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POLICY FRAMEWORK ON QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN KOSOVO

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The overall goal of the project is to develop a culture of quality in teacher training institutions to increase their professionalism in the school system in Kosovo.

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Preface

As one of the main pillars of the development of a state, education has been continuously in the trend of reforms that have aimed at development not only for the education system, but especially for all actors involved in this system. The results of international evaluations have also further strengthened the understanding of the role of teachers in the success of the system and especially students.

The Faculty of Education at the University "Isa Boletini" in Mitrovica, is well aware of the important role it has in the preparation of new educators and teachers, whose quality of preparation plays a major role in preparing generations with market demands work and related competencies. As a faculty, it has gone through two new four-year accreditation processes of which it has a high employment rate of graduate students. However, the evidence supports the continuing need for quality development either in the content prepared by new teachers or in the various practices they encounter during their studies and beyond.

As UIBM, building the quality assurance system, has aimed to create a culture of quality in all segments of academic life, and makes continuous efforts for improvement based on evidence. With the involvement in the QATEK project, the Faculty of Education, already through this policy has the opportunity to use the mechanisms that accompany it, to further develop this culture of quality and identify the right steps that will ensure developmental changes in the teacher training program. Young. In addition to the professional obligation, in this way the Faculty of Education fulfils its mission to prepare as high quality as possible the generations of teachers.

Prof. dr. Alush Musaj

Rector

1. Introduction

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skill, they require to perform their task effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. Although, ideally it should be conceived of, and organized as a seamless continuum, teacher education is often divided into these stages: Initial teacher training/education (a pre-service training before entering the classroom as a fully responsible teacher); Induction (the process of providing training and support during the first few years of teaching or the first year in a particular school); and in-service development or continuing professional development (CPD). According to the EU Framework for supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes (2013), professional learning is a continuum starting in initial teacher education, carrying on through the induction phase and continuing throughout the rest of the career.

The new Kosovo Curriculum Framework (launched in 2011 and implemented in phases after a pilot) focuses on competence-based teaching and learning, shifting the focus from acquiring knowledge to building competences, and fosters a transition for teaching and learning based on objectives and teaching content to a more contemporary methodology of teaching and learning based on results and development of competencies in children. Hence, the role of the teacher is now projected as moving beyond the provision of information to fostering an adequate environment for the inclusion and development of key competences. The implementation of this curriculum framework requires that teacher education programs prepare teachers that can support development of prospective teachers that respond to this and similar curriculum reforms.

According to the Strategic Framework for Teacher Development in Kosovo (approved by Ministry of Education and Science in 2017), the competence profile of teachers consists of seven standards that define what teachers should know, be able to do and behave in the profession. These standards are grouped into four areas of teaching: Professional values (attitudes and behaviours); professional knowledge and understanding; professional practice; and teaching and professional engagement. These areas are interlinked and complement each other.

In Kosovo, teacher education is organized in five public higher education institutions through Faculties of Education. The Law on Pre-university education in Kosovo (2011) and the Law on Higher education in Kosovo (2012) defines the institutions responsible for teacher education in pre-university education. According to the Law on Higher Education, public higher education institutions are responsible for offering pre-service teacher education programs in Kosovo. Hence, TE programs are offered at the Faculties of Education at the University of Prishtina, the University of Gjilan, the University of Gjakova, the University of Mitrovica and the University of Prizren. All these programs require accreditation by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

Pre-primary and primary teacher education programs are offered in all five public universities, and the required duration of studies to prepare teachers of pre-primary and primary education is at least four years (240 ECTS). Subject teaching is offered only at the University of Prishtina.

The duration of studies to prepare subject teachers is at least 300 ECTS, out of which at least 180 ECTS are required for academic component (BA level) and 120 ECTS (MA level) for the pedagogical and practical component. Vocational Education Pedagogy is also offered only at the University of Prishtina, requiring at least 300 ECTS, out of which 180 ECTS for the professional component and 120 ECTS (MA) the pedagogical component. Teacher education programs are required to comply with the professional standards defined by the Strategic Framework on teacher development and Curriculum Framework/Core curriculum for the respective level (KEEN, 2019).

