**QUALITY of EDUCATION in EPU**

Quality is a priority value for the EPU. The university's website discloses that the goal of EPU is to "Achieve high quality preparation of students with scientific knowledge, applicable skills and professional competencies".

The main regulator of quality at the University is the System for the Evaluation and Maintenance of the Quality of Teaching and Academic Staff (SOPQS), a normative document with the value of a university standard. It regulates both the assessment and maintenance of quality in all forms of study: full-time, part-time and distance learning.

**Academic standards**

Quality is understood as a multidimensional set of properties and characteristics of an object (training programme, academic discipline, teacher) that give it the ability to satisfy conditioned or assumed requirements for it.

The requirements are contained in academic standards that can be changed in a certain order. The quantitative quality assessment is a measure of the degree of approximation to the defined requirements, i.e. to the academic standards as the reference points of the assessment measure.

Academic standards have been adopted for:

EPU Bachelors and Masters. They concretise the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework by transferring them to the territory of the university and the professional field;

academic disciplines. They contain, in addition to the syllabus of the discipline, a number of other requirements (for lecturers, facilities, interaction with students, external testing, anonymity of the written examination, etc.), as well as the formulae for obtaining the final grade in the discipline. For each subject, the knowledge, skills and competences are defined in such a way that the sum of all the elements of the curriculum achieves the academic standards for the relevant ACS.

The standard also defines the numerical grades (excellent, very good, good and average) for each discipline, thus limiting the subjectivity of the assessors.

Quality philosophy

Quality Motivation.

Along with the material, informational and organizational prerequisites, motivations must be created in the participants (students, faculty, administration) to achieve quality - each in their own activity.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, intrinsic motivation is deficient and traditional administrative and disciplinary measures, especially in a non-state university, "do not work" effectively. It starts from the assumption that motivations are created mainly through financial influence. That is why the University has a uniform policy of financial incentives for the quality of the work of the teachers and the quality of the preparation of the students.

Based on this philosophy, quality is "organically woven" into the finances of the University. Quality is paid for - through faculty remuneration and through regulation of student fees.

**Assessment.**

In order to incentivise the bearer of quality (student, lecturer, supervisor), their performance must be assessed on quantitative scales so that they have an equivalent reward to incentivise them.

But evaluations can be trusted if they are adequate, objective, unbiased, and scientifically based. This leads to the conclusion that quality is linked to the adequacy of evaluations. Adequacy in turn requires more sophisticated and precise methods. But in the age of modern information technology, this is a solvable problem. When adequate quality estimates are achieved by being able to match financial equivalent rewards. That is - pay for quantity of work and quality of results.

**Teachers.**

Main components in the salary of a lecturer

The salary of lecturers (see Ordinance on the formation of the salary of lecturers) depends on:

The quality of the results, measured annually on a 100-point SOPCO scale. Mechanism:

Academic standards and resulting requirements for the evaluatee are defined.

Criteria, methods, rules and grading scales are defined and applied on the following levels:

* Expert
* multifactorial (multi-criteria)
* Multi-subject
* quantitative

evaluation taking into account the different weight of the criteria and the different awareness and competence in each indicator of the evaluators - students, associations and users and employers.

Academic employment in the current academic year , measured in academic hours (not 'bell' hours). There are three components to the standard, each of which has minimum allowable values:

* academic employment;
* academic achievement;

work to develop and strengthen the University.

Thus, each faculty member is asked to teach, do scholarship, and work for the university.

The evaluation of the lecturer in the statutory attestation (Article 57 of the Law on Education), which is made every 5 (or 3 - for non-habilitated) years. It is also quantitative but has a "background" influence.

Acquired scientific and professional qualifications, which are judged mainly by the scientific degrees () and academic positions (with a basic salary for each post).

Formula

The salary for a faculty member that is proposed to the President for approval is personal and is calculated by a formula that includes these 5 variables:

The formula itself (here only as an implicit function) and the values of the coefficients involved determine the policy of the university leadership.

