first or second author when the first author is the scientific leader, at least 3 (three) referrals, 2 (two) of which are held in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress) , in one of the European Union, OECD or G20 member states, admitted on the basis of a prior scientific evaluation and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;
- b) Have published at least 3 (three) scientific articles in scientific journals, of which 2 (two) have been published or accepted for publication in indexed journals of OECD, EU or G20 countries, editorial board, where, at least, one of them is the first author and the second author of the second.

#### *5.4. What is the duration of a programme?*

### **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro the duration of a doctoral programme is 3 years (360 ECTS). In practice, it is usually longer, as most of them work. Usually, they give all exams according to the schedule but work longer on their research.

### **ALBANIA**

Doctoral studies in Albania have a duration of not less than 3 nor longer than 5 academic years.

The duration of the program is foreseen to be 3-5years. Doctoral degrees are held full-time or prolonged in time, in those cases where the doctorate is employed as an academic staff in another higher education institution or as a research staff at a research institution higher education institutions. PhD studies last no less than three academic years and no more than five academic years.

#### *5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

According to the report from UM, the structure is rigid. It should be more flexible so it can be easily adapted for a variety of different possible areas within a single study programme. All courses should be elective in my opinion. Also ECTS credits for research makes no sense. In addition, doctoral candidates do not receive any teaching with regard to the so called transferable skills. The opinion is shared with the representatives from the UDG.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, referred to the new law we think that the structuring of the Doctoral School is untimely. The study programs of Scientific Master do not represent in-depth studies so as to address the candidate for the topic he will choose. We think that theoretical studies are important and they should have the needed space.

We need to have the best experience of how the doctoral schools are organized in EU countries to give a proper opinion.

*5.6. If data or information is not available, why?*

**MONTENEGRO:** University of Montenegro reported on available data.

## **6.0. SELECTION AND ADMISSION**

*Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?*

*6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

According to the Law on Higher Education, enrolment in Doctoral studies is performed on a competitive basis, according to the results achieved at Master's academic studies, in accordance with the Law and the Statute of the Institution.

According to the Statute of the University of Montenegro, candidates who have acquired a diploma of the academic title of Master within a specific area of science have the right to enter the competition for enrolment in Doctoral studies. Enrolment is performed on competitive grounds in accordance with the average grade at Master's level, after a conducted procedure of ranking. Candidates with the same average grade have the right to enrol under equal conditions. Any candidate who considers the ranking to be irregular has the right to object to the Committee of the Organizational Unit. The decision of the Committee is final. The Senate of the University verifies decisions on enrolment.

So, the answer to this question is: Committee of the Organizational Unit (Committee of the Faculty) checks if the candidate has the appropriate Master diploma. For example, if a candidate for PhD in physics has Master in Physics, then he/she is allowed to compete with other candidates for enrolment at PhD study programme in Physics. If the candidate has Master diploma in Economy, then he/she is immediately rejected. After the first

selection procedure, all eligible candidates are ranked solely on the basis of the average grade at Master's level. The Senate of the University verifies decisions on enrolment.

The selection of PhD candidates is process consisting of several phases. All Montenegrin and foreign citizens can enrol PhD studies under the same conditions. Official languages at UDG are Montenegrin and English so courses are conducted on both languages. The first stage of the admissions process, following the public invitation to potential PhD students to submit the application. Application usually consists of sending motivation letter and CV of candidate, however depending on the field of doctoral studies some additional requirement can be set (for example candidate can be asked to submit essay on certain topic). The deadline is set and all documents and application are reviewed by Admissions Committee consisting of the Head of PhD studies and several professors. The candidate who satisfy the formal criteria to enrol the studies and whose motivation letters and (or) essays are graded as satisfactory are invited for an interview. Interview is usually organized with the Head of PhD program and several professors. At the interview students have to demonstrate their motivation, and dedication to research and academic work, however some questions can include testing their knowledge and the way of thinking about certain expert topics. After all candidates go through interview the decision is made whether they can enrol the studies directly or organizing preparation courses and seminars is needed, either because their education background is such that they need to acquire more knowledge about certain topics in order to be prepared to follow the course of the program without problem. The third possibility is that student is not allowed to enrol the program because she or he doesn't satisfy requirements. Preparation courses can be organized in different fields and each of the students can be asked to attend a course designed according to his capacities and background. At the end of preparation courses, each student is taking written or oral exam, writes a paper, etc. and if his/her work is graded as satisfactory she/he can formally enroll PhD studies. If he fails, he will not be accepted as PhD student. For example the generation of PhD students enrolled in study year 2017/18 at the program "International Economics" had preparatory courses, while the 6 candidates who applied for the same program of PhD studies in 2016/17 and 2018/19. did not pass at the interview so the decision was made not to enroll the students at that program in those study years.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, the studies for the Scientific Doctoral Degree are developed in full-time at the base unit, or in a prolonged time in the cases where the candidate is employed as an academic staff in another higher education institution or as research staff at a base or implemented research institution, at higher education institutions such as "universities" or "academies", which meet the legal criteria and those set out in this Decision of the Council of Ministers No.112.

### *6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

As explained in the section 6.1. the general procedure of selection process is more or less the same, however depending on the field of study and the background of candidates some additional requirements can be introduced in order to make sure that all PhD candidates have the same starting point and that they can follow the program without obstacles. All PhD program at UDG are multidisciplinary and individually oriented according to students background and research interests, which makes the selection procedure very important part of the studies. The reason is to choose the best candidates who will be able to take the burden of studies and conduct research, write and defend the thesis which will give original contribution to the field of study.



## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, the Department which offers the doctoral programme might decide on specific criteria. The legal framework provides the possibility to differentiate the criteria.

*6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro, officially, supervisor is not selecting his/her doctoral candidates. On the other hand, there is no mechanism to force any professor to accept supervision of any doctoral candidate, i.e. we cannot allocate a candidate to a supervisor if the supervisor does not want to supervise. Formally, a Faculty makes the suggestion to the Committee for Doctoral Studies; the Committee then considers this suggestion and proposes the supervisor for the doctoral candidates to the Senate which nominates the supervisor. But it is obvious that there is a previous agreement between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate.

The Committee for PhD studies and the Head of PhD program can propose the doctoral candidate to a supervisor (mentor), depending on the research interest of the candidate and the field of expertise of potential mentor (advisor). The proposal is not mandatory. After a candidate is proposed to advisor, they have to organize direct meetings and consultations about the topic of research, after which an advisor (mentor) can decide if she/he is willing to accept mentorship and work with the candidate on the PhD thesis.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, the base unit, department, is responsible for the doctoral study program. The department will have to assign the scientific researchers according to the disciplines and fields of research.

According to the Decision of our Education Ministry an academic staff that has the title “Professor” cannot have more than 7 doctoral students and with the title “Associate Professor” no more than 5 candidates.

As there is no specific decision to select doctoral candidates the first priority is the desire and the request of the candidate.

*6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

Supervisor selects candidates according to the following criteria (most probably):

- Student’s previous academic records
- His/her motivation for research
- Personal qualities

The most important selection criteria in admissions procedure is an interview with Head of PhD studies and professors where a student has to demonstrate his clear dedication to research and academic work, but also

to demonstrate his knowledge and the way of thinking about certain topics. At UDG it is very important that our students (at all level of studies) shares common values we develop at UDG: academic integrity, willingness to learn and invest efforts in research and education, to be open-minded, to have capacity for holistic way of thinking and interdisciplinary research, to be friendly oriented among peers, to be able to cooperate and build academic network, to speak foreign languages, to be ready to participate in research projects and enter academic mobility. Of course knowledge and references in the field of science are necessary, but not sufficient condition to become UDG PhD student.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania the most important criteria is the Grade Average Point from the Scientific Master and the requirement to have the presentation of three papers among which two of them in conferences organized in one of EU countries or OECD countries and the publication of three scientific articles from which two should be published in indexed journals with editorial board in EU countries or in OECD countries.

The most important criteria are the average grade point of bachelor and master studies and the interest of research in the specific field (documented).

The criteria set out in the internal regulations of UMT for the admission of candidates are:

- Possession of a Master's Degree Master's degree or equivalent diploma in the required field. For applicants who have completed their studies abroad, the diploma must be equivalent to the responsible state structures.
- high scores in the first and second cycle studies, in accordance with the criteria announced each academic year. Exceptions are those special cases that are deemed reasonable by the relevant commissions for granting the title "Doctor".
- possession of evidence of one of the five foreign languages assessed according to internationally recognized tests, in accordance with the applicable legislation, level C1;
- recommendations by persons who have a scientific title, who recognize the academic and professional skills of the candidate;
- implementation of scientific and ethical standards (declarations).

The two most important criteria are: The supervisor to have adequate knowledge and huge experience in the field that is going to be conducted the doctoral thesis and secondly to accept to supervise this candidate.

### *6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?*

## **MONTENEGRO**

Representative of the MU considers that the The main criteria for admission should be the quality of doctoral candidate's research proposal, personal motivation for research, and not their average grade at master's study.

I truly believe that selection criteria are set appropriately. Having in mind long term orientation of UDG to development of research, innovation and entrepreneurship, the only possible approach to admissions of PhD students is to select the best who have the best references in certain field of studies, but who also share UDG core values.

**ALBANIA:** The process has not started yet.

To our view, the candidate should choose by himself the supervisor and not to be proposed by the Doctoral Committee.

*6.6. If data or information is not available, why?*

**MONTENEGRO:** University of Montenegro - available data.

## **7.0. SUPERVISION**

*What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?*

*7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?*

### **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro, Supervisors are financially stimulated. Following the successful defence of a PhD thesis, supervisor receives a sum that approximately equals a two month salary. There is an internal University act that defines financial stimulation for supervisors of doctoral candidates. Thesis supervision is also recognized as one of pedagogical activities criteria for academic promotion, but it is not an eliminatory criterion.

All supervisors have the interest to work with PhD candidates because their academic promotion has requirements related to mentorship and supervisory work with PhD students. They are also motivated to work and advise candidates to conduct research in certain areas because high quality research work results in high quality research papers which can be published in relevant journals in co-authorship with candidates. It is also very often the case that mentors and candidates are applying for international projects which can be funded from international or national sources, which can also involve other students and professors, and enable them to develop their research further. Financial benefits are not so high – the fee which is paid to supervisors can not be considered as strong incentive to potential mentors, so these other benefits are considered much more important.

### **ALBANIA**

Benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise a candidate are defined in the law and are as follows:

- They receive a payment;
- This is one of the criteria to be completed by the staff holding the degree Associate Professor in order to be awarded the title Professor later on; and
- There is an institutional contribution in the scientific research

Similarly, supervisors in Albanian institutions are paid by the University based on the Rules and Decisions of the Ministry of Education that determines the workload during the supervision.

*7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?*

## MONTENEGRO

In Montenegro, a supervisor must be an active researcher. Supervisors in the fields of social sciences and humanities must have at least three scientific papers published in journals indexed in SSCI or A&HCI databases, and supervisors in the fields of natural, technical sciences and medicine must have at least five scientific papers published in journals indexed in SCI or SCIE databases. All supervisors must have publication record in the scientific field of the dissertation, and be either associate or full professors. One researcher may supervise a maximum of 3 doctoral candidates at the same time.

Formal requirement to be allowed to supervise are formally set by the Accreditation body and criteria (The Agency for Quality in Higher Education). Supervisor is required to have at least two published papers in relevant international journals in their field of studies in last five years (the field of studies of PhD topic). This is legal requirement, however at university or faculty level some additional requirements can be set. The quality of supervisory work is being double-checked at UDG PhD studies, because after mentor - advisor approves the PhD thesis, members of Advisory committee also have to approve it. However this approval is necessary but not sufficient condition for the thesis to go into procedure of defence. The Head of PhD studies also have to approve the thesis before it goes to further procedure. Beside the fact that student have to defend their proposal and three research papers which are integral part of PhD thesis in front of interdisciplinary professors' committee, this milestone is also very important part of ensuring quality of PhD studies.

## ALBANIA

In Albania, The doctoral studies are developed in the form of research groups, led by academic staff that hold the academic title "associate professor" or "professor". The number of doctoral candidates within each research group, which includes all the supervisions that academic staff supervises in all the higher education institutions where he is engaged, is:

- a) Not more than 7 (seven), in the case of academic staff holding the title "professor";
- b) Not more than 5 (five), in the case of academic staff holding the title "associate professor";
- c) Not more than 3 (three), in the case of the academic staff, holding the academic title "associate professor" or "professor" that works part-time.

In Albania, the requirement is to have the academic title “Associate Professor” or “Professor”.

The main requirement of the academic staff to be allowed to supervise is to be from the Professor category. The number of students within each research group, which also includes all the students that the academic staff pursues in all higher education institutions where he is engaged, is: a) no more than 7 (seven) in the case where the academic staff holds the title "professor"; b) no more than 5 (five), in the case where the full time academic staff holds the title "associate professor"; c) no more than 3 (three), in case where the academic staff, having the academic title "associate professor" or "professor", is engaged part time.

*7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?*

## MONTENEGRO

The representative from Montenegro reported that the quality of supervision should be improved. Supervisors should be active researchers, which isn't always the case at the moment, especially in the fields of social

sciences and humanities. Their publication records should contain much more publications published in renowned journals and by renowned publishers than is the case at the moment. Supervisors should be much more dedicated to their work and not ask the candidates to write reports instead of them, which is a common practice.

In some cases, when there is no eligible supervisor at the Faculty, some eminent professor from abroad is elected as a supervisor. In these cases there is often no day-to-day contact between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate, so that the candidate works on its own most of the time. This is not adequate.

All supervisors at UDG are really devoted to their role of mentors and supervisors. The whole process and methodology of work conducted at PhD studies ensures that UDG has great quality of PhD studies and all advisors who mentored PhD theses of UDG candidates, who are coming from regional or international universities are praising different approach implied at UDG doctoral programs which ensures great PhD thesis and great quality of UDG doctoral candidates. They emphasize the fact that the methodology developed along the course of UDG PhD studies is very demanding both for a student and for an advisor, however the final results are very high quality PhD thesis which are giving real contribution to the development of certain field of study.

Although the process is demanding the results and indicators obtained through students surveys within Quality Assurance System at UDG shows that students are really satisfied with PhD studies, and despite all challenges and hard work consider them very important for their professional, but also personal life, as facing all challenges of demanding research work make their personality and character stronger, which is the part of UDG model of studies.

Please note that the answer to this question doesn't refer to general quality of supervision work in Montenegro, but only about the supervisory work at UDG PhD studies.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, relatively since it is difficult to find a specific supervisor for a specific study direction. The supervisors are specified in broader fields rather than specific ones.

You can consider somehow adequate but as the quality is a continuous process of improving much more should be done from our University to dedicate funds to put as a priority investing in teaching quality and supporting much more academic staff with further qualifications and opportunities. Always focusing on the internationalization, a solution to this improvement might be a twining between supervisors from Albania and from Western European Universities.

According to our overall situation as a country, history, changing systems, transition etc, these are all factors that influence also in the quality of the research work in a macro point of view, so there is a lot to do in order to improve expertise in scientific research, for that reason we need successful models and methodologies.