The induction stage in teaching includes the process of providing training and support during the first few years of teaching and envisions a special mentoring program, however in Kosovo it is still not properly addressed. It is a stage of adaptation to the culture of work at school, of further development of competencies for a good teaching and care for personal development (KEEN, 2019). Although it is foreseen with the new teacher licensing system, Kosovo does not have a fully developed and functional induction system for new teachers which in a way is a challenge in the overall policy and practice of teacher development in context Kosovo.

Teacher professional development (in-service) on the other hand is under the responsibility of several institutions that have a role in in-service teacher professional development including here Municipal Education Directories, Schools and other Educational Institutions, Education Inspectorate, institutions/organizations, agencies and NGOs, and international projects financed by donors, which offer professional development courses and work towards professional development of teachers. Each of them has its own definition of quality and way of operation. They are also diversified significantly in content, duration and assessment criteria, and are delivered at different academic levels. Despite initiatives to define public institutions that would have the leading role for certain TPD programs, MEST was not successful in that and as a result the TPD mainly depends on international projects financed by donors (KEEN, 2019). All the TPD programs require accreditation by the MES.

Within the scope of QATEK project, two situation analysis were conducted in 2020, including: (i) *Situational analysis on QA practises in initial teacher education* and (ii) *Situational analysis on initial teacher education programmes*.

Situational analysis on QA practices showed that *accreditation process* is considered the guiding framework for assuring quality in higher education and teacher education (QATEK, 2020). Although the accreditation process has influenced the development of internal (institutional) quality assurance mechanisms across initial teacher education institutions, accreditation is externally-oriented and driven by quantitative indicators. Consequently, standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance cannot be generalised to the improvement of quality in entire initial teacher education. The standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance in higher education should not be imposed as a general template for improving quality in higher education and teacher education. The standards are guidelines to help individual institutions to understand their specific needs and adjust ways to improve institutional quality. Hence, initial teacher education institutions need tailored-made indicators/standards (both qualitative and quantitative) when aiming to develop a quality-

oriented teacher education and ensuring future teacher professionalism. In this way, internal stakeholders can better communicate with internal standards and guidelines for improving quality and offer substantial engagement towards the development of a quality culture within institutions.

Situational analysis of initial teacher education programmes (2020) confirms that knowledge and skills about learning and teaching are less developed and the role of initial teacher education is more narrowly conceived. Findings from situational analysis on programmes show that knowledge development is the priority in the programmes emphasised by teacher educators. However, skills are mainly developed during the internship period and skills development is not a priority in programmes. Whereas the development of attitudes, beliefs and values for the teaching profession is the least addressed component of the programmes. Some ITE institutions have ignored entirely the component of dispositions: attitudes, beliefs and values which is reflected in pre-university level, as well.

To sum up, although existing policies and mechanisms for quality assurance in initial teacher development serve as a basis for understanding ways to offer quality-oriented teacher education, initial teacher education imposes specific needs that require the development of a tailored policy framework.

The scope of this policy is to address the advancement of the policies and practices of quality assurance and enhancement of pre-service teacher education as the crucial element in the teacher development continuum.

The purpose of the policy

The overall purpose of the policy paper is to provide a framework and implementation guidelines for initial teacher education institutions in Kosovo introducing an internal quality assurance system for initial (pre-service) teacher education. This policy document aims to provide a reference framework for initial teacher education institutions in aligning program and institutional practices towards ensuring initial teacher education practices lead to the development of demanded teacher professionalism in national school context and international reference points. The policy provides a framework that establishes the reference points for standards of programming in initial teacher education as well as outlines the processes and instruments that lead to identifying improvement areas enabling thus the institutional actions to enhance the existing practices.

2. Reference framework for teacher education quality assurance policy

The purpose of this section is to layout existing reference frameworks for teacher education quality assurance policy at national level (see section 2.1) and European level (see section 2.2).

2.1 National reference framework for teaching profession

It is important to note that teacher education in Kosovo operates within the national context in which teaching profession and the operation of higher education institutions are embedded. In light of this, there are three important local policy references that shape the development of teaching profession and teacher education in Kosovo. These are: external accreditation system for higher education, the Strategic Framework for Teacher Development, and National Curriculum Policy. These policy references are:

- **Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance.** The Kosovo standards for external quality assurance (institutional and program accreditation) are based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. They are implemented regularly and higher education institutions plan developments based on those standards. They are generic and do not address specific themes. Higher Education Institutions are expected to develop own internal mechanisms to respond to those external standards.
- **Strategic framework for teacher development.** It is a national policy that foresees policies and practices that are used as reference points for teacher development along the continuum of initial (pre-service), induction phase and in-service development. The document provides a wide range of competencies for teachers that need to be addressed at various stages of career as well as provides a good reference point for the demanded teacher professionalism in Kosovo context. For the initial teacher education phase, the document specifies the set of competences that initial teacher education should aspire to nurture.
- **Kosovo Curriculum Policy.** The curriculum policy that is a competence-based approach foresees a transition in how teachers plan and deliver instruction with the intention to push teachers towards a learner-centered approach and outcomes based education. The transition that Kosovo teachers are expected to make is centered around abandoning the input oriented approaches of teachers and following prescribed curricula towards an approach that teachers create curricula and lead change in teaching and learning.

The first two policy references are explained in the following section in more detail in view of their relevance for the purpose of this present document.

2.1.1 Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance

Kosovo Accreditation Agency (hereafter KAA) supports the implementation of quality assurance in higher education and teacher education through institutional and programmes accreditation processes. To better understand higher education institutions and programmes accreditation

requirements, the KAA developed a manual with standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance that is based on the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* (Kačaniku, 2018).

Accreditation/re-accreditation of higher education institutions focuses on the following thematic areas:

- the public mission and institutional objectives,
- strategic planning, governance and administration,
- financial planning and management,
- academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability,
- quality management,
- learning and teaching,
- research,
- staff, employment processes and professional development,
- student administration and support services,
- learning resources and facilities, and
- institutional cooperation

Whereas, *accreditation/re-accreditation of study programmes* evaluate:

- the mission, objectives and administration;
- quality management;
- academic staff;
- educational process content;
- students;
- research, and;
- infrastructure and resources.

2.1.2 National teacher development framework

The main policy document for teacher development is the *Strategic framework for teacher development in Kosovo* (MES, 2017). Strategic framework for teacher development - sets the standards of the teaching profession throughout the career (pre-service, entry phase in the profession and professional development) and unpacks teacher competencies in different teacher development phases.

This document was developed in an effort to improve the organisation of the teacher development system and aims at:

- Offering a coherent career plan for teacher development in Kosovo, including a range of unified performance standards/competencies in five levels of teacher career/ licensing and prioritize many actions to be taken for the period 2017-2021
- Energizing discussion and action in different levels of the education system (central, municipal and school level) to ensure that all students in Kosovo, in any class, are inspired to learn from devoted teachers, who are efficient and careful towards their students (MEST, 2017, p. 10).

The teacher development strategic framework defines the standards of the profession, which serve as a reference for teacher preparation, professional support and development, performance assessment, and promotion of teachers. Teachers' professional standards are organised in four teaching areas and correspond to standards for teachers (see *Table 1* for detailed information).

Table 1: General framework of standards of the teaching profession / general competencies (MES, 2017, p. 14)

Teaching areas	Standards for teachers
<i>Professional values, attitudes and behaviour</i>	Recognizes and supports key values and criteria defined by the MEST/Responsibility towards work duties and obligations
<i>Professional knowledge and understanding</i>	Demonstrates positive and objective attitudes and behaviour for the well-being of students and teaching Demonstrates knowledge of curriculum/subject content and professional didactic methodology for the subject
<i>Skills and professional practice</i>	Plans effective implementation of teaching and learning Plans continuous assessment (assessment to learn), offers feedback and reports in regards to student learning
<i>Professional learning and engagement</i>	Engages in continuous professional development Engages professionally with colleagues, parents and community

2.2 European reference framework for teaching profession

This section aims at providing various perspectives of developing an initial teacher education framework. *Firstly*, we discuss the demands and complexities of teachers' profession by indicating main aspects to be considered by initial teacher education institutions when preparing future teachers. *Secondly*, we broadly conceptualize teacher competencies and link to practice of developing teacher competencies within ITE Kosovo-context. *Thirdly*, this section provides the framework for teacher competence development (adopted by EU framework). *Lastly*, we offer practical considerations for ITE institutions in Kosovo on how to ensure a harmonised implementation of a quality-oriented teacher education framework.

