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for Quality Assurance at Institutional Level“**

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WORK PACKAGE 9

Quality and stakeholders (Quality and Employers Including Private Sector)

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Introduction

The submitted report is aimed at the implementation of ESG and establishment of qualification frameworks affecting the nominal and real influences of stakeholders on internal processes of QA at HEIs. It is focused on description of the stakeholders' involvement to the processes of internal QA with the aim to identify possible barriers or examples of good practice in this area.

Stakeholder is defined as a person, group of persons, organization or institution which can affect the important areas of development of HEI – e.g. quality of education, establishment of the HEI long term strategy, using of financial resources etc. and thus to affect the process of internal QA.

ESG 1.1 defines the role of stakeholders as follows: “Students and other stakeholders should be included into the process of internal QA at HEIs with the aim to strengthen a linkage among HEI and society. Potential groups of stakeholders are represented by employers, professional organizations, representatives of local and regional municipalities, alumni, students, representatives of trade unions, etc”.

We observed an influence of the stakeholders on internal processes of QA at the Slovak HEIs in the following 6 areas:

1. How is an influence of stakeholders on the HEIs decision - making and governance processes determined in the national policy documents and how they have been changed over the last 5 years ?
2. How is an influence of stakeholders on the HEIs decision - making and governance processes determined in internal policy documents and how they have been changed over the last 5 years ?
3. Nominal and real representation of stakeholders in decision- making and governance bodies at HEIs.
4. Representation of stakeholders in organizational units of HEIs.

5. Influence of stakeholders on the following areas:
 - a/ Profile of graduates, learning outcomes,
 - b/ exam requirements and curriculum review ,
 - c/ acquisition of soft and entrepreneurial skills,
 - d/ processes of internal quality assurance.

6. Influence of stakeholders on study programs in regard of:
 - a/ Employment requirements for staff,
 - b/ internships,
 - c/ special professional development courses (job-related continuing education and training courses),
 - d/ contacts with business and other institutions (e.g. public research institutes).

National policy context

Central body of the area of higher education is represented by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of Slovak Republic (hereinafter the Ministry of Education). It creates the conditions for a development of educational processes of HEIs based on the accreditation of study programs. The municipal governance and decision – making processes are determined by a national legislation. The legislation exactly designates the municipal governance bodies of HEIs which consist of Rector , Scientific Board, Academic Senate and Board of Trustees, as well as Disciplinary Commission. National legislation also exactly defines activities and responsibilities of individual bodies, number of their representatives, conditions for membership, their structure, conditions of sessions and negotiations etc. National legislation determines activities and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees with aim to strengthen a liaison among HEIs and the community. Governance bodies which represent the Slovak HEIs with respect to the Ministry of Education are as follows:

- Council of Higher Education Institutions,
- Council of Students of Higher Education Institutions
- Slovak Rectors Conference.

Methodology

Four public HEIs representing network of 20 public, 3 state and 10 private HEIs in Slovakia, were taken as a research sample. The following HEIs were involved:

- Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (UKF)
- Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (UMB)
- University of Žilina (ZU)
- Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (VSVU)

Content analysis of documents, semi – structured interviews were taken as the methods for data collection.

Content analysis of documents

The following documents became a subject of content analysis:

- Law 131/2002 on Higher Education Institutions as amended, Law 172/1990 on Higher Education Institutions as amended, Law 568/2009 on Life Long Learning as amended, Law 172/2005 on State Support of Research and Development as amended, Law 575/2001 on Activity of Government and Central Governmental Bodies as amended part “Cultural and Educational Grant Agency of Ministry of Education” , policy document “Methodology of State Subsidy of HEIs for 2012”.
- Policy document “Long term strategy of HEIs in educational, research and development , artistic and other creative activities valid till 2014” prepared and approved by the Ministry of Education.
- By – laws of HEIs , by –laws of the governance and decision – making bodies of the appropriate HEIs.
- Long term strategies of the appropriate HEIs.
- Internal regulations of the appropriate HEIs.