### *7.4. If data or information is not available, why?*

**MONTENEGRO:** Only University of Montenegro reported on availability of data.

## 8.0. ADDITIONAL ISSUES

*What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?*

*8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern*

### **MONTENEGRO**

The representative of the University of Montenegro stated that the quality of doctoral education at the University of Montenegro – the project should help establish doctoral education standards by using comparative data and learning from good practices in order to assure quality culture in doctoral education, as well as to develop the mechanisms for regular monitoring of the process of doctoral education and adopt the measures for performance assessment on a regular basis.

As already mentioned the lack of motivation of potential PhD candidates in Montenegro can be considered as danger to further development of PhD education. UDG insists on keeping high level standards in PhD education and will continue to do so.

### **ALBANIA**

From the Albanian perspective, regarding the financing of the doctoral schools two resources should be the base: Grants from Education Ministry based on priority sectors of Country Development and Business Community based on agreements between University and business sector.

Till now in Albania the research has been apart from the country development and business community needs and this should change drastically because has destroyed the motivation and the sense of doing research.

A change on the Doctoral Education in Albania is needed, to our view. The most significant concern for us is the shutdown of doctoral programmes from the Government since 2013 and there are no new enrolment since then. A very important issue also is private Universities. The legal framework must be very strict for them to provide PhD studies. This because in the most of the times they work like a “private company/enterprise” by just “selling” the PhD diploma. Additionally, PhD students’ selection by public Universities must be more transparent. Another important issue is that both Ministry of Education and each University to predict a specific budget for doctoral studies.

*8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report*

### **MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro, a career support for doctoral candidates through the establishment of professional support at the institutional level with well-prepared and trained administrative staff, organization of transferrable skills training, establishment of the alumni system and promotion of new formats for starting career (e.g. spin-offs, incubators, technology parts).

Investing efforts in promoting PhD education among young undergraduates in Montenegro and master students is very important in order to develop PhD studies and research capacities in general. Here I don't think about PhD level of studies which would be considered as the tool to get an additional degree, but as of the tool to improve research and innovation capacity of an individual, a university or a country.

## **ALBANIA**

In Albania, the Law 80/2015; Article 80 defines Joint study programs

1. Joint study programs shall be carried out by a higher education institution or its main unit, in cooperation with one or more other higher education institutions, public or non-public, within or outside the country.
2. The process of implementing joint programs may be carried out in one or in the participating institutions, in accordance with the cooperation agreement.
3. At the end of the studies a joint degree or a double degree or a multiple diploma is issued by the participating institutions.
4. In the case of joint study programs with foreign institutions of higher education, other standards, different from state ones, may be applied.
5. The opening of joint study programs is done with the approval of the ministry responsible for education.

Another important issue to be addressed in the report is creation of the link between research and the priorities of the country development in every sector possible.

Also, the internationalization should be considered as an important part of the Universities strategies in order for a doctoral school to have always present the expertise of the Western Universities and Scientific research Centers.

## 4 Appendix 1

### 4.0. Appendix 1

**"Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"**

**Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna.**

**Output D1.1** "Report on the "state of the art" in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices" Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education. Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8th** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

In case some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

<b>Your name:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>E-mail contact:</b>	

#### Overview of the Questionnaire

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items



## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

### **What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?**

- 1.1. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education
- 1.2. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?
- 1.3. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education
- 1.4. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?
- 1.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## 2. Strategy and Vision

### **What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

- 2.1. What are the most relevant issues?
- 2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?
- 2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?
- 2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?
- 2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## 3. Statistical Data

### **How much doctoral candidates do you have?**

- 3.1. Please fill the following table:
- 3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?
- 3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

## 4. Research Capacity

### **It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?**

- 4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?
- 4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?
- 4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?
- 4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?
- 4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## 5. Structure of a doctoral programme

### **How is a doctoral programme structured?**

- 5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?
- 5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?
- 5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?
- 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?
- 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?
- 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## 6. Selection and admission

### **Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?**

- 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?
- 6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?
- 6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?
- 6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?
- 6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?
- 6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## 7. Supervision

### **What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

- 7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?
- 7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?
- 7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?
- 7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

## 8. Additional items

### **What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

- 8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:
- 8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1*

## 5 Appendix 2

List of partner country institutions and respondents of the Survey	
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## University of Montenegro

## **A1.1 "Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"**

**Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna**

**Output D1.1** "Report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices" Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education.

Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8th** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

In case some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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### **Overview of the Questionnaire**

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items

## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

**What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?**

1.1. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

**Higher education law.** HE law prescribes that enrolment in doctoral studies must be performed competitively, according to the results achieved at Master's academic studies (article 96). Students at first and second level of studies are exempted from paying scholarship, while students at the third level, doctoral studies, should pay the scholarship (article 69a). Doctoral Study programmes may be accredited as academic, i.e. there is no possibility for professional doctorate (article 81). Only the university is eligible to issue a PhD diploma.

**Statute of the University of Montenegro.** Statute defines responsibilities of various actors (Rector, Senate, Faculty, Centre for Doctoral Studies, Committee for Doctoral Studies) in the process of acquiring a PhD diploma.

1.2. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?

- Statute
- Rules for doctoral studies

1.3. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?

**Senate** is responsible to adopt a General Act to determine the Rules of Study at all levels and Rules of Doctoral Studies in particular. Senate also performs other tasks prescribed by the Rules of Doctoral Studies.

**Faculty** proposes the number of students for enrolment at all levels of studies; it proposes to the Management Board the amount of tuition fee for PhD studies; it also performs other tasks prescribed by other General Acts of the University in connection with PhD studies.

**Centre for Doctoral Studies** is an internal organizational unit of the University of Montenegro, which is responsible for administrative realization of doctoral studies.

**Committee for Doctoral Studies** is a permanent professional body which deals with all the issues related to the organization of doctoral studies, procedures and curricula; it gives opinions and suggests proposals for decisions to be adopted by the Senate.

**Government.** If the University of Montenegro wants to organise studies in cooperation with a domestic

or foreign Higher Education Institution, for example to issue a Joint or a Double PhD diploma, it has to obtain consent of the Government before the start of the programme.

**Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education** conducts the accreditation procedure of a study programme (doctoral study programme in particular) and issues a certificate on the accreditation of the study programme.

#### 1.4. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

The regulatory framework is adequate. The Rules of Doctoral Studies are clear and accompanied by the guidelines for both candidates and mentors, so that each party knows what it is expected to do and what standards of quality should be achieved. The only drawback is the expected length of doctoral studies (three academic years) which is almost impossible to achieve, at least in humanities and social sciences, having in mind that the candidates are expected to have a paper published in a journal indexed in SSCI or A&HCI databases before he or she can submit the thesis for evaluation.

Furthermore, certain solutions in Higher Education Law are not good. For example, the University of Montenegro has no (or very limited) freedom to select candidates for doctoral studies according to its needs. The University has to accept everyone based solely on their marks at Master level studies. Another point of concern is that the Higher Education Law “discriminates” the PhD students at public universities, since they are the only ones who should pay the tuition fee.

#### 1.5. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

## 2. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

### 2.1. What are the most relevant issues?

I will write down the strategic objectives as set down by the REDOS project. As for myself I agree with most of these issues:

- G. To set doctoral education standards by using comparative data and learning from good practices in order to assure quality culture in doctoral education;
- H. To foster research capacity and to optimize university potential for research; to stimulate national, regional and international cooperation by facilitating the training and education of young researchers;
- I. To adopt changes in the structure of doctoral studies and their implementation in order to

be comparable with other doctoral studies across Europe and to reach higher level of efficiency of doctoral programmes;

- J. To develop specific systems for quality assurance in doctoral education that need to be supported by the governing and management of the institution and linked to other relevant structural documents and policies such as research strategy, internationalization strategy, university financing policy;
- K. To develop career support for doctoral candidates bearing in mind that doctoral education must take into account individual interests and motivation as well as to prepare doctoral candidates for a wide range of careers, both in academia and non-academia working environments;
- L. To increase visibility of individual researchers and areas of their expertise.

2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

Yes, there were measurable targets set, but Strategy was never adopted by the Senate (in 2017 there were turmoil in the university management, Rector was removed by the Governing Board, so I believe this was the only reason why the Strategy was neglected).

2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?

Yes, the strategy for doctoral education is presented in a document entitled “Strategy for Doctoral Education” for the period 2017-2022. The document describes the institutional, national and European context of doctoral education as well as the objectives, goals, key performance indicators and recommendations for the five year period defined by the Strategy. There isn’t a concrete roadmap, but there is a concrete Action plan in the form of an internal document of the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?

I am satisfied with the above mentioned Strategy, but I am not satisfied with the fact that the Action plan has not been implemented.

2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

### 3. Statistical Data

#### How much doctoral candidates do you have?

3.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
--	------	------	------	------	------



Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	96	75	70	76	88
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	41	24	30	37	58
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	17	20	19	20	10

### 3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

The first row provides the number of active students. There are some inactive students at PhD studies, which are still in the database, but they should be withdrawn from the University. So the numbers indicating a total number of enrolled active doctoral candidates underestimate a little bit the real situation.

Secondly, I will judge the capacity to handle this number of doctoral students in relation to human resources within the University of Montenegro. The number of professors at the University of Montenegro who are eligible to be supervisors (according to the Rules for Doctoral Studies) is roughly one hundred. One may say that the University of Montenegro has the capacity to enrol a maximum of 300 PhD students (3 students per professor).

This is an average estimate (300 students) over all possible disciplines. But if one takes a closer look at the list of eligible supervisors, one may conclude that they are concentrated in a few faculties in natural and technical sciences.

### 3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

## 4. Research Capacity

**It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?**

### 4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?

A comprehensive university, with many different research areas that could facilitate multidisciplinary

research.

The existence of a critical mass for doctoral studies at some faculties (e.g. electrical engineering, natural and mathematical sciences).

A small research community, which can easily facilitate collaboration and networking

#### 4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?

Humanities and doctoral studies in the field of art.

#### 4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

Yes, in the field of electrical engineering there are excellent, internationally renowned, research groups. Members of these groups recruit young researchers, act as their mentors, and include them as collaborators in research projects.

#### 4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?

The main concern in the field of humanities is that there is a lack of quality mentors and quality mentorship. Also, there are no research groups. A solution to the problem could be the networking with internationally renowned universities, with whom the University of Montenegro has already signed cooperation agreements.

#### 4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

## 5. Structure of a doctoral programme

### How is a doctoral programme structured?

#### 5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

Structure of a doctoral programme is defined by the “Rules for Doctoral Studies”, a document which is approved by the Senate.

#### 5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?

Out of 60 ECTS in the first year of doctoral studies, a minimum of 40 ECTS are coursework that comprises five courses, of which one is obligatory and the other four are elective.

#### 5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

- Doctoral candidate must pass all the exams before the approval of the thesis title.

- Doctoral candidate must defend, in front of the nominated committee, the results of initial investigations and the thesis title as well, before the title is approved by the Senate.
- Before presenting a PhD thesis for evaluation, a doctoral candidate must publish a paper in international journal indexed in SCI, SCIE, SSCI or A&HCI lists, as a first author. The paper must contain the basic results from the thesis.
- Doctoral candidate must defend a PhD thesis.

#### 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?

The duration of a doctoral programme is 3 years (360 ECTS). In practice, it is usually longer.

#### 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?

I think the structure is rigid. It should be more flexible so it can be easily adapted for a variety of different possible areas within a single study programme. All courses should be elective in my opinion. Also ECTS credits for research makes no sense. In addition, doctoral candidates do not receive any teaching with regard to the so called transferable skills.

#### 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

## 6. Selection and admission

### Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?

#### 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

According to the Law on Higher Education, enrolment in Doctoral studies is performed on a competitive basis, according to the results achieved at Master's academic studies, in accordance with the Law and the Statute of the Institution.

According to the Statute of the University of Montenegro, candidates who have acquired a diploma of the academic title of Master within a specific area of science have the right to enter the competition for enrolment in Doctoral studies. Enrolment is performed on competitive grounds in accordance with the average grade at Master's level, after a conducted procedure of ranking. Candidates with the same average grade have the right to enrol under equal conditions. Any candidate who considers the ranking to be irregular has the right to object to the Committee of the Organizational Unit. The decision of the Committee is final. The Senate of the University verifies decisions on enrolment.

So, the answer to this question is: Committee of the Organizational Unit (Committee of the Faculty) checks if the candidate has the appropriate Master diploma. For example, if a candidate for PhD in

physics has Master in Physics, then he/she is allowed to compete with other candidates for enrolment at PhD study programme in Physics. If the candidate has Master diploma in Economy, then he/she is immediately rejected. After the first selection procedure, all eligible candidates are ranked solely on the basis of the average grade at Master's level. The Senate of the University verifies decisions on enrolment.

6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline? No.

6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

Officially, supervisor is not selecting his/her doctoral candidates. On the other hand, there is no mechanism to force any professor to accept supervision of any doctoral candidate, i.e. we cannot allocate a candidate to a supervisor if the supervisor does not want to supervise. Formally, a Faculty makes the suggestion to the Committee for Doctoral Studies; the Committee then considers this suggestion and proposes the supervisor for the doctoral candidates to the Senate which nominates the supervisor. But it is obvious that there is a previous agreement between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate.

6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?

Is this question about how the University selects the supervisor, or how the supervisor selects the candidate? My understanding of this question that it is about the criteria for selecting doctoral candidates.

Supervisor selects candidates according to the following criteria (most probably):

- Student's previous academic records
- His/her motivation for research
- Personal qualities

6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?

I am not satisfied. The main criterion for admission should be the quality of doctoral candidate's research proposal, personal motivation for research, and not their average grade at master's study.

6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

## 7. Supervision

**What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

Supervisors are financially stimulated. Following the successful defence of a PhD thesis, supervisor receives a sum that approximately equals a two month salary. There is an internal University act that defines financial stimulation for supervisors of doctoral candidates. Thesis supervision is also recognized as one of pedagogical activities criteria for academic promotion, but it is not an eliminatory criterion.

7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?

A supervisor must be an active researcher. Supervisors in the fields of social sciences and humanities must have at least three scientific papers published in journals indexed in SSCI or A&HCI databases, and supervisors in the fields of natural, technical sciences and medicine must have at least five scientific papers published in journals indexed in SCI or SCIE databases. All supervisors must have publication record in the scientific field of the dissertation, and be either associate or full professors. One researcher may supervise a maximum of 3 doctoral candidates at the same time.

7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?

The quality of supervision should be improved. Supervisors should be active researchers, which isn't always the case at the moment, especially in the fields of social sciences and humanities. Their publication records should contain much more publications published in renowned journals and by renowned publishers than is the case at the moment. Supervisors should be much more dedicated to their work and not ask the candidates to write reports instead of them, which is a common practice.

In some cases, when there is no eligible supervisor at the Faculty, some eminent professor from abroad is elected as a supervisor. In these cases there is often no day-to-day contact between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate, so that the candidate works on its own most of the time. This is not adequate.

7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

The data is available.

## 8. Additional items

### **What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

The quality of doctoral education at the University of Montenegro – the project should help establish doctoral education standards by using comparative data and learning from good practices in order to assure quality culture in doctoral education, as well as to develop the mechanisms for regular monitoring of the process of doctoral education and adopt the measures for performance assessment on a regular basis.

8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

A career support for doctoral candidates through the establishment of professional support at the institutional level with well-prepared and trained administrative staff, organization of transferrable skills training, establishment of the alumni system and promotion of new formats for starting career (e.g. spin-offs, incubators, technology parts).