2.2.1 Understanding the complexities of teachers' new work realities

The roles and realities of teachers' worlds and works are changing, and so are expectations about them: teachers are asked to teach in increasingly diverse classrooms, integrate students with special needs, use ICT for teaching effectively, engage in evaluation and accountability processes, and involve parents in schools (Fullan, 2007; Day & Gu 2010; Day, 2017) . Hargreaves (2003, p. 24) argues that teachers need to develop a new professionalism where they:

- Promote deep cognitive learning
- Learn to teach in ways they were not taught
- Commit to continuous professional learning
- Work and learn in collegial teams
- Treat parents as partners in learning

- Develop and draw on collective intelligence
- Build capacity for change and risk
- Foster trust in process

Furthermore, Hattie (2009, pp. 238-239) provides six indications that show the complexities of teachers' new roles:

1. Teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning;
2. Teachers need to be directive, influential, caring, and actively engaged in the passion of teaching and learning;
3. Teachers need to be aware of what each and every student is thinking and knowing, to construct meaning and meaningful experiences in light of this knowledge, and have proficient knowledge and understanding of their content to provide meaningful and appropriate feedback such that each student moves progressively through the curriculum levels;
4. Teachers need to know the learning intentions and success criteria of their lessons, know how well they are attaining these criteria for all students, and know where to go next in light of the gap between students' current knowledge and understanding and the success criteria of: "Where are you going?", "How are you going?", and "Where to next?";
5. Teachers need to move from the single idea to multiple ideas, and to relate and then extend these ideas such that learners construct and reconstruct knowledge and ideas. It is not the knowledge or ideas, but the learner's construction of this knowledge and these ideas that is critical;
6. School leaders and teachers need to create school, staffroom, and classroom environments where error is welcomed as a learning opportunity, where discarding incorrect knowledge and understanding is welcomed, and where participants can feel safe to learn, re-learn, and explore knowledge and understanding.

European Commission (2013) document on *Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes* outlines new teacher professionalism by distinguishing teachers equipped with the ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity, and adapt to the needs of individual learners as well as groups. In this context, teacher competences are built on a concept of teaching as praxis in which theory, practice and the ability to reflect critically on one's own and others practice illuminate each other, rather than on a concept of teaching as the acquisition of technical skills.

Moreover, Day (2017) noted that teachers need to help students acquire not only the skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test, but more importantly:

- *ways of thinking* (i.e. creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and learning)
- *ways of working* (i.e. communication and collaboration)
- *tools for working* (i.e. including information and communications technologies); and

- skills around citizenship, life and career and personal and social responsibility for success in modern democracies.

The extended complexities of the teaching profession indicates the need to develop a shared understanding of initial teacher education.

2.2.2 ITE competence framework

Teaching competences are complex combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, leading to effective action in situation. Since teaching is much more than a task, and involves values or assumptions concerning education, learning and society, the concept of teacher competences may resonate differently in different national contexts (Caena, 2011, 2014).

In initial teacher education in Kosovo, *Situational analysis of initial teacher education programmes* (2020) confirms that knowledge and skills about learning and teaching are less developed and the role of initial teacher education is more narrowly conceived. Findings from situational analysis on programmes show that knowledge development is the priority in the programmes emphasised by teacher educators. However, skills are mainly developed during the internship period and skills development is not a priority in programmes. Whereas the development of attitudes, beliefs and values for the teaching profession is the least addressed component of the programmes. Some ITE institutions have ignored entirely the component of dispositions: attitudes, beliefs and values which is reflected in pre-university level, as well.

In order to address above mentioned problems, this policy provides a framework for initial teacher education develop future teachers that constantly innovate and adapt, including teachers that have critical, evidence-based attitudes, which enables them to respond to student outcomes with new evidence from inside and outside the classroom, and professional dialogue, in order to adapt their own practices.

The policy supports that teachers' competences need to be set in the wider context of the European framework to ensure that all future teachers in Kosovo have the competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) they require for teaching in the 21st century.