**Students**

Approach to financially incentivising quality

In addition to traditional means of motivation such as scholarships, awards, Erasmus - mobility, etc., systematic financial incentives are applied at EPU

What do they consist of?

Students pay fees for their studies that are several times higher than those at state universities, which the University depends on as it does not benefit from state subsidies. The quality of students' preparation is judged by their grades in the previous academic year. Depending on their success, they pay a fee, decreasing in a graded scale, which reaches the free tuition of the excellent students.

Annual pass rate = measure of quality of preparation?

As the numerical dimension of training success becomes a financial incentive, grades (here too!) must be objective, adequate to knowledge and applicable skills. Otherwise, false "quality" may be stimulated, and the university's finances may be harmed.

How is the adequacy and objectivity of success assessments achieved?

Examination is not only about knowledge, attitudes and values, but also skills to apply what has been learned, which make the assessments adequate to prepare the student for independent and team work in the profession (possibly close to a real work environment).

External assessment of each student's semester examination.

Success is calculated as a weighted arithmetic average of all grades earned by the student during the previous academic year, taking into account the number of credits of the relevant course (its weight in the curriculum).

The weighting factors are the credit points of the courses in the curriculum, i.e. the annual average formula is applied:

where courses 1, 2, ..., n of the curriculum are credit points and their grades are respectively .

The final grade m, which is decisive for the student's financial incentive, determines the extent to which the student has achieved the learning objective defined in the EPU academic standard. It is calculated from three components:

The assessment of the student's activity and performance during the semester (manifest). It is based on the assumption that the depth and durability of knowledge, skills and competencies depend on how they are acquired. Their rhythmic, methodical and gradual (rather than sessional and campaignistic) learning yields sustainable knowledge.

The anonymous assessment of the university holder in the discipline on the semester examination paper;

The anonymous assessment of an external (foreign, from another university, from business) examiner (appointed by the Academic Board) on the semester examination material;

The formula that accounts for these grades is:

where the significance of each of the three grades is defined in the academic standard of the respective discipline .

**Quality maintenance**

Since the SOPCO system not only assesses but also maintains quality, it sets requirements that are checked when assessing teachers and disciplines. These requirements are contained in the criteria and indicators themselves, for example:

* Harmonisation of taught curriculum content and knowledge and skills requirements with partner universities.
* Modern teaching methods and tools, which include interactive methods, discussions, teamwork, teaching students the ability to learn on their own, active student participation in the learning process.
* Building the necessary qualities and (besides the special) general transferable knowledge (soft), skills and applicable key competences.
* Electronic student support and distance learning with state-of-the-art ICT forms and tools.
* **NOTICE**

It should be emphasized that quality has motivated in the EPU a complete management complex formed through the normative documents and has "permeated" each of them. This complex includes: admission of students, management of the learning process, testing, evaluation and stimulation of students, motivation and active position of students in the learning process, mobility of students (in particular - one semester in a foreign university), appraisal and development of academic staff, formation of the salary of teachers depending on the quality they produce.

The quality of teaching is guaranteed by:

* Teaching content that:
* complies with the EQF and the NQF;
* is harmonised with European partners and universities, in particular with the one that admits students to the EPU for one semester.
* Academic standards for the requirements of knowledge, skills and competences at the end of the relevant KQF, for the academic disciplines, as well as standards for numerical assessments (excellent, very good. good and average) that limit the subjectivism of the assessors.
* Modern teaching methods and tools, which include interactive
* The participation of scientists and lecturers from foreign universities in the regular teaching process as academic partners, including by video conference.
* Stimulation of learning during the semester, the rhythm of learning the material and the activity of students.
* Anonymous evaluation by two professors, one of whom is the university holder and the other is an external (foreign, from another university, from business) examiner.
* Determination of the final grade by a formula including the three grades - from the semester (explicit) and the two examiners (anonymous).
* Financial incentive for the quality of the work of the faculty and the quality of the preparation of the students, as judged by their learning outcomes.