



PhD ICT KES

Co-founded by the Erasmus+

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The development and implementation of PhD Curricula in ICT for Kosovo
Education System

Deliverable 1.4

Development of Strategy for national research PhD school

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This document includes initial discussions about the Strategy of the PhD School. The meeting took place on 18th June 2020, online. The initial ideas were recorded. The groups are requested to have a more thorough look at phrasing these ideas to become a draft Strategy for the National School until the 13th of July 2020.

The general strategy should start with *“To <verb> ...”* and include some qualitative characteristics of the outcome to be achieved through the strategy.

The rest of the bullets should be considered (initially) as **actions/steps/notes** that should be taken into consideration in trying to apply the strategy for each item. We will have to find out how these bullets can be partitioned further in a more meaningful way.

GROUP A

Participants:

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1. Vision and mission statement

The Vision is to create a national curricula for PhD Program in ICT through the direct involvement of local Higher Education Institutions that have demonstrated long time experience in similar programs. Initially we will involve three Universities in Kosovo and in the future the aim is to increase the number of affiliated Universities.

The Mission is to (a) increase quality of research education in the ICT field in Kosovo, (b) enhance national quality assurance policy for research education in ICT in Kosovo, (c) allow mobility of PhD students and researchers of Kosovo with partner institution counterparts, (d) share human capacities for research education in the ICT field in Kosovo, (e) impact the nation-building process through R&I and education.

2. Guiding principles for cooperating with industry, including industry sponsoring, industry placements and industry induced themes

To meet expectations from collaborating parties contracts or formal agreements should be made. The following gives some suggestions on what to address when setting up agreements. Depending on the form of collaboration, some defined guiding principles points are more important than others.

- Mutually beneficial for involved parties.
- Establishing a process of intellectual property rights over research outcomes with and/or without potential commercial use.

- Defining supervision team and roles: main supervisor from academia with other co supervisors (they need to fulfill formal requirements to be supervisors) potentially coming from industry; annual monitoring and periodic review process.
- Research ethics issues, GDPR compliance.
- Agreement between industry and academia / student and industry. Both types of agreements are needed depending on the nature of collaboration and who is involved.
- Utilization of industrial boards
 - Assign contact person (focal point) for collaboration with industry
- Ensuring funding continuity.
 - Determining financial provisions and allocation of resources as well as co-funding procedures between the university and industry.

3. Guiding principles for cooperating with academics and academic institutions outside Kosovo

To frame the main motivation and benefits for the Kosovo National ICT PhD School for cooperating with academics and academic institutions outside Kosovo. Below follows some suggestions on activities and outcomes that such collaboration enables.

- Establishing a link with Kosovo academic diaspora
- Creating a critical mass of resources and researches on selected topics
- Utilization of distance technology
- Co-supervision
- Establishing a PhD supervision course
 - Formal training/education in partner institutions with experience with PhD programmes
- Quality assurance and monitoring of the progression of the PhD students
- Enabling the transfer of credits (national and international)
- Common PhD courses

4. Co-creation and evolution of the School in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Accreditation Body for Higher Education

To reach sustainability and ensure viability of the Kosovo National PhD School cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Accreditation Body for Higher Education is utmost important. Below follows some suggested activities and expected outcomes of these.

- Independence of the National school for PhD in ICT
- Alignment of support for the respective institutions PhD programs with KAA requirements
- National school hosted by MES - hosted by higher education institutions (similar like other initiatives in the rest of Europe)
- Sustainable funding of the National school after the completion of the project
- Ensure commitment of all involved parties
- Applying for new projects - focus on the evolution and co-creation
- Facilitating and consolidating the research ICT infrastructure for participating institutions

5. Legal status, Governance, organisational structure, advice and decision making

To ensure legal status, governance, organisational structure and decision making, a well-defined set of principles should be defined and implemented by all stakeholders (MES, KAA, Universities, and Industry). Below is a list of initial principles:

- Legal status: PhD School of ICT will support individual institutions to comply with and be aligned with KAA requirements.
 - Governance, budget and decision making: To be defined in the process of establishment of the PhD School of ICT.
 - Organisational structure: Needs to be flexible enough to accommodate various stakeholders, such as individual institutions, students, industry, etc.
 - Advice: Programme Country Consortium impact could be open for advisory roles in the National Research School. Other higher education institutions and research institutions and organizations, outside of the current Consortium, will be able to be included.
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GROUP B

Participants:

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- Bertan Karahoda, UBT
- Jorida Xhafaj, UBT
- Edmond Jajaga, UBT
- Sule, NTNU
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6. A framework for entry criteria

To recruit high caliber candidates who have the qualifications and potential to meet the challenges and complete successfully the PhD programme of the National School. Candidates should be admitted in the programme after a thorough, transparent and fair evaluation of their application.

- Entry criteria of HEI under the National School
 - Has accreditation program in PhD level within the ICT domain
 - Funding for research within the national school (define minimal level, and also proposing different level of funding: EU project, industry, MEST, institution partners)
- Entry criteria of PhD Students (part of affiliated institutions) under the National School might refer to:
 - Background/Interest of the Students
 - Fits within the project call from National School
 - A high standard of English is essential for a student to be considered for admission
 - Gender Issue (also equality, diversity etc)
 - Partnership balance issue
 - Research experiences or research methods experience
 - Comprehensive exams (this can replace the above criteria) - aptitude test
- Clear and well established process for admission of students

7. A framework for ECTS alignment

To recognise or provide through the partner institutions an adequate number of ECTS awarded from courses in partner institutions so that training of candidates gives them the appropriate background (discipline specific and skills) to conduct their research and complete their thesis.

- Comply with National Regulations for ECTS (36 ECTS of modules, approved by the student's Graduate Research Committee and to be relevant to the thesis subject. The last one can be named otherwise).
- Organise courses bearing ECTS recognised by partner institutions
- Establish a procedure for acceptance of credits awarded by Universities outside Kosovo

8. A framework for graduation criteria

To ensure that a candidate has reached a level of research with respect to completion of courses, research output, thesis and publications that meet the International accepted standards, assessed

under clear, transparent and fair process which includes external (and possibly International) examiners.

- Agree in minimum and maximum duration of studies (enrollment and time limits)
- Establish specific KPIs that are aligned with graduation criteria of the partner institutions.
- Document the formal requirements for the thesis submission.
- Ensure avoidance of unfair means (plagiarism, collusion, impersonation, manufacturing of data etc) using a suitable tool.
- Agree on whether it is possible to have (a kind of intermediate award (equivalent to UK type MPhil) for students who gain credits but can not finish successfully the complete PhD programme.

9. A framework for Quality Assurance

To establish appropriate quality assurance mechanisms in alignment with KAA and international standards that guarantee the quality of research conducted, its output and graduates, so that they enjoy National and international recognition.

- Ensure that all mechanisms in place for admissions and graduation are **applied and monitored from a dedicated body (eg:PhD progression Board of the institution)** (see above points).
 - Investigate whether a specific Board or Committee should be overall responsible for the quality assurance of the national school.
 - Establish a monitoring process (including an interim thorough evaluation) that will guide the students towards graduation.
 - Identify a number of KPIs that reassure the stakeholders that quality assurance is monitoring the progress and enhancement of high quality research output and
 - Identify the potential components that could increase the internationalisation competences (example: exchange of students with international HEI)
 - Ensure that appropriately qualified academics undertake supervision
 - Join existing resources for ensuring quality of programmes.
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GROUP C

Participants:

- Lule Ahmedi, University of Prishtina
- Kadri Sylejmani, University of Prishtina
- Ermir Rogova, University of Prishtina
- Eliot Bytyçi, University of Prishtina
- Yannis Spyridis, SEERC

10. Pooling of resources for research training

To pool together the existing resources of local HEI and Research Organizations in Kosovo in training for conducting research and take into consideration the best practices with regards to research training from HEI and Research Bodies from international partners.