In addition to the national standards for quality assurance and teacher development framework, this policy also adopts the European framework for supporting teacher competence development (*see Table 2*). The competencies of teachers derive from an extensive review of perspectives from research and policy literature (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2008; González & Wagenaar, 2005; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Krauss et al., 2008; Williamson Mc Diarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

Table 2: Framework for planning curriculum improvement and development (source: EU framework [supporting teacher competence development](#))

Categories	Competence area
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<i>Knowledge and understanding</i>	Subject matter knowledge
	Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), implying deep knowledge about content and structure of subject matter: - knowledge of tasks, learning contexts and objectives - knowledge of students' prior knowledge and recurrent, subject-specific learning difficulties - strategic knowledge of instructional methods and curricular Materials
	Pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of teaching and learning processes)
	Curricular knowledge (knowledge of subject curricula - e.g. the planned and guided learning of subject-specific contents)
	Educational sciences foundations (intercultural, historical, philosophical, psychological, sociological knowledge)
	Contextual, institutional, organizational aspects of educational policies
	Issues of inclusion and diversity
	Effective use of technologies in learning
	Developmental psychology Group processes and dynamics, learning theories, motivational issues
	Evaluation and assessment processes and methods
<i>Skills</i>	Planning, managing and coordinating teaching
	Using teaching materials and technologies
	Managing students and groups
	Monitoring, adapting and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes
	Collecting, analysing, interpreting evidence and data (school learning outcomes, external assessments results) for professional decisions and teaching/learning improvement; Using, developing and creating research knowledge to inform practices
	Collaborating with colleagues, parents and social services
	Negotiation skills (social and political interactions with multiple educational stakeholders, actors and contexts)
	Reflective, metacognitive, interpersonal skills for learning individually and in professional communities
	Adapting to educational contexts characterised by multi-level dynamics with cross-influences (from the macro level of government policies to the meso-level of school contexts, and the micro level of classroom and student dynamics)
	Epistemological awareness (issues concerning features and historical development of subject area and its status, as related to other subject areas)
<i>Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment</i>	Teaching skills through content
	Transferable skills
	Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning and professional improvement, including study and research
	Commitment to promoting the learning of all students
	Dispositions to promote students' democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens (including appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism)
	Critical attitudes to one's own teaching (examining, discussing, questioning practices)
	Dispositions to team-working, collaboration and networking
	Sense of self-efficacy

3 Initial teacher education quality assurance policy for Kosovo

The overall purpose of this section is to provide a quality assurance policy framework for initial teacher education institutions in Kosovo. The policy focuses on standards and mechanism to be implemented at:

- i. *Institutional* - quality assurance practices at institutional level
- ii. *Programming* - quality assurance practices at programme level
- iii. *Classroom* - quality assurance practices at classroom level

In the following sections, each of these areas provides specific policy objectives/recommendations in implementing the development of future teacher competencies.

3.1 Institutional

Managerial and Administrative Practices

1. The Faculty of Education should have a vision statement that embodies the best thinking about teaching and learning, and is recognized as a common direction of growth. The vision of the faculty of education strives for contemporary and quality education and developing professional teachers for the 21st century.
2. The Faculty of Education should have a defined mission statement that includes teaching, scientific research, development and service to the community. The mission is periodically reviewed in light of changing circumstances
3. Medium and long-term objectives of the Faculty of Education are consistent with and support the mission of FE.
4. Medium and long-term objectives include objectives about in-service teacher training as well.
5. FE has a strategic plan for a period of minimum three years, and is periodically reviewed in light of changing circumstances
6. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic and managerial issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.
7. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.
8. The Faculty of Education establishes a counselling body, with representatives from the labour market, decision makers in public and private institutions and representatives of NGOs. The Faculty and the counselling body cooperate together in research studies, professional services, project implementation, and other partnerships.
9. The Faculty of Education provides evidence-based policy advice to MES and guides national debates on reforming TE
10. The Faculty of Education has developed an induction programme for beginning teacher educators to support socialisation in the organisation, avoid burnout and support their professional development.

Research

1. The Faculty of Education has defined scientific/applied research objectives and has a developed research strategy, which is periodically reviewed in light of changing circumstances
2. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.
3. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.
4. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.
5. Research is connected to development of teaching and learning and school development. It serves teaching purposes in schools as well as teaching in teacher education programs. It should be of both basic and applied nature and should provide sufficient inputs for education policy making and development practices

Internationalization and cooperation

1. The Faculty of Education drafts and adopts an institutional cooperation and/or internationalization strategy/policy that guides the decisions and resource allocation in this area.
2. The Faculty of Education creates and assigns the portfolio for institutional cooperation and/or internationalization to a member of the upper management that is directly mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in this area.
3. The Faculty of Education has different agreements and memorandums of understanding with relevant international partners and organizations. The responsibilities of partners are clearly defined in formal agreements.
4. The Faculty of Education takes part, either as a leader or as a partner, in international projects.
5. The Faculty of Education organizes events of international visibility and outreach (conferences, summer schools, etc.)
6. The Faculty of Education encourages the international visibility of its staff and students by supporting their participation in different study mobility, forums, events, internships, summer schools, seminars, etc.