Semi - structured interviews

49 respondents were asked within 4 HEIs

Chart 1. Structure of the research sample

<i>segment</i>	<i>UKF</i>	<i>UMB</i>	<i>ŽU</i>	<i>VŠVU</i>
Rector, Vice- Rectors	3	2	1	2
Deans, Vice-Deans	8	6	10	0
Heads of Departments	0	0	0	0
Member of Board of Trustees, Member of Scientific /Artistic Board, Member of Academic Senate	0	0	0	3
Pedagogues and other employees	4	2	0	2
Students	0	6	0	0
Graduates	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0

Findings

Field No.1

National legislation and stakeholders

Participation of stakeholders in governance and decision –making processes focused on the internal HEI QA is defined in Law No. 131/2002 on Higher Education Institutions as amended (hereinafter the Law on HEIs). The Law doesn't exactly declare number of stakeholders towards global numbers of representatives of the decision – making as well as governance bodies in all cases. Numbers are explicitly expressed in a definition of the following bodies:

- a) Board of Trustees,
- b) Scientific Board
- c) Academic Senate
- d) Disciplinary Commission

a) Board of Trustees

It consists of 14 members. Its members are approved and cancelled by the Minister of Education. Six members are nominated by Rector based on acceptance of Academic Senate. Other six members are approved by the Minister of Education based on the Rector's nomination. Members of the Board of Trustees represent personalities of public life including representatives of business sector, local and regional municipalities, regional governmental bodies who are responsible for education, finances, economy and social affairs in the region. Two members are nominated from HEI - one is nominated by representatives of Academic Senate among employees, other member is nominated by representatives of students of the Academic Senate. Members of Board of Trustees in generally cannot be an employee of HEI, except of the case of nomination of one employee mentioned above (§ 40 of Law on HEIs).

b) Scientific Board

Members of the Scientific Board of HEI (in the case HEI is divided to the Faculties, Scientific Boards of Faculties also have to be established by Law on HEIs) are professionals from the fields in which HEI realizes its educational, research, development, artistic and other creative activities. At least 1/4 and at the most 1/3 of the Scientific Board's members has to be composed from the representatives of other than academic community (§ 11 and § 29 of Law on HEIs).

c) Academic Senate

Members of the Academic Senate of HEI have to be nominated from employees and students of the appropriate HEI, at least 1/3 of all members is composed from representatives of students (§ 8 of Law on HEIs).

d) Disciplinary Commission and other commissions

Establishment of Disciplinary Commissions at HEIs is declared in the Law on HEIs. Their members have to be nominated from employees and students of the appropriate HEI, at least 1/2 of members consists of representatives of students.

Membership of stakeholders in different commissions than Disciplinary one is not required by legislation. The Law on HEIs doesn't determinate the exact numbers of stakeholders regarding to a composition of the State Exam Commissions. The Law defines membership in the Exam State Commissions as follows: "Significant professionals of the appropriate study fields are generally included into the State Exam Commissions. They should represent other HEIs, legal entities realized research and development in Slovak Republic or legal entities representing other fields of practice" (§63 of Law on HEIs).

The Law was amended in years of 2002 and 2012, no important changes concerning the stakeholders have been involved. The other amendment of the Law is currently prepared.

Field No.2

Internal policy, regulations and stakeholders

Internal policy documents of HEIs follow and “trace” the national policy documents. The Law on HEIs contains the direct regulations obliging HEIs to have established the following internal policy documents defining activities of their stakeholders:

a) *By-laws of HEIs/ faculties*

They define numbers and shares of stakeholders in the municipal decision - making and governance bodies (Board of Trustees, Scientific Board or Academic Senate), they also determine their responsibilities.

b) *Internal regulations established by the individual HEIs/faculties*

They define numbers and shares of stakeholders in the individual bodies, they also supplement details of their responsibilities as well as the particular rules concerning realization of their activities. It concerns the following bodies:

- Board of Trustees
- Scientific Board
- Academic Senate

c) *Study Regulations of HEIs/Faculties*

They determine rules of composition of State Exam Commissions.

d) *Other internal documents*

They are prepared by individual HEIs over requirement of legislation. E.g. UMB has established a special document called “Rules of tenders” identifying a participation of external representatives/stakeholders in the Tender’s Commissions. VŠVU has prepared a similar internal document identifying a participation of stakeholders in Entrance Exams Commissions.

The research didn't discover any essential changes of internal policy documents of HEIs over 5 years which concerns influence of stakeholders or their nominal participation. Changes concerning the particular nominations of stakeholders participating in individual bodies are published in the Annual Narrative Report of HEI as well as on web pages of HEIs/faculties.