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1 Team*

## University of Donja Gorica

## **A1.1 "Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"**

**Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna.**

**Output D1.1** "Report on the "state of the art" in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices" Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education.

Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8<sup>th</sup>** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

In case some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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### **Overview of the Questionnaire**

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items



## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

### What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?

#### 1.6. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

National legal framework of higher education in Montenegro is shaped by Law on Higher Education, adopted in 2014 and amended in 2017. The reform of higher education observing the principles of the Bologna Declaration was initiated by the Law on Higher Education, adopted in October 2003. At the time of adopting the 2003 Law on Higher Education there was only one (public) university in Montenegro (University of Montenegro), whereas at present there are also four private universities, several independent private faculties and one independent public faculty.

Law on Higher Education regulates the fundamentals of higher education, requirements for conducting the activities, types of study programmes, organisation principles of institutions conducting this activity, rights and obligations of academic staff and students, quality assurance, financing of higher education, as well as other matters significant for the performance of higher education activities.

Law on Higher Education establishes the Council for Higher Education as the body responsible for improving the higher education area. The Council members are appointed by the Parliament of Montenegro. According to the Law it is the body responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of higher education in Montenegro. The Council served as accreditation body until the changes in the Law on Higher Education from 2017, when Agency for the Control and Ensuring Quality of Higher Education is established as the body which conducts study programme accreditation procedure and issue a certificate on accreditation of the study programme. Changes in the Law changed the model of studies, which has been 3+1+1+3, into 3+2+3 which will be mandatory model of studies from 2020/2021. The Law also introduced free bachelor and master studies at public higher education institutions, i.e. University of Montenegro, starting from academic year 2017/2018 for bachelor studies and free second cycle studies, i.e. master studies according to the reformed model of studies starting from 2020/2021, new financing model, i.e. contractual model between the Government of Montenegro and University of Montenegro where the amount of funds will be proportionate to the level of achieved performance indicators, introduction of mandatory practical training at higher education institutions comprising 25% of workload, as mandatory part of study programmes. The position of private universities did not change, neither the provisions related to PhD studies. Private universities have to follow all legal requirements as state university, however they have no funds from the state. PhD studies are predicted to last 3 years (180 ECTS) and can be organized only at academic oriented programs, according to the scheme given below.

<b>PHD STUDIES</b> <b>3 YEARS - 180 ECTS</b>	8 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	
	7 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	
	6 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	
<b>MASTER STUDIES</b> <b>2 YEARS - 60/120 ECTS</b>	5 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	<b>MASTER STUDIES</b> <b>2 YEARS - 120 ECTS</b>
	4 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR	
<b>UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES/BACHELOR DEGREE</b> <b>3 YEARS - 180 ECTS</b>	3 <sup>RD</sup> YEAR	<b>UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES/BACHELOR DEGREE</b> <b>3 YEARS - 180 ECTS</b>
	2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR	
	1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR	
<b>ACADEMIC STUDY PROGRAMS</b>		<b>APPLIED STUDY PROGRAMS</b>

Scheme: Model of studies in Montenegro

All University of Donja Gorica acts and regulations are in line with Law on higher education and relevant national regulations (UDG Statute, statutes of all UDG units and Rulebooks of PhD studies).

**1.7. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?**

PhD studies at the level of University are regulated by UDG Statute (general provisions and rules), Statutes of UDG university units (general provisions) and Rulebooks of PhD studies at certain UDG units where PhD studies are organized. PhD studies and their organization are being covered by important strategic documents of UDG and are considered as important part of UDG long-term development having in mind strategic orientation of UDG to become research and innovative institution. All institutional regulations are in line with national legal requirements however it defines certain specific rules which make UDG PhD studies unique and recognizable in the higher education area.

**1.8. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?**

The Senate is the main responsible body which define the general framework and rules of Doctoral studies and adopts strategic documents at UDG level where development of doctoral education and PhD research is very important part of strategic development. Faculty Council, consisted of all professors and lecturers at UDG Faculty Unit makes the Decision on Founding and Organizing Doctoral Studies

and proposes the Rulebook of PhD studies at the level of Faculty. UDG Senate has to approve both document and it adopts the Decision on Acceptance and Adoption of the Decision of the Faculty of Doctor's Studies on the Organization of Doctoral Studies and Rulebooks.

Rector and Rector Collegium are also defining some general rules which can imply on PhD level of studies, however PhD studies and their organization can be discussed on some Rector Collegium sessions.

UDG internal regulation also establishes the body called the Committee for Doctoral studies at the level of Faculty. This Committee is a separate body of doctoral studies and is the Council of the Faculty. The Faculty Council appoints also the Chair of the Committee for Doctoral studies. The Chair is responsible for organization of the Committee meetings. The responsibility of the Committee is to initially adopts PhD proposals, PhD thesis, etc. approved by Mentors Advisory Committees and students, according to the requirements of the Rulebook and send it to Faculty Council for final approval. The Committee is responsible to enable functioning of PhD studies according to the provisions of the Rulebook.

Mentors Advisory Committee is established and appointed as a separate body of doctoral studies for each candidate according to the Rulebook. This Committee is of a mentor and at least two members of the Committee. The Mentoring Committee serves as advisory body to each student PhD studies, and give expert advices which can help student to conduct his research activities, improves them in certain direction. Members of Mentors Advisory Committee and the Mentor work intensively with doctoral candidates.

#### 1.9. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

Regulatory framework enables efficient functioning of PhD studies at UDG and gives enough space both to candidate and mentors to conduct high quality research work and write high quality and competitive PhD thesis on relevant topics.

#### 1.10. If data or information is not available, why?

## 2. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

#### 2.1. What are the most relevant issues?

The Strategy of Development of Higher Education in Montenegro, 2016-2020, adopted in 2016. The strategy treats doctoral education as important part of Strategy. Doctoral education is considered as the part of the wider research area and the tool to improve and build research capacities of higher education institution. It is a challenge for Montenegro, as research activities were not often and intensive. The Strategy states that “overcoming this challenge will require a long-term shared strategy with doctoral education as a key element”<sup>1</sup> and sets doctoral education in many European countries as the role model with respect to the ensuring condition for professional development and mobility of PhD students. Ministry of Science implemented several project of providing funds for doctoral students’ mobility.

One of them was project which funded Montenegrin PhD students who wanted to go abroad for PhD studies and funds were provided by HERIC project (Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness Projects). Montenegrin postgraduate students – including PhD students got the opportunity to apply for granted scholarship for covering their costs studying abroad). The last program includes scholarships for PhD students - researchers who study at Montenegrin universities. Montenegrin universities granted free tuition fee for these students, and they work full time at the universities and getting monthly scholarships from Ministry of Science. The grant also includes covering mobility and research costs for doctoral candidates.

The Objective 3 of the National Strategy: Improving research work and increasing the level of participation in EU projects includes the goals related to the development of PhD Education. In order to achieve this objective, Strategy defines the following measures

In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to take the following measures:

3.1 Improving doctoral studies and strengthening the research component

3.2 Improving infrastructure for carrying out research work Providing a high-quality research infrastructure and equipment is a necessary condition for carrying out high-quality research, and therefore the socio-economic development of the country.

3.3 Development of digital libraries in Montenegro and their networking In the forthcoming period it is necessary to work more intensively on the development of digital libraries and their networking within Montenegro.

3.4 Improving the quality of human resources at research institutions

3.5 Internationalization of research In order to encourage internationalization of research it is necessary to intensify the participation of all research institutions in international programs and projects and promote regional, bilateral and technological cooperation.

3.6 Intensifying the use of EU structural funds for the development of doctoral studies

3.7 Strengthening links between science, education and economy to encourage innovation Measures for the implementation of EU policies in the field of Science - Technology - Innovation, focus particularly on strengthening the sector of knowledge users, linking public and private sectors, linking initiatives between researchers in public and private sectors, as well as encouraging research in the private sector.

3.8 Identifying Montenegrin research diaspora and encouraging its involvement in the home country At UDG PhD studies and its development is considered very important part of long-term strategic vision of UDG. That is why PhD studies are very important element treated in the main strategic document at UDG Almanac of Studies. The Development of Research function and Doctoral studies has been main topic of many round tables and discussions organized at UDG (cycle of round tables: Almanac of Studies – New ideas). The importance of doctoral education for the development of research and innovative University of Donja Gorica influences establishment of very unique rules of PhD studies and very high entrance criteria when it comes to the enrolment of PhD students which have to pass not only test of knowledge and skills in certain areas, but to be devoted to the development of their future research development. Every one of them have to go to several-layer admission procedure, last of which include interviews with the Head of Doctoral study program and several professors-mentors.

<sup>1</sup> The Strategy of Development of Higher Education in Montenegro, 2016-2020, pp. 9, available at:

[http://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/uploads/file/Strategy%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20Higher%20Education%20in%20Montenegro%20\(2016-2020\).pdf](http://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/uploads/file/Strategy%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20Higher%20Education%20in%20Montenegro%20(2016-2020).pdf)

Development of PhD studies is aim of many European and National projects funded through European and national research funds. PhD students are encouraged to go to mobility programs and UDG provide funds for them to use these programs, and they have the possibility to use resources developed and obtained through European and national projects for their research activities (PhD research hub is developed – please see the text below).

### 2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

At national level, the Strategy on the Development of Higher Education set the targets, which can be measured. It is adopted by the Government of Montenegro.

At University level, The Almanac of Studies as a strategic development document set the goals and objectives which are furtherly operationalized through PhD level documents and regulations and monitored through new Quality Assurance Framework at University of Donja Gorica supported by the QAF information system that UDG has developed. QAF framework follows several Indicators of Almanac related to PhD studies and their development at the level of faculties on annual basis (number of enrolled PhD students, number of research papers authored by PhD students and their advisors published in relevant journals, number of research projects and grants obtained proposed by PhD students and mentors, number of research projects and grants where PhD students are involved in realization, number and sort of PhD students mobility programs, patents and prototypes created as the result of work of PhD students, number of awards of PhD students, number of national and international books published as the result of PhD research).

### 2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?

As stated, the Strategy on the Development of Higher Education set the targets, which can be measured. It is adopted by the Government of Montenegro.

At University level the strategic document, which is presented and discussed at the level of UDG, but also nationally and internationally, set the general goals for the development of PhD studies. Benchmark indicators are set and presented through the document New Quality Assurance Framework of University of Donja Gorica, adopted by the Senate and presented at many university levels, which is implemented from this study year. The part of this document which define the concrete PhD studies indicators is developed on the basis of UDG Almanac of studies and refers to the development of research and innovative capacity of UDG.

### 2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?

National strategy is outdated and sets very general goals. At University level strategic orientation is clear, which enables all professors and students to develop and improve research work at PhD studies.

### 2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

### 3. Statistical Data

#### How much doctoral candidates do you have?

Doctoral studies at UDG are organized at three faculties: Faculty of International Economics, Finance and Business (marked with e), Faculty of Humanistic Studies (marked with h) and the Faculty of Law (marked with l)

#### 3.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	42 (e)	47 (e)	45 (e)	43 (e)	40 (e)
	7 (h)	9 (h)	11 (h)	15 (h)	13 (h)
	7 (l)	11 (l)	12 (l)	12 (l)	12 (l)
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>65</b>
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	5 (e)	0 (e)	0 (e)	3 (e)	0 (e)
	7 (e)	2 (h)	4 (h)	4 (h)	1 (h)
	0 (l)	4 (l)	2 (l)	0 (l)	0 (l)
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	0 (e)	0 (e)	2 (e)	5 (e)	3 (e)
	0 (h)	0 (h)	2 (h)	0 (h)	3 (h)
	0 (l)	0 (l)	1 (l)	0 (l)	0 (l)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

Please note that the number of enrolled PhD students at the PhD program “International Economics”, of the Faculty for International Economics, Finance and Business were quite high in the first and second generation, due to the fact these students obtained their Master’s degree before the reform of model of studies at national level which happened in 2004. when new Law on Higher education was adopted (this Law introduce the possibility to establish private higher education institutions and regulates all education programs in line with the rules of Bologna declaration). Before the change PhD studies were not required to last three years and after the reform was introduced there has been several years when PHD studies were not organized at all in Montenegro, because there was no bylaws and regulation enacted which was necessary to accredit the PhD programs. Thus in 2011/12, 29 students enrolled PhD studies International Economics, at the Faculty for International Economics, Finance and Business and in the following 2012/13, 13 students enrolled this program. Afterwards, there was 5 students enrolled in 2013/14, while there was no enrolment in 2015/16 and 2016/17. During these years there were

interested candidates however they didn't go through enrolment procedure. The situation repeated in 2018/19 study year when there was no single candidate which went through interview as final stage of enrolment procedure where potential candidates have to demonstrate their devotion to research work and academic capacity to follow UDG PhD studies. Enrolled students, on the other hand, who usually combine work and studying realized they cannot finish studies within three years but prolong it.

In practice out of total number of students who enrolled in PhD program International economics (e), 30 are not active, while at Humanistic studies (h) and Faculty of Law there are 6 and 5 non-active students respectively.

### 3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

UDG strategic orientation is to build research, innovative and entrepreneurial University and that is why PhD studies are considered as one of the keystones of development. UDG keeps high standards at all level of studies, however wants to build internationally competitive research capacity through PhD studies.

The data given above shows that the number of PhD diplomas awarded is not high which leads us to two conclusions – UDG develops and has high quality PhD studies which require lots of work and investing lot of efforts in order to satisfy all criteria and get the degree (it is part of UDG strategic orientation to develop PhD studies which will be internationally competitive) and potential lack of students' motivation. Students (who usually work) enrol studies believing they will be able to finish them along with their regular job, however, during the course of studies the requirements and hard work, efforts and time which have to be invested in research are becoming the burden (these are students' opinions collected from several surveys conducted at different PhD programs – questions about reason why they are not active students), and they decide to stop or make a break. In practice, they are not active students.

The capacities of UDG enable us to keep high level of PhD studies with these number of enrolled students, especially if we have in mind number of active students. That is why UDG PhD graduated students are recognized and very appreciated in academic and business environment. Many national awards are given to UDG PhD students for the quality of their thesis (Central Bank of Montenegro awards, National Academy of Science Awards, etc.).

If you compare the data and number on PhD students with the size of Univeristy (UDG has around 2500 students at all levels), they are comparable with number of PhD students at national level (at University of Montenegro and University Mediterranean).

### 3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

## **4. Research Capacity**

**It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their**

## **institutions?**

### 4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?

According to what is already said above UDG is clearly oriented to develop as research, innovative and entrepreneurial University and that is why PhD studies are considered as one of the keystones of development. UDG keeps high standards at all level of studies, however wants to build internationally competitive research capacity through PhD studies. That is why UDG invests in the development of PhD studies. UDG strenghts are in widespread international cooperation, many research projects developed at Univeristy, great research infrastructure (Product Design Laboratory - Product Development Laboratory and Materials Testing Laboratory, The Food Quality & Safety Laboratory, 3 D laboratory, Ideas Lab, CISCO Academy and Laboratory for Digital Forensics–the Cisco Academy, CCNA Laboratory, CCNP Laboratory, PhD Reseach Hub for programs in social sciences and humanities, etc.