Staff development

1. The Faculty of Education conducts regular evaluation of staff teaching and research work
2. The Faculty of Education develops a yearly performance appraisal system for its academic and administrative staff.
3. Academic staff participates regularly in mobility schemes
4. The Faculty of Education hosts seminars and webinars for continuous professional development of its academic staff

Student Services

5. Students regularly participate in mobility schemes

6. Regular contact is maintained with alumni, keeping them informed about institutional developments, inviting their participation in activities, and encouraging their support for new developments.

3.2 Programming

- 1 The study programs comply with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.
- 2 The study programs' conceptual orientation promotes a well-defined overarching didactic and inquiry and research-based approach
- 3 The programs also reflect issues around national curriculum reform; address issues of societal and cultural development in addition to the content and skills we want new generations to learn and develop
- 4 The study programs are modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies
- 5 The study programs reflect the issue of practical education. Programs expose students as much as possible to school realities, and not only to teaching tasks but also to the experiences of being a member of the school, school culture, management practices, working with parents, collegial cooperation, curriculum and lesson development, student testing, etc.
- 6 In order to facilitate the practice stages, the Faculty of Education signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units. Relationships are established with local industries and employers to assist program delivery (these may include placement of students for work-study programs, part time employment opportunities, and identification of issues for analysis in student project activities.)
- 7 Guidelines for student practice are drafted, outlining all parties' responsibilities and students' evaluation criteria. Tasks assigned to students during internship go beyond formalistic tasks i.e. student teachers could carry out action research and use this as input for bachelor/master work
- 8 The courses within the programme have analytical syllabuses which comprise of course objectives, content, learning outcomes, student load, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, assessment system, bibliography, etc.
- 9 Programs are reviewed regularly (yearly) by departments to analyse two aspects: 1) program content and 2) program delivery
- 10 Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop.
- 11 Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses. Both formative and summative assessment techniques are employed
- 12 Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying competencies of student achievement.
- 13 A programmatic approach for initial teacher education is applied to prevent fragmentation, compartmentalisation of knowledge and skills and foster an interdisciplinary approach

- 14 Developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions (values, attitudes, beliefs) as synthesised throughout the course learning outcomes and assessment methods. Assessment methods encourage development of skills for successfully carrying out the future profession, and attention is provided to developing positive values and attitudes for the teaching profession
- 15 Programs focus on developing teachers who are:
 - 15.1 strategic teachers that are capable to teach in different areas
 - 15.2 teachers that understand and respond to different situations
 - 15.3 teachers that are ready to cope with different situations through different techniques
 - 15.4 teachers that can teach even if they are not in a face-to-face and physical classroom environments
 - 15.5 link situations with real-life problems
 - 15.6 motivate students to learn.
- 16 Action research as a method to improve own teaching is integrated into the learning process.
- 17 Strong link is ensured between theory-practice
- 18 The development of transversal competencies is prioritized. In order to prepare student teachers to develop their pupils' transferable competencies (21st competencies), the learning process at the university should support development of future teachers' transferable competencies. Learning process should include more project work, working in teams, planning their own learning activities and developing leadership skills. LifeComp: The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence
- 19 Focus is put in developing future teachers' democratic attitudes and practices, including appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism, as future European citizens.
- 20 Use of the educational technology is increased, e.g. use of different learning environments, educational games, group work environments etc.
- 21 Throughout the programme metacognition and self-reflection regarding student teachers' own teaching (examining, discussing, questioning practices) is supported.
- 22 Regular yearly course and program evaluation is conducted and the process involves the management, staff and students.

3.3 Classroom

1. Classroom approach that promotes a student-centred teaching and learning
2. Holistic education- Programs are crafted to prepare student teachers for differentiated learning and classroom diversity. Teachers are trained not only to convey content but to take on roles as community leaders
3. Integrating theory and practice: It is important not only to balance courses on pedagogy, content and practice, but also to facilitate the integration of academic theory and research with practice.
4. Reflection is a crucial component in both professional and personal development as it creates awareness for the individual to recall and refine their practice. Reflection is used in the process of coursework and put into practice after every lesson to encourage student teachers to consciously and methodically reflect on their assumptions.