- Identify the available resources to share, both locally and internationally
 - Training for staff
 - Courses to students
 - Create and maintain a joint database of available resources
- Formalize the procedures and criteria for pooling
 - Regulatory policy document for use of joint resources
 - Memorandum of Understanding
 - Terms of reference
- Design and implement the use of joint resources
 - Design solution
 - Action plan
 - Joint workshops/conferences
 - Joint working groups for implementation
- Review and guide on use of joint resources

11. Pooling of resources for PhD supervision

To pool together the existing resources of local HEI and Research Organizations in Kosovo in human resource capacities for PhD supervision and take into consideration the best practices in supervision from HEI and Research Bodies from international partners.

- Identify the available resources for PhD supervision
 - Supervisors and co-supervisors
 - The supervision process as a whole (from assigning a supervisor, supervision itself, to evaluating the supervision)
 - Create and maintain a joint database of available resources
- Identify the available human resources for PhD evaluation
 - Internal and external evaluators
 - The evaluation process as a whole
 - Create a joint database of available resources
- Formalize the procedures and criteria for pooling
 - Regulatory policy document for use of joint resources
 - Memorandum of Understanding
 - Terms of reference

- Design and implement the use of joint resources
 - Design solution
 - Action plan
 - Joint workshops/conferences
 - Joint working groups for implementation
- Review and guide on use of joint resources

12. Pooling of infrastructure

To pool together the existing infrastructure of local HEI and Research Organizations in Kosovo in infrastructure for conducting research and take into consideration the best practices with regards to sharing infrastructure from HEI and Research Bodies from international partners.

- Identify the existing infrastructure for PhD research (or if new infrastructure is required)
 - Equipment, instruments, archives, databases, grid, computing, software, middleware, etc.
 - Trainings and support of the technical staff about the infrastructure
 - Promote and create a partnership with the industry (access to their infrastructure, adopt best practices in setting up and administering the infrastructure)
 - Future needs
 - Avoid redundancy of infrastructure
 - Calls for available grants
 - Create and maintain a joint database of available resources
- Formalize the procedure and criteria for pooling
 - Regulatory policy document for use of joint resources
 - Memorandum of Understanding
 - Terms of reference
- Design and implement the use of joint resources
 - Design solution
 - Action plan
 - Joint workshops/conferences
 - Joint working groups for implementation
- Review and guide on use of joint resources

13. A framework for ethics, research integrity and Gender issues

To define the framework for research ethics, research integrity, gender equality and diverse inclusion with the aim of maintaining high research standards and protection of all groups involved in the research: participants, institutions, founders and researchers. The goal is to build up on the existing applicable laws, guidelines and frameworks of local HEI and Research Organizations in Kosovo and best practices from HEI and Research Bodies from international partners.

- Identify and analyze the existing applicable laws, frameworks and guidelines
 - Law on Scientific- Research Activities in Kosova
 - Law on Protection of Personal Data in Kosova
 - Law on Copyright and Related Rights in Kosova
 - Law on Gender Equality in Kosova
 - GDPR framework
 - ACM code of ethics

- IEEE code of ethics, etc.
- Formalize the procedure and criteria for the framework
 - Regulatory policy document for use of joint resources
 - The ethics approval process
 - Research ethics checklist
 - Research integrity checklist, etc.
- Design and implement the framework by integrating the best practices from both, local and international standards,
 - Training modules for research staff and dedicated courses for PhD students on issues related to research ethics, research integrity, as well as gender equality and inclusion.
- Review and guide on use of the framework

14. Open Access and Open Data

To match the requirements for sharing research results to the research community at both local and international level.

- Identify the existing resources on open access and open data
 - Research data and results sharing
 - GDPR practices
 - DIVA database practices
 - Integration into Open Data Government Kosova
 - Create and maintain a joint database of available resources
 - Formalize the procedures and criteria for open access and open data
 - Memorandum of Understanding
 - Ownership of data
 - Definitions
 - Researcher responsibilities
 - The university's responsibilities
 - Relationship with existing policies
 - Design and implement open access and open data in research
 - Design solution
 - Action plan
 - Joint workshops/conferences
 - Joint working groups for implementation
 - Review and guide on use of joint resources
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