Through mobility projects and intensive international co-operation, UDG also enabled PhD students to go on study visits at prestigious universities, including: KOF Swiss Economic Institute, Buckinghamshire New University, University of Torino, UniversitéLibre de Bruxelles, UniversitéLibre de Bruxelles, University of Salzburg, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, Sichuan in China, etc. There has been a total of 16 study visits ranged from one month to three years. Bearing in mind that out of a total of 70 enrolled students, 45 are active ones, it can be concluded that

nearly 1/3 of PhD students participated in study visits, which was in line with the recommendation on further internationalization. In order to improve the quality of academic staff, we should point out that four of our assistants who are also PhD students atUDG were sent to study outside Montenegro with the obligation to continue teaching atUDG after completing their studies.

### 4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

The previous answer imply the need for more intensive work in promoting research activities in general public and the need to acquire more funds for research work at national level which would be directed to good quality researchers, which would then serve as the role model for future PhD students. Some campaigns of Ministry of Science are underway these days which target this problem. At UDG we enable PhD students to enter the program of international mobility, so most of them have the opportunity to go and conduct research abroad. Students have possibility to work at UDG research projects, and cooperate with best experts from their field of study. At UDG we have special program of studies for undergraduate and master students who wants to go to PhD program after obtaining degrees of first two higher education degrees. These students have special training sessions, courses and seminars which are preparing them for PhD studies, which is a sort of promotion of research among them. It encourages them to orient to research and academic carrier.

### 4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?



At UDG we cannot say that we have lack of research capacities with respect to human resources and infrastructure and trying to overcome this through international projects. I'll mention some of the most recent ones. Thanks to the PhDRH@UDG (PhD Research Hub at University Donja Gorica) – the grant for the institutional development awarded to UDG through the project HERIC - INVO - "Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness", the PhD multidisciplinary research centre (UDG PhD Research Hub) started its work at UDG, which brings together PhD students and postgraduate students from all UDG faculties. The purpose of establishing the PhD multidisciplinary research center at UDG is the development of a unique research center for PhD students that will enable them to work together on different programmes and multidisciplinary projects and present the results of their work to UDG partners and academic and business community, thus leveraging the influence of the doctoral research. With project activities, the research equipment used by students and academic staff in their research was modernized and additionally the software tools used in multidisciplinary research (Matlab, SPSS, Eviews) were improved. With the support of international consultants - respected and distinguished professors involved in the project, UDG students, research and academic staff were given, within interactive workshops, the opportunity to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of research processes, research methodologies, the application of adequate research methods and the creation of appropriate samples. By this project, UDG has made the institutional improvement that leads to increasing the quality of research and teaching process not only at UDG, but also in Montenegro and the region.

Over the last two years, UDG has strengthened its teaching staff with experts from the field of applied and technical sciences, which resulted in the opening of the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Thanks to a significant basis of professors, the conditions have been created to establish doctoral studies at several more Faculty units which are in process of accreditation (Faculty of Arts and Communications, Faculty of Information Systems and Technology). In addition to developing the philosophical and educational dimension of the academic staff, a great attention is paid to improving research capabilities of the academic staff. Thus, apart from participating in numerous international projects, UDG organized the

academic staff trainings in different areas starting from Writing Scientific Research Projects (How to Make a Good Application?) & International Research Standards; Methodology of research and writing of scientific papers; Theory of samples for applied research; etc.

#### 4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## **5. Structure of a doctoral programme**

### **How is a doctoral programme structured?**

#### 5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

The structure of the program of PhD studies is defined in curriculum and information lists for each discipline. This documentation is submitted within the documentation for accreditation. It is initially

approved by the Faculty Council, along with the decision on establishment the new program, and approved by Senate. The documentation is then going through accreditation procedure (in the past Council for Higher Education, and now Agency for Quality in Higher Education appoints Committee for Accreditation consisting of relevant experts from the field). The Committee gives proposal to Council/Agency to approve the program and issue licence on accreditation. After program is accredited the structure is published at the website.

#### 5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?

The studies are organized in accordance with the legal regulations that include a total of 6 semesters, 30 ECTS per semester. During the first two semesters, students attend classes and take examinations, while other four semesters are dedicated to research work and preparations for their doctoral thesis.

#### 5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

The work of each student is supervised by two or three mentors, one of whom has to work outside UDG according to the model of doctoral studies developed by the Rector. In order for a lecturer to be a mentor, it is necessary for him/her to have adequate references from the study area that is the area of PhD research. Apart from lectures, examinations, speaker`s platforms, debates, participations in scientific-research projects and mentoring consultations, the PhD candidate goes through the following stages: (I) Thinking about the problem and the hypothesis of research from a theoretical and methodological point of view, (II) Mini Thesis and its Defense; (III) Writing PhD thesis. During the work on PhD thesis, the candidate is obliged to hold three lectures in front of the commission made up of experts from various fields in order to defend the methodology and results of his/her research. The student should write at least one paper in a international or national journal in order to defend a doctoral thesis.

#### 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?

The program last 3 years. In practice, all candidates who graduated took more than that to successfully defend their thesis, as most of them work. Usually they give all exams according to the schedule but work longer on their research.

#### 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?

The structure of the program is enabling efficient functioning of PhD studies and good quality work.

#### 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## **6. Selection and admission**

### **Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?**

#### 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

The selection of PhD candidates is process consisting of several phases. All Montenegrin and foreign citizens can enrol PhD studies under the same conditions. Official languages at UDG are Montenegrin

and English so courses are conducted on both languages. The first stage of the admissions process, following the public invitation to potential PhD students to submit the application. Application usually consists of sending motivation letter and CV of candidate, however depending on the field of doctoral studies some additional requirement can be set (for example candidate can be asked to submit essay on certain topic). The deadline is set and all documents and application are reviewed by Admissions Committee consisting of the Head of PhD studies and several professors. The candidate who satisfy the formal criteria to enrol the studies and whose motivation letters and (or) essays are graded as satisfactory are invited for an interview. Interview is usually organized with the Head of PhD program and several professors. At the interview students have to demonstrate their motivation, and dedication to research and academic work, however some questions can include testing their knowledge and the way of thinking about certain expert topics. After all candidates go through interview the decision is made whether they can enrol the studies directly or organizing preparation courses and seminars is needed, either because their education background is such that they need to acquire more knowledge about certain topics in order to be prepared to follow the course of the program without problem. The third possibility is that student is not allowed to enrol the program because she or he doesn't satisfy requirements. Preparation courses can be organized in different fields and each of the students can be asked to attend a course designed according to his capacities and background. At the end of preparation courses, each student is taking written or oral exam, writes a paper, etc. and if his/her work is graded as satisfactory she/he can formally enroll PhD studies. If he fails, he will not be accepted as PhD student. For example, the generation of PhD students enrolled in study year 2017/18 at the program "International Economics" had preparatory courses, while the 6 candidates who applied for the same program of PhD studies in 2016/17 and 2018/19. did not pass at the interview so the decision was made not to enroll the students at that program in those study years

### 6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?

As explained in the section 6.1. the general procedure of selection process is more or less the same, however depending on the field of study and the background of candidates some additional requirements can be introduced in order to make sure that all PhD candidates have the same starting point and that they can follow the program without obstacles. All PhD program at UDG are multidisciplinary and individually oriented according to students background and research interests, which makes the selection procedure very important part of the studies. The reason is to choose the best candidates who will be able to take the burden of studies and conduct research, write and defend the thesis which will give original contribution to the field of study.

### 6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

The Committee for PhD studies and the Head of PhD program can propose the doctoral candidate to a supervisor (mentor), depending on the research interest of the candidate and the field of expertise of potential mentor (advisor). The proposal is not mandatory. After a candidate is proposed to advisor, they have to organize direct meetings and consultations about the topic of research, after which an advisor (mentor) can decide if she/he is willing to accept mentorship and work with the candidate on the PhD thesis.

#### 6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?

The most important selection criteria in admissions procedure is an interview with Head of PhD studies and professors where a student have to demonstrate his clear dedication to research and academic work, but also to demonstrate his knowledge and the way of thinking about certain topics. At UDG it is very important that our students (at all level of studies) shares common values we develop at UDG: academic integrity, willingness to learn and invest efforts in research and education, to be open-minded, to have capacity for holistic way of thinking and interdisciplinary research, to be friendly oriented among peers, to be able to cooperate and build academic network, to speak foreign languages, to be ready to participate in research projects and enter academic mobility. Of course knowledge and references in the field of science are necessary, but not sufficient condition to become UDG PhD student.

#### 6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?

I truly believe that selection criteria are set appropriately. Having in mind long term orientation of UDG to development of research, innovation and entrepreneurship, the only possible approach to admissions of PhD students is to select the best who have the best references in certain field of studies, but who also share UDG core values.

#### 6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## **7. Supervision**

### **What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

#### 7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

All supervisors have the interest to work with PhD candidates because their academic promotion has requirements related to mentorship and supervisory work with PhD students. They are also motivated to work and advise candidates to conduct research in certain areas because high quality research work result in high quality research papers which can be published in relevant journals in co-authorship with candidates. It is also very often the case that mentors and candidates are applying for international projects which can be funded from international or national sources, which can also involve other students and professors, and enable them to develop their research further. Financial benefits are not so high – the fee which is paid to supervisors can not be considered as strong incentive to potential mentors, so these other benefits are considered much more important.

#### 7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?

Formal requirement to be allowed to supervise are formally set by the Accreditation body and criteria (The Agency for Quality in Higher Education). Supervisor is required to have at least two published papers in relevant international journals in their field of studies in last five years (the field of studies of

PhD topic). This is legal requirement, however at university or faculty level some additional requirements can be set. The quality of supervisory work is being double-checked at UDG PhD studies, because after mentor - advisor approves the PhD thesis, members of Advisory committee also have to approve it. However this approval is necessary but not sufficient condition for the thesis to go into procedure of defence. The Head of PhD studies also have to approve the thesis before it goes to further procedure. Beside the fact that student have to defend their proposal and three research papers which are integral part of PhD thesis in front of interdisciplinary professors' committee, this milestone is also very important part of ensuring quality of PhD studies.

### 7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?

All supervisors at UDG are really devoted to their role of mentors and supervisors. The whole process and methodology of work conducted at PhD studies ensures that UDG has great quality of PhD studies and all advisors who mentored PhD theses of UDG candidates, who are coming from regional or international universities are praising different approach implied at UDG doctoral programs which ensures great PhD thesis and great quality of UDG doctoral candidates. They emphasize the fact that the methodology developed along the course of UDG PhD studies is very demanding both for a student and for an advisor, however the final results are very high quality PhD thesis which are giving real contribution to the development of certain field of study.

Although the process is demanding the results and indicators obtained through students surveys within Quality Assurance System at UDG shows that students are really satisfied with PhD studies, and despite all challenges and hard work consider them very important for their professional, but also personal life, as facing all challenges of demanding research work make their personality and character stronger, which is the part of UDG model of studies.

Please note that the answer to this question doesn't refer to general quality of supervision work in Montenegro, but only about the supervisory work at UDG PhD studies.

### 7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

## **8. Additional items**

### **What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

#### 8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

As already mentioned the lack of motivation of potential PhD candidates in Montenegro can be considered as danger to further development of PhD education. UDG insists on keeping high level standards in PhD education and will continue to do so.

8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

Investing efforts in promoting PhD education among young undergraduate and master students is very important in order to develop PhD studies and research capacities in general. Here I don't think about PhD level of studies which would be considered as the tool to get an additional degree, but as of the tool to improve research and innovation capacity of an individual, a university or a country.

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1 Team*

## **University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" and University Aleksander Moisiu, Durres**

## A1.1 "Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"

Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna.

**Output D1.1** "Report on the "state of the art" in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices" Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education.

Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8<sup>th</sup>** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

Incase some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

<b>Your Name:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>E-mail contact:</b>	

### Overview of the Questionnaire

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items



## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

**What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?**

1.11. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

Doctoral education in Albania is based in the Law no. 80, dated 22. 07. 2015 "On Higher Education and Research in the Institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Albania"

Our link: [www.unishk.edu.al](http://www.unishk.edu.al)

MASR Guidance nr. 31 date 29.12.2017 "For the definition of the criteria and documentation and procedures for the opening and reorganization of the study programs in higher education.

Council of minister decision nr. 41 date 24.01.2018 "for the elements of the study program offered by the higher education institutions"

Council of minister decision nr. 112 date 23.02.2018 "for the definition of the criteria of the scientific grade "Doctor and the state standards for the academic titles"

Udhëzimin 31 datë 29.12.2017 "PËR PËRCAKTIMIN E KRITEREVE, DOKUMENTACIONIT DHE PROCEDURAVE PËR HAPJEN, RIORGANIZIMIN DHE MBYLLJEN E PROGRAMEVE TË STUDIMIT NGA INSTITUCIONET E ARSIMIT TË LARTË VKM nr. 41 datë 24.01.2018

Nr. 41, datë 24.1.2018 PËR ELEMENTET E PROGRAMEVE TË STUDIMIT TË OFRUARA NGA INSTITUCIONET E ARSIMIT TË LARTË

VENDIM, Nr. 112, datë 23.2.2018 PËR PËRCAKTIMIN E KRITEREVE PËR FITIMIN E GRADËS SHKENCORE "DOKTOR" DHE TË STANDARDEVE SHTETËRORE PËR FITIMIN E TITUJVE AKADEMIKË "PROFESOR I ASOCIUAR" DHE "PROFESOR"

[www.uamd.edu.al](http://www.uamd.edu.al)

1.12. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?

The regulations at University level are:

- a) Statutes of UNISHK
- b) Doctoral Regulations of UNISHK.
- c) Senate Decision of UNISHK to Open the Program.

- d) Decisions of Ministry of Education Youth and Sports no. 498, dated 07. 10. 2011 for the opening of the Program.
- e) Statutes of UAMD
- f) Internal regulation of UAMD
- g) Doctoral program study Regulation.
- h) Academic Senate decision for the opening in 2009
  
- i) Decision of the council of Ministres for the opening nr. 1115 date 13.11.2009, where one of the study programs is also Public Administration.
- j) Academic Senate decision for the reorganization in 2018

1.13. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?

The parties involved in opening a doctoral program are as following:

- First is Department that has to propose it to the University Senate
- University Senate should approve it and send to Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Education has to take the final decision after the approval from Accreditation Board

The procedures and the parties involved in opening a doctoral program are as following:

- The basic unit, thus the Department in a special meeting decides to propose the start of the procedures to apply for the doctoral study program.
- The Department proposal will be examined and approved by the Faculty council, or the Dean council.
- Then a working team, or all department prepares the full file package of the doctoral program study application which should be examined and approved by the Dean Council and after form the academic senate.
- After being examined and approved from the academic senate the file is also examined from the Administration Board for financial issues.
- After Board approval the University can send the file to Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Education has to take the final decision after the approval from Accreditation Board

1.14. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

We are satisfied in general but in some cases our Education Ministry should take in account different requirements from different Universities according to their priorities and specific goals they have set.

The regulatory in overall is satisfying, although it should be facilitated by the bureaucracies.

1.15. If data or information is not available, why? General data are available.

## 2. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

2.1. What are the most relevant issues?

Doctoral education is considered priority at our University (UNISHK) but there is no action to try to apply at Education Ministry for another Doctorial Program apart from Albanology which remains the only one opened even the territory (being the only state University in Northern Albania) and the economic development of the region is in need of other research focused in priority sectors.