5. People come to teacher education with beliefs, values, commitments, personalities and moral codes from their upbringing and schooling which affect who they are as teachers and what they are able to learn in teacher education and in teaching. Helping teacher candidates examine critically their beliefs and values as they relate to teaching, learning and subject matter and form a vision of good teaching to guide and inspire their learning and their work is a central task of teacher education (Fieman-Nemser, 2001)

4. Implementation strategy

The purpose of this section is to provide detailed guidelines to aid initial teacher education institutions strategic planning and implementation of QA policy provisions. It provides a plan for implementing internal QA mechanisms to ensure they contribute towards quality-oriented initial teacher education.

Guidelines of QA policy implementation are structured and planed in terms of the following (see Table 3):

- i. Instruments (existing institutional instruments for QA) and Purpose (purpose of each individual instrument)
- ii. Target group(s) (who is targeted to provide feedback)
- iii. Institutional actors and their responsibilities (who is responsible to design, disseminate, monitor the process)
- iv. Timeline (how often and when will the instruments be distributed)
- v. Process (how will the instruments be distributed, how will the data be analysed and reflected upon, use of data for possible mentoring and intervention)

Table 3: QA implantation plan

Structure	Instrument and purpose	Target group(s)	Institutional actors and their responsibilities	Timeline	Process
Course & programme evaluation	<i>Student teacher feedback</i> for (i) monitoring teaching and learning and (ii) supporting learning of students	Student teachers	Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	Twice during the academic year (at the end of each course/ semester)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Student teachers receive online questionnaire upon course completion – Students participation is voluntary – QA coordinator (under the leadership of Vice-Dean for Quality Assurance) analyses data and provides short reports at the end of each academic year for department heads and all staff – Reports will be used for staff reflection on course revisions – Reports will also be reflected in the future program review and overall self-evaluation report for accreditation.
	<i>Student teacher feedback</i> on practical training experiences in school	Student teachers	Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	After completion of each school practice period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students will receive a questionnaire after completing their school practice/placement – Student participation is voluntary – Vice deans for teaching (BA and MA) in collaboration with the officer for school practice/placement will analyse data and provide short reports at the end of each academic year – Reports will be used for a better understanding of student challenges and experiences during school placement in efforts to improve the process and outcome – Reports will also be reflected in plans to improve school practice/ placement and students’ learning.
	<i>Programme and syllabi review</i> on program and course achievement of objectives	<i>Programme review</i> Student teachers and academic staff,	Study Commission Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	Periodically (every 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Academic staff: receive a survey and participate in focus groups (facilitated by department heads) every 2 years to analyse the achievement of program objectives and identify improvement areas; – Students: (facilitated by Department heads) will participate in focus groups every 2 years

		Department heads			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The purpose of organizing focus groups is to allow students and academic staff to provide feedback and reflect on program achievement of objectives – This periodic activity intends to ensure continuous programme revision and improvement – Vice-dean for Doctoral studies and QA will design an intervention plan for specific programme needs derived from the review – Vice-dean for Doctoral studies and QA will compile a lessons learned report that will be reflected in programmes accreditation.
		<i>Syllabi review</i> Cluster of Academic staff teaching similar/same courses	Study Commission	Every start of the semester (depending on the course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Before semester start, academic staff teaching similar/same courses will participate in focus group discussions – The purpose of organizing focus groups with the academic staff of teaching similar/same courses is to ensure coherence and coordination between various syllabi (i.e. course description, learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment, literature, among others) – Focus group discussions will be facilitated by Vice deans for teaching (BA and MA) – Focus group discussion minutes will be recorded and kept as evidence for the course syllabi review process
Employer/ labour-market feedback	<i>Educational institutions feedback</i> (kindergartens, schools, etc.) for improving professional practice/school placement	Institution directors	Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	Once a year at the end of each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – School directors and teachers (student teacher mentors) receive an online questionnaire at the end of each academic year – QA office is responsible for analysing the data and providing a short report at the end of each academic year – Data will be shared with Department heads – Data will be used during the programme review and teaching process.
		Teachers			