Scientific research as part of it the doctoral program of study is considered very important part at our University (UAMD), the process of preparing and integrating students with the scientific research and with their specific field of interest is as a process to which is paid very much attention in my institution. In order to well prepare the student our doctoral study program includes the doctoral school, according to this approach the student has the obligatory of some general and profile subjects.

2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

No measured targets are set only general goals which many times remain in documents without any link to the reality.

2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?

Yes there is a document of the strategic plan of the University but goals and objectives are not set with measurable indicators.

The strategy is presented both in the strategic plan of the institution and in the scientific research plan of the university. This can be find also in our website.

2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?

We are not completely satisfied because of the missing indicators for the performance of the institution and the individual staff.

The strategic plan of the institution where the doctoral program is integrated is satisfying and inspiring but the procedures established by the new legal framework in a macro level or sometimes the lack of

this framework, I mean in over all higher education system in our country make difficult the efficiency the program of study and benefiting from the planned resources.

2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

### 3. Statistical Data

**How much doctoral candidates do you have?**

3.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years					
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years					
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years					

The total number of PhDs students at UNISHK is 14 (out of which 5 PhDs have completed the defense). In 2011-2012, 11 doctoral students were registered, while in 2012-2013, 3 were registered. From 2013 onwards, no new students have been enrolled at the Institute of Albanological Studies, based on the decision of the Ministry of Education to temporarily close the doctoral school.

Doctorate in Public Administration at UAMD is effective since the academic year 2009-2010, actually is in the phase of reorganization and reintegrated with the new legal framework. In this period by this program are graduated 7 students, the entire number of the students enrolled is 13.

3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

No the numbers and the specialty of the doctoral studies at UNISHK are not in line with our capacities because there is a potential of our country and our University in the specialties such as Economy and specifically in Sustainable Tourism. There are tens of best students from UNISHK which after finishing their Scientific Master at UNISHK are registered in doctoral schools at Tirana University (UT) and Durres University ( UAMD).

3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

## 4. Research Capacity

### How do they assess the research capacities at their institutions?

#### 4.1. What fields of strength can be identified in your institution?

In our institution there are academic staff in Economic Faculty prepared and well qualified in several Western Universities in Europe and USA with right research capacity to open a doctoral school.

In our institution the priorities of the scientific research are established by the each basic units plans periodically, as for the doctoral study program the priorities are in the public administration field, in management, economic sciences, marketing and tourism.

#### 4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?

The big question in Albania is that research is distant to the economic development and to the business community creating a great problem regarding the motivation of the people involved in the research and missing of funding.

From different point of view in order to increase the efficiency and the usefulness of the scientific research in general and doctoral researches specifically, institutions, universities should connect and network with all the actors such as government, local and central government, business, organizations etc. in this field we have to exchange and to learn a lot from successful western experience.

#### 4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

The best examples can only be found in Western Universities.

#### 4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?

Any lack of research capacities can and should be compensated through the collaboration with EU Universities and other Research Centers.

Also the orientation of the research toward the business community and their needs might be a solution to the motivation of researchers and funding opportunities.

As I have up mentioned the main issues are methodology, connection, bureaucracy, legal framework in the everyday practices and procedures. In order to resolve this issue firstly we have to learn and borrow the best western experiences and secondly dynamically apply and integrate these models and experiences in our reality.

#### 4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## 5. Structure of a doctoral programme

### How is a doctoral programme structured?

#### 5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

The structure should have been defined on the Law of Higher Education and on the Rules and Decisions of Education Ministry.

The structure of the program is defined by the national legal framework and internal university politics. (mentioned at the beginning)

#### 5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?

Still not clear if Ph D students should follow any course or they should develop only scientific research.

In fact this definition is evasive in the legal framework. Actually our requirement is for 60 ECTS divided in general courses and profile field courses.

#### 5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

Still not clear – to be decided from Education Ministry

#### 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?

Three years.

3-5 years

#### 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?

We need to have the best experience of how the doctoral schools are organized in EU countries to give a proper opinion.

#### 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## 6. Selection and admission

### Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?

#### 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

An ad-hoc commission is appointed from the Department which offers the doctoral program and this commission is involved in the selection process.

An ad hoc commission from department representative appointed from the Faculty Dean. From the reorganized prospective this selection is proposed to be done by all the professors of the basic unit.

6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?

Yes the Department which offers the doctoral program might decide on specific criteria.

The legal framework provides the possibility to differentiate the criteria.

6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

According to the Decision of our Education Ministry an academic staff that has the title “Professor” cannot have more than 7 doctoral students and with the title “Associate Professor” no more than 5 candidates.

As there is no specific decision to select doctoral candidates the first priority is the desire and the request of the candidate.

This process is actually managed form the Professors Council of the University.

6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?

The most important criteria is the Grade Average Point from the Scientific Master and the requirement to have the presentation of three papers among which two of them in conferences organized in one of EU countries or OECD countries and the publication of three scientific articles from which two should be published in indexed journals with editorial board in EU countries or in OECD countries.

The most important criteria are the average grade point of bachelor and master studies and the interest of research in the specific field (documented)

6.5. Are you satisfied with the progress or not and why?

As the doctoral school is closed since 2013 at our University there is not to much to say.

6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## 7. Supervision

**What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

Supervisors are paid by the University based on the Rules and Decisions of the Ministry of Education that determines the workload during the supervision.

7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?

The requirement is to have the academic title “Associate Professor” or “Professor”.

The academic title “Associate Professor” or “Professor” and to have the same field of research of interest.

7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?

You can consider somehow adequate but as the quality is a continuous process of improving much more should be done from our University to dedicate funds to put as a priority investing in teaching quality and supporting much more academic staff with further qualifications and opportunities. Always focusing on the internationalization, a solution to this improvement might be a twining between supervisors from Albania and from Western European Universities.

According to our overall situation as a country, history, changing systems, transition etc, these are all factors that influence also in the quality of the research work in a macro point of view, so there is a lot to do in order to improve expertise in scientific research, for that reason we need successful models and methodologies.

7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

## 8. Additional items

**What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

Regarding the financing of the doctoral schools two resources should be the base : Grants from Education Ministry based on priority sectors of Country Development and Business Community based on agreements between University and business sector.



Till now in Albania the research has been apart from the country development and business community needs and this should change drastically because has destroyed the motivation and the sense of doing research.

8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

Any important issue to be addressed in the report is creation of the link between research and the priorities of the country development in every sector possible.

Also the internationalization should be considered as an important part of the Universities strategies in order for a doctoral school to have always present the expertise of the Western Universities and Scientific research Centers.

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1 Team*

## **Polytechnic University of Tirana**

## A1.1 "Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"

Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna.

**Output D1.1** "Report on the "state of the art" in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices" Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education.

Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8<sup>th</sup>** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

In case some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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## Overview of the Questionnaire

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items

## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

### What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?

1.16. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

- Law No. 80/2015, “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania”;
- Decision of Council of Ministers No. 112, dated 23.02.2018;
- Statute of PUT;
- Decision of Council of Ministers No. 710, dated 1.12.2017 “On the approval of National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2017-2022”;
- Strategic Action Plan of PUT (in approval process);
- National Quality Standards for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Albania.

1.17. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?

- Statute of PUT is approved by order of Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, No. 10, dated 11.01.2019.
- The preparation of the Regulation for the functioning of the Council of Professors and the Regulation of the third cycle studies (Doctoral studies) are in process.

1.18. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?

The parties involved in the definition of the framework are:

- The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth – Law No. 80/2015
- Council of Ministers - Decisions regarding legal framework
- Academic Senate of PUT – Formulating the Statute of PUT
- Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL) – The national Quality Standards for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Albania.

1.19. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

The implementation of the legal framework has difficulties. There needs to be an interrelation between the elements of law and by-laws.

1.20. If data or information is not available, why?

## 2. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

### 2.1. What are the most relevant issues?

- The increase of quality of the realization of doctoral projects at levels that are required by the dynamics of national and international development in the frame of the globalisation of the scientific research with the purpose of increasing the influence and economic-scientific value which currently is low both inside and outside the country.
- The existence of a non-suitable infrastructure for the realization of the research part of the doctoral projects.
- The researching and providing of new and alternative sources of funding for doctoral projects, this due to the fact that PUT is a Public University with engineering profile and with specific scientific research requirements and due to the fact that our state allocates the GERD indicator (funding for scientific research funding versus GDP) at a low level.
- The undertaking of concrete and complete studies regarding academic and infrastructural human capacities in support of the realization of doctoral projects.
- The encouragement of awareness and co-operation of the university with relevant business actors in order to highlight the technical and scientific requests of the leading companies in the country, with the aim of specifying the field, themes, funding, realization and assessment of the doctoral projects.
- A periodical study of the needs and trends of industries as well as the setting of priority sectors for cooperation, based on the skills and opportunities of PUT to respond to them.
- The realization of concrete studies related to the needs of the market and technical & research requests of the companies; classifying them as actual and of perspective.
- The maximization of synergies between University and Industry for the realization of doctoral projects, providing mutual benefits: having financial resources and achieving technological development.
- The increase of the cooperation with foreign counterparts (universities or research institutes) especially in the realization of the research part of the doctoral projects in order to share experience and laboratory infrastructure.
- The introduction of Information Technology into the Control System and evaluation of the authenticity of the doctoral studies.

2.1. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

The main measurable targets in the realization of the doctoral projects are:

- The amount of annual funding for doctoral projects
  - % of state funding
  - % of private funding
- Incomes obtained from the realization of doctoral projects:
  - At the University level
  - At Faculty / Institute level
  - At Department level
- Number of completed doctoral projects:

- At University level
  - At Faculty level
  - At Department level
  - Number of doctoral projects realized with international collaboration:
    - At University level
    - At Faculty level
    - At Department level
  - Number of concrete studies related to the needs of market and technical & research requests of the companies.
    - The measuring of the above targets is achieved at all levels of the structure of the Institution. 2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?  
UPT has just completed the drafting of the overall strategic plan.  
The Strategic Plan of Doctoral Studies is part of the Overall Strategic Research Plan for Scientific Research.
- 2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?  
UPT has just completed the drafting of the overall strategic plan and currently is at the approving phase.
- 2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

### 3. Statistical Data

#### How much doctoral candidates do you have?

##### 3.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	24	44	56	61	12

##### 3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

Doctoral studies are interrupted since the academic year 2014-2015 by the MESY (Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth) in the framework of reassessment of the actual scientific situation in the HEI in order to formulate and implement the Higher Education Law in Albania.

##### 3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

## 4. Research Capacity

**It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?**

4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?

Polytechnic University of Tirana has research capacities in all the engineering fields that it covers; mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, architecture and urban planning, geology and mining, mathematical engineering and physical engineering and computer engineering.

Referring to the latest developments and to the demands the most requested fields are:

1. Information Technology
2. Renewable Energy
3. Environment, Water.

4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?

4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?

The main concerns regarding the research capacities are:

- Limited Human Resources
- Laboratory base is very limited and
- The implementation of the law requires the elaboration of many of its constituent elements by means of the by-laws.

4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## 5. Structure of a doctoral programme

### How is a doctoral programme structured?

#### 5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

The Decision of Council of Ministers No. 112, Article 1, point 4 stipulates that: The candidate applies individually to the approved study program in the fields of research, offered by the base unit or the main unit. The base unit approves the individual research programs of the candidate only for those fields that belong to the approved doctoral programs that it offers. When the research fields are intertwined between two or more base units; in accordance between them; one of the base units is assigned responsible for providing the candidate's research program.

#### 5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?

ECTS is not applicable in doctoral studies.

#### 5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

The doctoral scientific degree is obtained after the successful defending the dissertation thesis at the conclusion of doctoral studies in the field of higher education and scientific research, according to the criteria and within the deadlines set by the legislation on higher education and scientific research.

The main unit; according to the regulation of the third cycle of studies; defines the specific criteria:

- a) That the candidate must complete in order to be accepted or to transfer the studies in the study program, according to the research field;
- b) For the annual evaluation of the progress of the candidates and the continuation of the work for the development of the research project during the period of doctoral studies;
- c) That the candidate must complete before the final defence of the dissertation thesis;
- ç) When doctoral studies are interrupted, postponed or suspended;
- d) For the payment deadlines for the entire program cycle.

The basic criteria that the candidate has to complete before defending the dissertation are:

- a) The candidate must have realized as first or second author (when the first author is the scientific leader) at least 3 (three) referrals, 2 (two) of which are delivered in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the European Union member states, the OECD or the G20; accepted on a preliminary scientific evaluation basis and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;
- b) The candidate must have published at least 3 (three) scientific articles in scientific journals, of which 2 (two) must published or accepted for publication in indexed journals of OECD, EU or G20 countries, that have an editorial board; where, at least in one of the articles the candidate must be the first author and in the second article be a second author.



The candidate compiles the dissertation according to the format approved in the third cycle regulations. The dissertation should bring theoretical and / or empirical innovations in the relevant field of research as well as contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge. The dissertation is prepared in Albanian language and its summary (2000-4000 words) in one of the five European Union languages: English, French, German, Spanish or Italian, in printed and electronic format. The dissertation is approved by the scientific leader before submission.

The candidate submits the dissertation, as defined in the above paragraph, together with the file, to the head of the main unit, who then delivers it to the basic unit for evaluation within 15 (fifteen) days from the submission date. After the evaluation from the base unit, the dissertation and the candidate's file are delivered to the Commission for Scientific Doctoral Award, within 30 (thirty) days. If the file is positively evaluated, the Commission, within 30 (thirty) days raises the jury for the dissertation's assessment. The jury sets the date for the defending of the dissertation within 15 (fifteen) days of its formation. The dissertation is presented to the jury, which makes the evaluation. The jury compiles the evaluation report and submits it to the Commission for Scientific Doctoral Award, which takes the decision to award the "doctoral" degree within 10 (ten) days and submits it to the head of the main unit for further procedures.

#### 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?

As stipulated in Article 57 of the statute of PUT; Doctoral Studies have a duration of not less than 3 nor longer than 5 academic years.

#### 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?

Referred to the new law we think that the structuring of the Doctoral School is untimely.

The study programs of Scientific Master do not represent in-depth studies so as to address the candidate for the topic he will chose. We think that theoretical studies are important and they should have the needed space.

#### 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## **6. Selection and admission**

### **Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?**

#### 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

The studies for the Scientific Doctoral Degree are developed in full-time at the base unit, or in a prolonged time in the cases where the candidate is employed as an academic staff in another higher education institution or as research staff at a base or implemented research institution, at higher education institutions such as "universities" or "academies", which meet the legal criteria and those set out in this Decision of the Council of Ministers No.112.

6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?

The department (base unit) that defines the scope of the study and the priorities.

6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

The base unit, department, is responsible for the doctoral study program. The department will have to assign the scientific researchers according to the disciplines and fields of research.

6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?

The criteria will be set by the departments.

6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?

The process has not started yet.

6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## 7. Supervision

### **What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

The benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise a candidate are defined in the law and are as follows:

- They receive a Payment;
- This is one of the criteria to be completed by the staff holding the degree Associate Professor in order to be awarded the title Professor later on; and
- There is an institutional contribution in the scientific research

7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?

The doctoral studies are developed in the form of research groups, led by academic staff that hold the academic title "associate professor" or "professor". The number of doctoral candidates within each research group, which includes all the supervisions that academic staff supervises in all the higher education institutions where he is engaged, is:

- a) Not more than 7 (seven), in the case of academic staff holding the title "professor";
- b) Not more than 5 (five), in the case of academic staff holding the title "associate professor";

c) Not more than 3 (three), in the case of the academic staff, holding the academic title "associate professor" or "professor" that works part-time.

7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?

Relatively since it is difficult to find a specific supervisor for a specific study direction. The supervisors are specified in broader fields rather than specific ones.

7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

## 8. Additional items

**What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

Law 80/2015; Article 80

Joint study programs

1. Joint study programs shall be carried out by a higher education institution or its main unit, in cooperation with one or more other higher education institutions, public or non-public, within or outside the country.
2. The process of implementing joint programs may be carried out in one or in the participating institutions, in accordance with the cooperation agreement.
3. At the end of the studies a joint degree or a double degree or a multiple diploma is issued by the participating institutions.
4. In the case of joint study programs with foreign institutions of higher education, other standards, different from state ones, may be applied.
5. The opening of joint study programs is done with the approval of the ministry responsible for education.

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1 Team*

## University of Vlora

## **A1.1 "Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"**

**Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna.**

**Output D1.1** "Report on the "state of the art" in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices "Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education.

Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8<sup>th</sup>** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

In case some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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### **Overview of the Questionnaire**

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items

## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

### What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?

1.21. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

The legal framework of doctoral educations in Albania is regulated by the Albanian *Law for Higher Education and Research*, Law number 80/2015 dated 22.07.2015 "On Higher Education and Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania" (1), by sub laws and especially with sub-law number 112, date 23.2.2018c Determining The Criteria For The Award Of Scientific Grade "Doctor" And State Standards For The Benefit Of The Titles "Associated Professor" And "Full Professor" (2), instruction No.31, dated 29.12. 2017 "On Determining Criteria, Documentation and Procedures for Opening, Reorganizing and Closing Study Programs by Higher Education Institutions (3) as well as the regulations of the University for doctoral studies (4). This regulation has been updated and approved by the Academic Senate in 2018 (Senate decision no.22, date 08.05.2018 "For the approval of the Doctoral Program in Mathematics in offered by Faculty of Technical Sciences"). Albanian Agency for Research (AKKSHI) approves, on the basis of free competition among applicants, funds for doctoral studies. According the law, PhD studies are built on individual programs for independent research of candidates in the fields defined by the department/unit or the Faculty. PhD studies last no less than three academic years and no more than five academic years. The number of PhD students is determined by the department/unit, based on its research priorities. University of Vlora "Ismail Qemali" offers doctoral studies in the field of Maths only (5).

1.22. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?

In general the University of Vlora (UV) is very well organised as a Higher Education Institution on the existence of documentations. UV has an active statute that was approved from the Academic Senate in 2014 (6). After the new law on Higher Education (1) came into force, the Rector of the University established a working group in order to prepare a new statute. The new statute has been already approved by the Administration Board (the highest body of the Institution responsible for financial issues- Administration Board decision no.28, dt.16.11.2018 "For the approval of UV Statute") and by the Academic Senate (Senate decision no.11, date 27.02.2019 "For the approval of UV Statute"). Decisions of approval were sent to Ministry of Education, and after its approval will come into force. Additionally, the University has an active regulation since 2014. After the approval of the new statute, members of the University will start drafting the new regulation (7).

1.23. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?

In the process of Doctoral studies are involved several bodies. First of all is Ministry of Education. It has the main role in accepting or refusing openness, closure and/or reorganization of closing a doctoral

programme. Additionally, based on this framework, the Higher Education Institutions are able to provide doctoral studies. The second most important body is Academic Senate. It has the main role to approve or to reject openness of a doctoral programme based on the proposal of the Faculty and/or Department. The faculty/main unit, in the regulation of the third cycle of studies, defines the specific criteria in order to be a doctoral student. After finalization of the studies, candidates deposit the final version at the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean send the file to the Department for evaluation within fifteen days maximum after its arrival. The Doctoral Degree Awarding Committee, which monitors the whole process of obtaining the "doctor" degree/title, consists of not less than five (5) elected members of the Faculty/main unit, where the doctoral program is offered, having the academic title "Associate Professor" or "Full Professor ". However, before a new doctoral programme goes to the Academic Senate and the Ministry of Education for approval, must be approved by this Faculty committee. The last years a very significant role plays the Agency for Quality Assurance (ASCAL) which in collaboration with internal and international external evaluators, assess the quality of the offered programme.

1.24. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

Albanian education system and in general higher education system is in devolution. The country has passed many problems and obstacles in this field and since 2013, the shutdown of registration in any doctoral studies provoke a new situation. Since 2013 many things changed. A new law, different sub-laws and instructions made more clearly the situation in this field. To sum up, the situation and the regulatory framework is sufficient. However, there is a lot of empty place that needs to be filled. To our view, is of paramount significance any new or existing doctoral programme firstly to be evaluated by ASCAL and after that to be able to recruit new PhD candidates. This is not yet regulated by the law. Additionally, there are no specific guidelines for joint doctoral programmes that could be offered by two Albanian Higher Education Institutions or in collaboration with international institutions.

1.25. If data or information is not available, why?

In general, the information on regulatory framework is open, transparent and accessible by all interested.

## 2. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

2.1. What are the most relevant issues?

UV aims to create and support that kind of University that will function properly to the improvement of Vlora region and the south territory, meeting not only the need of the new era, but also by creating prominent scholars and promising students, regardless of their social, economic, or cultural background. The role and mission of UV is based on the four main components that include: Contemporary teaching according to all international standards, the Bologna Declaration and the Albanian Framework of

Qualifications, basic and applied research, as well as high quality academic work, effective and efficient public and community services, comprehensive programs of development activities of the Students capacity and the creation of future scientists. The main vision of UV is to have a transformative impact on society through continuous innovation in education, research, high creativity and active participation in the country's social and economic development.

*The main axes of research development:*

University of Vloara research strategy is in accordance with the research objectives of the faculties and departments and the relevant Senate decisions (8). Its purpose is to promote the strengthening and improvement of scientific and technological research at an Institution level and to contribute to the creation of the only European Regional Research Area.

*The Research Policy predicts the following actions:*

The collaboration between departments and faculty members in the fields of basic research, interdisciplinary research promotion in various sectors, strengthening of research potential and the creation of adequate research infrastructure at the institutional level, support of faculty members for the publication of research results and remuneration to prominent research activities on the basis of evaluation, database and research management to support research activities in the future. Research sources for funding in fundamental research from the Ministry of Education and other public organizations and international bodies, ensuring transparency and ethics in research and the emphasis stay on the needs and contribution to the economic and cultural development of the region of Europe.

Vloara University strategic plan is based mainly on the strategic topics ratified by Albanian Parliament and government. These documents are mainly “The National Strategy for Development and Integration” (9), “The National Strategy for Implementation of SDG – Objectives of Sustainable Development of 2030 Agenda of United Nations” (10), and “Collaboration Programme for Sustainable Development” (11).

University of Vloara on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 has approved a comprehensive strategic plan (12). The plan is spread from 2018 till 2024. In this document are settled they key areas that UV will focus during the forthcoming years. These are: tourism and business, healthcare services, technology, Alban-ology and Balkan-ology studies. However, this strategy doesn't include something specific for doctoral studies. First of all due to the shutdown of doctoral studies by the government since 2013, secondly because such kind of studies are provided only at Faculty of Technical Sciences and more specifically at Maths Department and finally because most of the Faculties/Departments do not have the adequate number of Full Professors and/or Associate Professors that could compose the “*Doctoral Commission*” as was mentioned above. However, there is a lack of any comprehensive document or any strategic priority plan for doctoral education in our institution.

## 2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

At the University strategic plan there are measurable targets. **Due to the lack of the document for doctoral studies, such targets are not yet in place.**



2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?

As aforementioned UV lack such kind of document.

2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?

We are not satisfied with the current situation. Is very urgent, UV to prepare a specific strategy for doctoral studies. Additionally, it should work very hard to open new doctoral programme studies.

2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

There are no data because there are no documents for this issue.

### 3. Statistical Data

**How much doctoral candidates do you have?**

3.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	20	12	11	11	9
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years	0	0	0	0	0
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years	0	1	1	0	2

3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

No. The numbers are not in line neither with the country nor with the University capacity. This is because of three key issues. First of all due to the shutdown of doctoral studies by the Albanian government since 2013, secondly because such kind of studies are provided only at Faculty of Technical Sciences at Vlora University and more specifically at Maths Department and finally because most of the Faculties/Departments do not have the adequate number of Full Professors and/or Associate Professors that could compose the “*Doctoral Commission*” as was mentioned above.

3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

The data at Vlora University are available for this issue by the secretary.

### 4. Research Capacity

**It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?**

4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?

We must be sincere at this point for the real condition of doctoral studies at UV and could find only few strengths. The University in the past gave the chance to be recruited as PhD students at Maths Department. Some of the strengths are:

- Adequate and sufficient number of Professors and/or Associate Professors at Math Department/Faculty of Technical Science;
- Will of Rectorate and Academic Senate to approve new Doctoral programmes at the University;
- High will from assistant lecturers to be recruited as PhD students;
- It is of high quality the doctoral programme offered by UV.

4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?

- There is a lack of funding for such kinds of studies;
- Haven't been able to sustain a funded program of research over time;
- There is no any specific budget for doctoral studies;
- Only one doctoral programme is offered by the University;
- There are no schools with doctoral programs in the country;
- Never was held any conference on doctoral education at University level;
- Lack of willingness in the past years to open new doctoral programmes;
- Lack of experienced staff;
- Lack of any strategic plan by the University for this field;
- Lack of facilities for research;
- Lack of up-to-date laboratories;
- Small number of graduates.

4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

Till now there are no any approaches. Different issues have been discussed at University level time by time but it's very urgent Ministry of Education to re-open the process and after that a comprehensive strategic plan could be developed.

4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?

To our view, there is a lack of research capacity and the University should work hard to improve it. Our key concerns are the lack of doctoral programmes offered by the UV, lack of staff, lack of facilities, lack of knowledge/skills from some members of the staff etc. First of all, the University should plan an annual budget for capacity improvement. Secondly, should improve collaboration with international Universities in order to train and educate in a comprehensive way the professors that will have the supervision of PhD students. Another important issue is involvement of the University in European funded capacity building projects. Additionally, it is critical the University to establish a working group that will evaluate the current situation in order to develop a strategic plan.

#### 4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

There are no official data on this issue. This is mainly due to the lack of will from the Institution to actively be involved in this issue as well as by the lack of knowledge by some of them. Additionally, provision of only one doctoral study by the UV is another issue for inactive engagement of the University authorities.

## 5. Structure of a doctoral programme

### How is a doctoral programme structured?

#### 5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

There are four key documents about structure of a doctoral programme. First of all is the *law for Higher Education and Research*, Law number 80/2015 dated 22.07.2015 "On Higher Education and Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania" (1), two sub laws and especially the sub-law number 112, date 23.2.2018 "for Determining The Criteria For The Award Of Scientific Grade "Doctor" And State Standards For The Benefit Of The Titles "Associated Professor" And "Full Professor" (2), instruction No.31, dated 29.12. 2017 "On Determining Criteria, Documentation and Procedures for Opening, Reorganizing and Closing Study Programs by Higher Education Institutions (3), the as well as the doctoral regulation of the University (4). Additionally, both statute (6) and regulation (7) of the University are critical documents. As about their approval, the law is approved by the Albanian Parliament, the sub-laws by the Government cabinet (summit of Ministers) and the other documents by the Academic Senate of the University.

#### 5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?

In order to obtain a doctoral degree at the University of Vlora, a total of 180 ECTS is required. The first year the PhD students need to fulfil 60 ECTS with some obligated courses (according specialization) and the rest 120 ECTS are obtained by the thesis.

#### 5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

Key milestones that must be achieved as they are determined at the sub-law number 112, date 23.2.2018 "for Determining The Criteria For The Award Of Scientific Grade "Doctor" And State Standards For The Benefit Of The Titles "Associated Professor" And "Full Professor" are (2):

1. To have realized as first or second author when (first author is the supervisor), at least 3 (three) referrals, 2 (two) of which were held in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the member states of the European Union, the OECD or the G20. The activity should be peer-review and published in "Conference Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN;
2. To have published at least three scientific papers and two of them must be in peer-review Scientific Journals in one of the member states of the European Union, the OECD or the G20

in which must be first or second author (when first author is the supervisor);

Additionally, the UV doctoral regulation (Senate decision no.22, date 08.05.2018 “For the approval of the Doctoral Program in Mathematics in offered by Faculty of Technical Sciences”) obligate the student to present:

1. Every year a progress report;
2. To have a minimum average of eight (8) of the courses conducted during the first year of doctoral studies;
3. To have succeed in one of the recognized international tests of English language.

#### 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?

Doctoral studies are full time studies or studies with an extended duration in cases when the candidate is an academic personnel of another Higher Education Institution or researcher in other Universities or Scientific Academies (as it is defined by the acting law). Studies duration must be at least three academic years and maximum 5 academic years.

#### 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?

To our view, legal framework is adequate. However, some more strict criteria are needed (i.e one publication to be in a Scientific Journal with at least 0.8 or 1 Impact Factor etc.).

#### 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

Not applicable.

## **6. Selection and admission**

### **Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?**

#### 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

In the process are involved the Dean, the Head of the Department, the basic unit/department, the main unit/Faculty (when it provides the doctoral programme) and the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty. According sub-law (2) the candidate applies individually to the approved study program offered by the Department or the Faculty. Initially the University propose to the Ministry of Education the quotes. After quotes approval by the Ministry, the Faculty open the application process. After that, the Dean requests approval from Doctoral Committee for the ad-hoc established working groups that will be involved in the selection process. As head of the ad-hoc commission is the Head of the Department that provide the doctoral programme (only in cases that the head has the title of Full or Associate Professor). After process deadline, the Dean receives the successful candidates and send it to the Doctoral Committee for approval. Within two weeks, the committee decide the final candidates. At the end, the Dean of the Faculty publish the final results.

In order someone to be selected as a PhD student must have a Master of Science in the field of the future doctoral studies or in another same field. Additionally, both bachelor and Master degree average must be over eight (8). Except the above, must prove that knows at a sufficient level at least one of the official languages of the European Union (English, Italian, German, French or Spanish).

6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?

This is not applicable at UV because we offer only one doctoral programme.

6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

Based on the subject/thesis of the candidate the Department proposes to the Doctoral Committee who can be the supervisor for each candidate.

6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?

The two most important criteria are: The supervisor to have adequate knowledge and huge experience in the field that is going to be conducted the doctoral thesis and secondly to accept to supervise this candidate.

6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?

To our view, the candidate should choose by himself the supervisor and not to be proposed by the Doctoral Committee. Additionally, to our opinion, a part-time Professor should not have PhD students and as about the numbers of the students a Full Professor must have maximum 5 PhD students and an Associate Professor must have maximum three PhD students.

6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

Not applicable.

## 7. Supervision

**What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

According an instruction from the Ministry of Education a supervisor must provide assistance to a Doctoral candidate at least eighty (80) hours per year (13). For this contribution, the supervisor gains an amount at the end of the academic year. Additionally, if someone is head of the commission that evaluate the doctoral thesis is reimbursed for fifteen (15) hours and if is just a member of the commission, for ten (10) hours.

7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?

The supervisor must have the title of Full Professor or at least Associate Professor. A Full Professor cannot have more than seven PhD students at the same time while an Associate Professor must have maximum five. However, part-time professors could be supervisor of two students.