Alumni tracking and feedback	<i>Alumni feedback</i> on how prepared they felt when they transitioned to work	Alumni	Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	Once a year at the end of each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alumni receive an online questionnaire at the end of each academic year – QA office is responsible for analysing the data and providing a short report at the end of each academic year – Data will be shared with Department heads – Data will be used during the programme review and teaching process.
Institutional development	<i>Staff performance review</i> (tailored interviews with teacher educators, individualised development plans to support their professional development and academic advancement process)	Academic staff	Vice deans for teaching and Department heads <i>*This process is facilitated and overseen by the Dean and Vice-dean for teaching</i>	Subject to the individual academic staff development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Department heads will fill-out a performance appraisal form for each Department member and send to Vice deans for teaching (BA and MA) – Vice deans for teaching (BA and MA) together with academic staff will prepare individualised professional development plans for each academic staff based on the appraisal form – Vice deans for teaching (BA and MA) together with the Department heads will conduct tailored interviews with each academic staff at least once a year to review the plans and identify priority activities and development plans as well as to track improvement – Vice deans for teaching (BA and MA) under the supervision of the Dean will provide written feedback to all academic staff after the interview (<i>summary of performance appraisal + interview</i>) – During the interview and within the performance appraisal system, student feedback on courses will be incorporated in the process of discussing improvement priorities and individual development plans.
	<i>Student teacher feedback</i> for administrative processes and services and institutional development practices (quality of	Student teachers	Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	Once a year at the end of each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Student teachers receive online questionnaire upon academic year completion through SEMS platform – Students participation is voluntary – QA office is responsible for analysing the data and providing a short report at the end of each academic year – Reports will be used for better understanding and improving administrative processes and services and management culture

	management; organizational culture etc.)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Secretary of the faculty under the supervision of the Dean will provide written feedback to all administrative staff after the interview conducted by the Vice- Dean for QA and Secretary. – Secretary and Vice- Dan for QA together with administrative staff will prepare individualised professional development plans for each administrative staff based on the appraisal form – Vice-dean for Doctoral studies and QA together with the Dean strategize and draft institutional improvement plans.
	<i>Administrative staff feedback/reflection for administrative processes and services and institutional development practices (quality of management; organizational culture etc.)</i>	Administrative staff	Vice-dean for teaching QA Coordinator	At the end of each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Administrative staff receives an online questionnaire at the end of each academic year – Participation is voluntary – QA office is responsible for analysing the data and providing a short report at the end of each academic year – Reports will be used for better understanding and improving administrative processes and services – Secretary of the faculty under the supervision of the Dean will provide written feedback to all administrative staff – Secretary and Vice-dean for QA together with administrative staff will prepare individualised professional development plans for each administrative staff based on the appraisal form – Vice-dean for Doctoral studies and QA together with the Dean strategize and draft institutional improvement plans.
	Review of volume, quality and profile of <i>staff and institutional research</i>	Academic staff and CV review	QA Coordinator (QA Office)	Once a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – QA Office is responsible to prepare a template and share with academic staff to track their published research volume – Academic staff are asked to provide data on their scientific contribution by sending the filled-out template once a year – The team at IRDE is responsible to analyse the volume, quality and profile of institutional and staff research once a year

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The team at IRDE will compile a report from the analysis conducted – The team at IRDE will provide support and consultation services regarding research and publication to all interested academy staff – The Dean (<i>as part of the Staff performance appraisal and development</i>) will discuss individually with each academic staff to ensure enhanced scientific engagements in education for the next academic year.
	Review of international collaboration	Individual and institutional project collaboration review	QA Coordinator	Once a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – QA Office is responsible to prepare a template and share with academic staff to track their international collaboration (<i>individual and institutional</i>) – QA office will prepare templates and processes to track the incoming and outgoing students and staff (mobility through ERASMUS and other programs) – QA Office will provide a report at the end of each year on international collaboration – The Dean (<i>as part of the Staff performance appraisal and development</i>) will discuss individually with each academic staff to ensure enhanced international cooperation for the next academic year.

There are a number of documents (as specified *in Table 3*) as part of quality assurance practices that will aid initial teacher education institutions in undertaking needed intervention for quality improvement and change, such as:

- Annual reports
- Self-evaluation reports for accreditation
- Improvement and change plans (including strategic plans)

Responsible individuals and teams will compile improvement and change plans based on evidence collected throughout the year. Improvement and change plans will be monitored and evaluated carefully to ensure the expected results are achieved.

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