7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?

To our view, the quality of supervision is adequate, however a research on this issue is significant in order to know the real situation.

7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

There are no data of the quality of supervision. This is probably due to the low number of PhD students recruited by UV and secondly because the majority of them are academic staff of the same University.

## 8. Additional items

### **What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

A change on the Doctoral Education in Albania is needed, to our view. The most significant concern for us is the shutdown of doctoral programmes from the Government since 2013 and there are no new enrolment since then. A very important issue also is private Universities. The legal framework must be very strict for them to provide PhD studies. This because in the most of the times they work like a “private company/enterprise” by just “selling” the PhD diploma. Additionally, PhD students’ selection by public Universities must be more transparent. Another important issue is that both Ministry of Education and each University to predict a specific budget for doctoral studies.

8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

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*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1 Team*

## **Metropolitan University of Tirana**



## **A1.1 "Evaluation of the existing doctoral education policy and standards in Montenegro and Albania and comparing with EU practices"**

**Lead by University of Zagreb and University of Vienna.**

**Output D1.1** "Report on the "state of the art" in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania and comparison with EU practices" Info-pack

Dear partners,

As agreed in the kick-off meeting find here the questionnaire which build the basis for the report. As described in the proposal the analysis must be of SWOT character with detailed statistical parameters (quantitative). Of course, all numbers should be followed with qualitative estimators and qualifications. The traced situation and findings should be compared with EU practices based on known criteria and standards in doctoral education.

Please return this questionnaire **latest by March 8<sup>th</sup>** to Melita Kovacevic [melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr](mailto:melita.kovacevic@unizg.hr) and Lucas Zinner [lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at](mailto:lucas.zinner@univie.ac.at).

In case some of the questions are not clear, please do not hesitate to contact us.

<b>Your Name:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	<b>Metropolitan Tirana University</b>
<b>E-mail contact</b>	

### **Overview of the Questionnaire**

1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations
2. Strategy and Vision
3. Statistical Data
4. Research Capacity
5. Structure of a doctoral programme
6. Selection and admission
7. Supervision
8. Additional items

## 1. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

### **What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?**

1.26. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

The legal basis for the doctoral program in Albania is regulated by law Nr. 80/2015 ‘Education and research in higher education institutions in the republic of Albania’. This law defines the role of the state in higher education, Its mission, the main objectives of higher education and scientific research, the rules of establishment, organization, management, administration, financing and closure of higher education institutions.

Specifically, the opening of doctoral programs is regulated by Instruction Nr. 31, dated 29.12.2017 ‘‘Determining criteria, documentation and procedures for the open, reorganization and closure of study programs from higher education institutions’’. While the criteria for obtaining a PhD title are provided by decision of the council of ministers Nr. 112, dated 23 February 2018 ‘‘For determining the criteria for the award of scientific grade "doctor" and state standards for the benefit of the titles "associated professor" and "professor" academy The Council of Ministers decision’’

1.27. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?

At Metropolitan Tirana University an internal regulation was adopted which sets out the normative rules of functioning and relationships between the subjects participating in scientific research activities. The regulation defines the mission, internal structure and mode of functioning of the third cycle study programs, "Doctorate", the rights and obligations of leading bodies, academic and administrative staff, students, external collaborators, and relations between them.

1.28. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?

The general framework/internal regulation for each University is proposed by the heads of departments and approved by the academic senate.

1.29. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

The regulatory framework is drafted by the academic staff of MTU and has been revised several times by them. This framework provides all the information needed to set up the program structures and assure the transparency and quality.

1.30. If data or information is not available, why?

## 2. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

### 2.1. What are the most relevant issues?

MTU has undertaken a market analysis that has resulted in the identification of the main strategic areas for development of the country, translated into the main field of doctoral studies.

**Doctoral studies in Construction Design and Management of Construction Works-** The government has determined the program (National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020) that will work till 2020, focused mainly in on the four (road, rail, sea and air) directions that make up the challenges of the infrastructure development program. The main objective in this field is to accelerate the integration of the transport system, the establishment of an integrated market, including transport infrastructure, land and sea that support the demand for transport development. To achieve this goal, the first step is the completion of the Transport Sector Strategy and the Albanian national transport plan. This includes approximation of national legislation to that of the EU and harmonization of rules on safety and standards, environmental protection and transport services. It is clear that for the achievement of all these ambitious objectives, experts with the highest technical and scientific formation are needed, capable not only of drafting strategic documents at planning level, but also to implement infrastructural and construction projects and development of sustainable in general.

**Doctoral studies on Computer Science and IT-** Particular attention in the 2020 digital agenda has been given to information technology. Strategic Priority of the Agenda is the Policy for the development of ICT infrastructure and electronic communications in all sectors (health, education, environment, agriculture, tourism, culture, energy, transport etc.). However, the attention that this field has been taken in the industry is not the same with regard to scientific research. It is necessary to have experts with the highest technical and scientific formation, capable not only of drafting strategic documents at the planning level, but also to implement computer science projects.

**Doctoral studies on Management-** Great priority has been given to the development of tourism and entrepreneurship in Albania, one of the pillars of the 'digital agenda' 2015-2020. The development policies of SMEs and tourism are in line with all SAA, Small Business Act for Europe (ABV) laws and agreements and the European Commission's recommendation of 09.01.2013: "Action Plan for Entrepreneurship Development for the period 2020". The main focus is to increase the competitiveness of SMEs, stimulating the growth of new enterprises and employment opportunities. The research and development infrastructure in Albania is not satisfactory. Technology and technical research equipment

have improved in recent years, but this improvement is still insufficient. The rapid development of the tourism and enterprises should be accompanied with development of scientific research.

2.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

2.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete roadmap?

2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?

2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

Doctoral studies have seven years that have been blocked by the Ministry of Education. Affected by this situation, Metropolitan University Tirana has not established a strategy for doctoral studies.

But with the goal of development of the research capacity, MTU has taken the preliminary steps for drafting the strategy. In September 2018, UMT conducted a market analysis to evaluate the needs, potentials and their compliance with our institutional capacities. UMT during 2018 also drafted the curriculum and applied to the Ministry of Education for the opening of doctoral studies. Having a clear vision MTU is creating an Innovation Centre aimed at interconnecting the industry with scientific research. During this period UMT has also created partnership in Erasmus+ framework for the exchange of experience and know-how with European Institutions.

### 3. Statistical Data

#### How much doctoral candidates do you have?

##### 3.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years					
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years					
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years					

##### 3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

The number of PhD quotes predicted to provide, for each profile is consistent with UMT organizational capacity, academic staff number and current market demands. Metropolitan Tirana University has made a market study for each of the specific fields. In this market study is taken into consideration the number of graduate students at the Metropolitan University, as well as other private or state universities and market needs. Referring to the market study that UMT has made, as well as referring to our institutional capacities, are predicted to provide these quotas for each field:

Doctorate on Management: minimum number 2, maximum number 5

Doctorate on Construction Design and Management of Construction Works- minimum number 2, maximum number 3

Doctorate on Computer Science and IT: minimum number 2 maximum number 3

##### 3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

Metropolitan Tirana University has not yet opened the doctoral program but it is expected the improvement of the request for the opening by the Ministry of Education. For this reason there are no statistical data on the number of PhDs in the past years. But we have given an estimate of the number of quotas expected to be allocated.

### 4. Research Capacity

**It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?**

4.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?

Metropolitan Tirana University is closely related to the market and has always sought to intertwine the academic world with the industry. In 2016, MTU opened an Incubation Center and is currently pursuing the establishment of an Innovation Center that aims to strengthen the links between science, industry, technology and scientific research. The main aim is the creation bridges between scientific research and SMEs through the support of technological innovations. Having a strong focus on the collaboration of science and industry, beyond the MTU investment, a strong scientist capacity is very much needed. The freezing of doctoral programs has created a shortage of human capacities in the academic field. Currently in Albania, most universities do not provide funding for scientific research support, which has further deteriorated the research capacity in Albania. Metropolitan Tirana University is determined in creation of the infrastructure for the development of scientific research in Albania.

4.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?

The main problem for the sustainable development of doctorates in Albania is the legislation and the lack of infrastructure. Metropolitan Tirana University, same as other Universities in Albania suffers from lack of research capacity and lack of network research cooperation with international schools. Funding for development of scientific research is limited. On the other hand, the current curriculum offered is not in line with developments in EU countries. The magnitude of these factors impedes the sustainable development of doctoral programs.

4.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

An example of good approach to building a critical mass is Netherland. Since 2005, the year when Salzburg's recommendations for the development of doctoral programs were published, a system of local graduate schools was implemented with national co-operation in PhD training in research schools. Now this school is recognized as a success story due to the proper implementation of the principles of Salzburg.

A contextualized approach of this model would be fruitful for Albania.

4.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?

The doctoral program in Albania has been closed for years. Scientific researchers that aspire to continue the academic world have it impossible to apply in Albania. Beyond legal constraints, technological factors are a strong inhibitor to the development of science. The lack of appropriate curricula for this type of program, as well as the lack of labs/ infrastructure, the lack of access to online libraries limit the quality of the research studies. A good opportunity for doctoral development in Albania is the creation of joint doctoral programs with international universities, which can remove the legal barriers in Albania and offer high academic expertise.

On the other side, MTU is investing in infrastructure and the creation of links with the SMEs, in line with Salzbur recommendation.

4.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## **5. Structure of a doctoral programme**

**How is a doctoral programme structured?**

5.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

According to the law Nr. 80/2015 ‘Education and research in higher education institutions in the republic of Albania’, the organizational autonomy and selection of personnel is guaranteed through the right: a) to self-govern, to select governing bodies, to organize the structures and to regulate the ways of exercising their activity through their internal acts drafted in accordance with this law and other legal, sub legal acts in force; b) to set criteria for admission of students to study programs, in accordance with this law; c) to conclude agreements with legal, public and private persons, domestic or foreign, for the development of teaching, research, qualification, innovation, and other legitimate activities; ç) to independently determine the number of personnel, the criteria and procedures for its selection, as well as to determine the salaries of the staff, in accordance with the institution's form.

Metropolitan Tirana University has its own regulation defining the structure of the doctoral program. This regulation has been prepared by the head of department and approved by the academic senate.

5.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is required?

6 courses, 60 ECTS

5.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

**From institution perspective**

**Short term Milestone**

UMT is currently in the phase of applying for the approval of the opening of doctoral program. Short-term milestone is the successful opening of the program in accordance with local requirements and international programs. The documents for the opening of the doctoral program have been submitted to the Ministry of Education and actually we are in the process of opening of doctoral studies.

**Milestone**

The accreditation of the doctoral program is the mid-term objective of UMT. Accreditation of programs is a problem that has always accompanied the university in Albania. Till now MTU has successfully secured the accreditation of

**Long Term Milestone**

In the long run, the goal of UMT is to increase the research capacities through: staff training, staff exchange, professional growth of academic staff (it is a criterion in Albania to supervise 2 doctoral students in order to obtain the title Prof. Dr- according to Instruction Nr. 31, date 29.12.2017), providing online bookstores, holding annual conferences, scientific symposiums, and scientific journals.

## **From candidate perspective**

From the perspective of PhD candidate, success is the defense of the title 'doctor'. The "doctor" scientific degree is obtained after the successful defense of the dissertation thesis, at the conclusion of doctoral studies in the field of higher education and research, according to the criteria and within the deadlines set by the legislation on higher education and research. PhD studies are conducted in the form of research groups, led by academic staff, with the academic title "associate professor" or "professor".

The basic criteria to be fulfilled by the candidate before defending the dissertation are:

- a) Have realized as the first or second author when the first author is the scientific leader, at least 3 (three) referrals, 2 (two) of which are held in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress) , in one of the European Union, OECD or G20 member states, admitted on the basis of a prior scientific evaluation and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;
- b) Have published at least 3 (three) scientific articles in scientific journals, of which 2 (two) have been published or accepted for publication in indexed journals of OECD, EU or G20 countries, editorial board, where, at least, one of them is the first author and the second author of the second.

### 5.4. What is the duration of a programme?

The duration of the program is foreseen to be 3-5 years. Doctoral degrees are held full-time or prolonged in time, in those cases where the doctorate is employed as an academic staff in another higher education institution or as a research staff at a research institution higher education institutions. PhD studies last no less than three academic years and no more than five academic years.

### 5.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and why?

### 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## **6. Selection and admission**

### **Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?**

#### 6.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

**Permanent Commission for doctoral studies-** Commissions that monitor the process of awarding the scientific degree "doctor". This committee consists of not less than 5 members and no more than 11 members who are elected by the assembly of the academic staff. The members of these commissions must hold at least the academic title "Associate Professor". The academic staff assembly decides on the approval of candidatures for members of the permanent commission for awarding the "Doctor" degree. The Committee decides by a majority vote of all members. Organization and functioning of this committee is defined in its regulation. During its activity, the commission applies the criteria set out in the applicable legal and sub-legal acts for the evaluation of candidates and the award of scientific degrees.

**Ad-Hoc Commission-** The ad hoc commission set up by the head of department decides the material and procedural rules that will apply for the admission. If it is estimated by the Dean that the rules or a part of them are the same for two or more study programs, to assist the applicants, it will be the dean who will decide on these rules. Each ad hoc commission has the right to impose additional rules aimed at achieving



the most efficient and transparent process. Prior to the start of the selection process, the deadlines for each procedure to be followed during the new admission process will be determined. These deadlines will be made public immediately at the official web site of the respective faculty.

6.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?

The selection process does not vary in different fields. The same criteria are used for the selection of doctoral candidates of different fields.

6.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

All doctoral applications are reviewed in advance by the Permanent Doctorate Commission, which in cooperation with the unit responsible for the PhD Program, proposes to the Dean the setting up of the ad-hoc committee, according to departments covering the doctoral school program, consisting of internal and external members of the academic staff, having at least the "doctor" degree. The chairman of each ad-hoc commission is the head of department.

Ad-hoc Committee, after a preliminary selection of candidates who meet the general criteria, proceeds with their ranking in accordance with the criteria. This ranking is presented by the Ad-hoc Committee to the Dean, who collects all the assessments of the commissions and submits them to the Permanent Commission for Doctoral.

6.4. Which selection criteria are most important?

The criteria set out in the internal regulations of UMT for the admission of candidates are:

- Possession of a Master's Degree Master's degree or equivalent diploma in the required field. For applicants who have completed their studies abroad, the diploma must be equivalent to the responsible state structures.
- high scores in the first and second cycle studies, in accordance with the criteria announced each academic year. Exceptions are those special cases that are deemed reasonable by the relevant commissions for granting the title "Doctor".
- possession of evidence of one of the five foreign languages assessed according to internationally recognized tests, in accordance with the applicable legislation, level C1;
- recommendations by persons who have a scientific title, who recognize the academic and professional skills of the candidate;
- implementation of scientific and ethical standards (declarations).

Priority is given to candidates who are full-time academic staff at UMT.

6.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?

The selection process envisaged in the regulation has been processed and reviewed by members MTU. Through regulation is provided the necessary basis for ensuring transparency and quality assurance of the doctoral program.

6.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## 7. Supervision

**What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

7.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

According to the actual instructions, supervisor's are anticipated to receive a fee for each doctoral student led.

7.2. Which are the formal requirements to be allowed to supervise?

The main requirement of the academic staff to be allowed to supervise is to be from the Professor category. The number of students within each research group, which also includes all the students that the academic staff pursues in all higher education institutions where he is engaged, is: a) no more than 7 (seven) in the case where the academic staff holds the title "professor"; b) no more than 5 (five), in the case where the full time academic staff holds the title "associate professor"; c) no more than 3 (three), in case where the academic staff, having the academic title "associate professor" or "professor", is engaged part time.

7.3. Do you think that the quality of supervision is adequate or not and why?

The Metropolitan University Tirana has the necessary staff to carry out doctoral studies. The staff is specialized and has the scientific degrees necessary to supervise doctoral candidates.

Academic staff have years of experience and are among the best professors in their field in Albania. However, experience of international professors is needed, in terms of the need for new methodological approaches in conducting research studies.

7.4. If data or information is not available, why?

## 8. Additional items

**What other issues should be taken into account in a report on the “state of the art” in doctoral education in Montenegro and Albania?**

8.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

8.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.  
Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WPI Team*

## 9. Legal framework, guidelines and regulations

**What defines the legal and organisational framework of doctoral education in your country and in your institution?**

1.31. Please describe briefly the National framework, University Act and its link to doctoral education:

The legal basis for the doctoral program in Albania is regulated by law Nr. 80/2015 ‘Education and research in higher education institutions in the republic of Albania’. This law defines the role of the state in higher education, Its mission, the main objectives of higher education and scientific research, the rules of establishment, organization, management, administration, financing and closure of higher education institutions.

Specifically, the opening of doctoral programs is regulated by Instruction Nr. 31, dated 29.12.2017 ‘‘Determining criteria, documentation and procedures for the open, reorganization and closure of study programs from higher education institutions’’. While the criteria for obtaining a PhD title are provided by decision of the council of ministers Nr. 112, dated 23 February 2018 ‘‘For determining the criteria for the award of scientific grade "doctor" and state standards for the benefit of the titles "associated professor" and "professor" academy The Council of Ministers decision’’

1.32. Which regulations and/or guidelines on University level such as statutes, internal regulations are in place?

At Metropolitan Tirana University an internal regulation was adopted which sets out the normative rules of functioning and relationships between the subjects participating in scientific research activities. The regulation defines the mission, internal structure and mode of functioning of the third cycle study programs, "Doctorate", the rights and obligations of leading bodies, academic and administrative staff, students, external collaborators, and relations between them.

1.33. Which parties are involved in defining the framework, e.g. the senate, a dedicated board for doctoral studies, faculties, ministries, accreditation agency etc. and their role with respect to doctoral education?

The general framework/internal regulation for each University is proposed by the heads of departments and approved by the academic senate.

1.34. Are you satisfied with the regulatory framework or not and why?

The regulatory framework is drafted by the academic staff of MTU and has been revised several times by them. This framework provides all the information needed to set up the program structures and assure the transparency and quality.

1.35. If data or information is not available, why?

## 10. Strategy and Vision

**What issues are currently considered a strategic priority in doctoral education in your institution respectively in your country?**

### 10.1. What are the most relevant issues?

MTU has undertaken a market analysis that has resulted in the identification of the main strategic areas for development of the country, translated into the main field of doctoral studies.

**Doctoral studies in Construction Design and Management of Construction Works-** The government has determined the program (National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020) that will work till 2020, focused mainly in on the four (road, rail, sea and air) directions that make up the challenges of the infrastructure development program. The main objective in this field is to accelerate the integration of the transport system, the establishment of an integrated market, including transport infrastructure, land and sea that support the demand for transport development. To achieve this goal, the first step is the completion of the Transport Sector Strategy and the Albanian national transport plan. This includes approximation of national legislation to that of the EU and harmonization of rules on safety and standards, environmental protection and transport services. It is clear that for the achievement of all these ambitious objectives, experts with the highest technical and scientific formation are needed, capable not only of drafting strategic documents at planning level, but also to implement infrastructural and construction projects and development of sustainable in general.

**Doctoral studies on Computer Science and IT-** Particular attention in the 2020 digital agenda has been given to information technology. Strategic Priority of the Agenda is the Policy for the development of ICT infrastructure and electronic communications in all sectors (health, education, environment, agriculture, tourism, culture, energy, transport etc.). However, the attention that this field has been taken in the industry is not the same with regard to scientific research. It is necessary to have experts with the highest technical and scientific formation, capable not only of drafting strategic documents at the planning level, but also to implement computer science projects.

**Doctoral studies on Management-** Great priority has been given to the development of tourism and entrepreneurship in Albania, one of the pillars of the 'digital agenda' 2015-2020. The development policies of SMEs and tourism are in line with all SAA, Small Business Act for Europe (ABV) laws and agreements and the European Commission's recommendation of 09.01.2013: "Action Plan for Entrepreneurship Development for the period 2020". The main focus is to increase the competitiveness of SMEs, stimulating the growth of new enterprises and employment opportunities. The research and development infrastructure in Albania is not satisfactory. Technology and technical research equipment have improved in recent years, but this improvement is still insufficient. The rapid development of the tourism and enterprises should be accompanied with development of scientific research.

### 10.2. Are measurable targets set and if so, which and by whom?

### 10.3. Is the strategy presented in a strategic document with a concrete

### roadmap? 2.4. Are you satisfied with the current strategy or not and why?

### 2.5. If data or information is not available, why?

Doctoral studies have seven years that have been blocked by the Ministry of Education. Affected by this situation, Metropolitan University Tirana has not established a strategy for doctoral studies.

But with the goal of development of the research capacity, MTU has taken the preliminary steps for drafting the strategy. In September 2018, UMT conducted a market analysis to evaluate the needs, potentials and their compliance with our institutional capacities. UMT during 2018 also drafted the curriculum and applied to the Ministry of Education for the opening of doctoral studies.

Having a clear vision MTU is creating an Innovation Centre aimed at interconnecting the industry with scientific research. During this period UMT has also created partnership in Erasmus+ framework for the exchange of experience and know-how with European Institutions.

## 11. Statistical Data

### How much doctoral candidates do you have?

#### 11.1. Please fill the following table:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Numbers of totally enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years					
Numbers of yearly new enrolled doctoral candidates in the last 5 years					
Numbers of degrees awarded in the last 5 years					

#### 3.2. Do you think the numbers are in line with your institution's or country's capacity or not and why?

The number of PhD quotes predicted to provide, for each profile is consistent with UMT organizational capacity, academic staff number and current market demands. Metropolitan Tirana University has made a market study for each of the specific fields. In this market study is taken into consideration the number of graduate students at the Metropolitan University, as well as other private or state universities and market needs. Referring to the market study that UMT has made, as well as referring to our institutional capacities, are predicted to provide these quotas for each field:

Doctorate on Management: minimum number 2, maximum number 5

Doctorate on Construction Design and Management of Construction Works- minimum number 2, maximum number 3

Doctorate on Computer Science and IT: minimum number 2 maximum number 3

#### 3.3. If data or information is not available, why?

Metropolitan Tirana University has not yet opened the doctoral program but it is expected the approval of the request for the opening by the Ministry of Education. For this reason there are no statistical data on the number of PhDs in the past years. But we have given an estimate of the number of quotas expected to be allocated.

## 12. Research Capacity

**It is generally accepted that without research in a specific field or discipline it is hardly possible to offer quality doctoral education in that field. How do you assess the research capacities at their institutions?**

12.1. Which strengths can be identified in your institution, for which quality doctoral education is offered or could be offered?

Metropolitan Tirana University is closely related to the market and has always sought to intertwine the academic world with the industry. In 2016, MTU opened an Incubation Center and is currently pursuing the establishment of an Innovation Center that aims to strengthen the links between science, industry, technology and scientific research. The main aim is the creation bridges between scientific research and SMEs through the support of technological innovations. Having a strong focus on the collaboration of science and industry, beyond the MTU investment, a strong scientist capacity is very much needed. The freezing of doctoral programs has created a shortage of human capacities in the academic field. Currently in Albania, most universities do not provide funding for scientific research support, which has further deteriorated the research capacity in Albania. Metropolitan Tirana University is determined in creation of the infrastructure for the development of scientific research in Albania.

12.2. Where do they lack the critical mass to develop sustainable doctoral programmes?

The main problem for the sustainable development of doctorates in Albania is the legislation and the lack of infrastructure. Metropolitan Tirana University, same as other Universities in Albania suffers from lack of research capacity and lack of network research cooperation with international schools. Funding for development of scientific research is limited. On the other hand, the current curriculum offered is not in line with developments in EU countries. The magnitude of these factors impedes the sustainable development of doctoral programs.

12.3. Are there already good approaches to building critical mass, and what examples could be mentioned?

An example of good approach to building a critical mass is Netherland. Since 2005, the year when Salzburg's recommendations for the development of doctoral programs were published, a system of local graduate schools was implemented with national co-operation in PhD training in research schools. Now this school is recognized as a success story due to the proper implementation of the principles of Salzburg.

A contextualized approach of this model would be fruitful for Albania.

12.4. If you perceive a lack of research capacities, what are your main concerns and what possibilities would there be to address them?

The doctoral program in Albania has been closed for years. Scientific researchers that aspire to continue the academic world have it impossible to apply in Albania. Beyond legal constraints, technological factors are a strong inhibitor to the development of science. The lack of appropriate curricula for this type of program, as well as the lack of labs/ infrastructure, the lack of access to online libraries limit the quality of the research studies. A good opportunity for doctoral development in Albania is the creation of joint doctoral programs with international universities, which can remove the legal barriers in Albania and offer high academic expertise.

On the other side, MTU is investing in infrastructure and the creation of links with the SMEs, in line with Salzbur recommendation.

12.5. If data or information is not available, why?

## **13. Structure of a doctoral programme**

### **How is a doctoral programme structured?**

13.1. In which documents is the structure of a programme defined and who is approving it?

According to the law Nr. 80/2015 'Education and research in higher education institutions in the republic of Albania', the organizational autonomy and selection of personnel is guaranteed through the right: a) to self-govern, to select governing bodies, to organize the structures and to regulate the ways of exercising their activity through their internal acts drafted in accordance with this law and other legal, sub legal acts in force; b) to set criteria for admission of students to study programs, in accordance with this law; c) to conclude agreements with legal, public and private persons, domestic or foreign, for the development of teaching, research, qualification, innovation, and other legitimate activities; ç) to independently determine the number of personnel, the criteria and procedures for its selection, as well as to determine the salaries of the staff, in accordance with the institution's form.

Metropolitan Tirana University has its own regulation defining the structure of the doctoral program. This regulation has been prepared by the head of department and approved by the academic senate.

13.2. How much coursework (ECTS) is

required? 6 courses, 60 ECTS

13.3. What kind of milestones must be achieved for successfully completing a programme?

### **From institution perspective**

#### **Short term Milestone**

UMT is currently in the phase of applying for the approval of the opening of doctoral program. Short-term milestone is the successful opening of the program in accordance with local requirements and international programs. The documents for the opening of the doctoral program have been submitted to the Ministry of Education and actually we are in the process of opening of doctoral studies.

#### **Milestone**

The accreditation of the doctoral program is the mid-term objective of UMT. Accreditation of programs is a problem that has always accompanied the university in Albania. Till now MTU has successfully secured the accreditation of

#### **Long Term Milestone**

In the long run, the goal of UMT is to increase the research capacities through: staff training, staff exchange, professional growth of academic staff (it is a criterion in Albania to supervise 2 doctoral students in order to obtain the title Prof. Dr- according to Instruction Nr. 31, date 29.12.2017), providing online bookstores, holding annual conferences, scientific symposiums, and scientific journals.

## **From candidate perspective**

From the perspective of PhD candidate, success is the defense of the title 'doctor'. The "doctor" scientific degree is obtained after the successful defense of the dissertation thesis, at the conclusion of doctoral studies in the field of higher education and research, according to the criteria and within the deadlines set by the legislation on higher education and research. PhD studies are conducted in the form of research groups, led by academic staff, with the academic title "associate professor" or "professor".

The basic criteria to be fulfilled by the candidate before defending the dissertation are:

c) Have realized as the first or second author when the first author is the scientific leader, at least 3 (three) referrals, 2 (two) of which are held in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the European Union, OECD or G20 member states, admitted on the basis of a prior scientific evaluation and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;

d) Have published at least 3 (three) scientific articles in scientific journals, of which 2 (two) have been published or accepted for publication in indexed journals of OECD, EU or G20 countries, editorial board, where, at least, one of them is the first author and the second author of the second.

### 13.4. What is the duration of a programme?

The duration of the program is foreseen to be 3-5 years. Doctoral degrees are held full-time or prolonged in time, in those cases where the doctorate is employed as an academic staff in another higher education institution or as a research staff at a research institution higher education institutions. PhD studies last no less than three academic years and no more than five academic years.

### 13.5. Are you satisfied with the structure or not and

why? 5.6. If data or information is not available, why?

## **14. Selection and admission**

### **Who is in charge of selecting and admitting a doctoral candidate?**

#### 14.1. Who is involved in the selection of doctoral candidates?

**Permanent Commission for doctoral studies-** Commissions that monitor the process of awarding the scientific degree "doctor". This committee consists of not less than 5 members and no more than 11 members who are elected by the assembly of the academic staff. The members of these commissions must hold at least the academic title "Associate Professor". The academic staff assembly decides on the approval of candidatures for members of the permanent commission for awarding the "Doctor" degree. The Committee decides by a majority vote of all members. Organization and functioning of this committee is defined in its regulation. During its activity, the commission applies the criteria set out in the applicable legal and sub-legal acts for the evaluation of candidates and the award of scientific degrees.

**Ad-Hoc Commission-** The ad hoc commission set up by the head of department decides the material and procedural rules that will apply for the admission. If it is estimated by the Dean that the rules or a part of them are the same for two or more study programs, to assist the applicants, it will be the dean



who will decide on these rules. Each ad hoc commission has the right to impose additional rules aimed at achieving the most efficient and transparent process. Prior to the start of the selection process, the deadlines for each procedure to be followed during the new admission process will be determined. These deadlines will be made public immediately at the official web site of the respective faculty.

14.2. Does the selection process vary from field to field or discipline to discipline?

The selection process does not vary in different fields. The same criteria are used for the selection of doctoral candidates of different fields.

14.3. If the supervisor is not personally selecting her/his doctoral candidates, how are they selected and allocated to a supervisor?

All doctoral applications are reviewed in advance by the Permanent Doctorate Commission, which in cooperation with the unit responsible for the PhD Program, proposes to the Dean the setting up of the ad-hoc committee, according to departments covering the doctoral school program, consisting of internal and external members of the academic staff, having at least the "doctor" degree. The chairman of each ad-hoc commission is the head of department.

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Priority is given to candidates who are full-time academic staff at UMT.

14.5. Are you satisfied with the process of admission and selection or not and why?

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## 15. Supervision

**What kind of rules and regulations are available regarding the supervision of doctoral candidates?**

15.1. Are there any benefits for supervisors to accept and supervise or to graduate a candidate?

According to the actual instructions, supervisor's are anticipated to receive a fee for each doctoral student led.

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## 16. Additional items

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16.1. Please explain specific issues of concern:

16.2. Please add any further comments, issues or topics which should be addressed in the report:

*Thanks for answering the questionnaire.*

*Melita Kovacevic and Lucas Zinner on behalf of the WP1 Team*