Even though the changes over last 5 years in regard of influence of stakeholders on internal QA didn't take place on level of policy documents, Slovak HEIs increase ad-hoc involvement of external professionals in evaluation of their pedagogical processes and internal processes of QA.

Field No.3

Nominal and real representation of stakeholders in governance and decision –making bodies.

Key municipal governance and decision – making bodies , which stakeholders participate in are as follows:

- a) Board of Trustees
- b) Scientific Board
- c) Academic Senate
- d) Commissions for individual activities of HEI

a) Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees is the highest governance body with the largest representation of stakeholders. 12 from 14 members of the Board represent the different areas of public life, business sector, state, regional and local state and municipal bodies.

The responsibilities of Board of Trustees are divided to the two following main areas:

- a) Approval
- b) Comments

The Board approves mainly important transfers of assets or financial contracts concerning movable and immovable properties or obtaining a loan. Its members refer mainly long term strategies or policy documents as well as Annual reports of HEI.

The responsibilities of the Board are described in the national policy documents. The results of our research showed, HEIs traced national legislation, they didn't define

an extension of stakeholders' influence within their internal policy documents in regard of their positions in the Board of Trustees.

Competences and responsibilities of the Board's members affect activities of HEIs in the defined areas on a real base.

b) Scientific Board

The Scientific Board is the second important body of HEIs with a big share of external stakeholders. National legislation doesn't exactly determine a total number of its members. It defines only a portion of its external and internal representatives. At least 1/4 and at the most 1/3 of Scientific Board's members have to be from external environment of HEI. The total number of representatives of the Board of the researched HEIs varied from 21 to 38 members, while a portion of its external and internal members was in accordance with a national legislation. The HEI research samples showed that more than 50% of external stakeholders comes from other HEIs (Slovak as well as foreign ones).

The responsibilities of the Scientific Board are divided to following three main areas:

- Evaluation
- Approval
- Comments
- Award of degrees

The Scientific Board of HEI acts in the following spheres:

- It comments long term strategies/ policy documents,
- it regularly (at least once per a year) evaluates the results of HEI in field of education achieved in science or art,
- it comments and approves the proposed study programs in the case they have not to be approved by Scientific Boards of individual Faculties (representatives of students nominated by Academic Senate are involved to the process),
- it approves the professionals who can execute the state exams as well as PhD supervisors,
- it approves conditions and criteria of HEI to gain research/art or pedagogical degree "associate professor" and it evaluates filling of criteria to gain research/art or pedagogical degree "professor",

- it comments and approves the nominations for a degree “professor” . If the degree is allotted in study programs concerning study fields realized within one Faculty, nomination is submitted by Scientific Board of Faculty,
- it approves general and particular criteria for the positions of “associate professor” and “professor” based on nominations of Scientific Boards of Faculties,
- it approves a proposal of Rector or Scientific Board of Faculty for a position of “visiting professor”,
- it awards a scientific degree “doctor scientarium”,
- it awards a degree “doctor honoris causa” to important Slovak and foreign personalities ,
- it proposes to award the degree “ professor emeritus” to professors older than 70 years,
- it approves own Rules of meetings based on the proposal of Chairman of the Scientific Board.

All responsibilities of the Scientific Board were adapted to internal policy documents from a national framework. A real influence of external stakeholders who act as members of the Scientific Board on decision making processes of HEIs was confirmed based on the research results.

c) Academic Senate

It belongs to the most important bodies of HEIs. Employees and students can be elected there. The national legislation determines that the Academic senate has to consist of at least 15 members, at least 1/3 of them has to be represented by the student community. If HEI is divided to Faculties, all faculties have to be represented there based on equal number of members.

Members of Academic Senate representing employees are elected by secret ballot by other personnel of HEI. Students are elected to the Academic senate by secret ballot by students community. The total number of members of Academic Senates of the researched HEIs varied from 21 to 42, minimum 1/3 share of students was respected by all.

The responsibilities of Academic Senate of HEIs are as follows:

- It approves establishment, fusion, dividing, cancelation, change of name or change of residence of HEI or faculty based on proposal of Rector and reference of Accreditation Commission,
- it approves internal regulations of HEI,
- it approves candidates for position of Rector and proposes cancellation of Rector from position,
- it approves Vice – Rectors based on the Rector’s proposal,
- it approves and withdraw members of the Scientific Board based on Rector’s proposal,
- it approves members of the Board of Trustees based on Rector’s proposal,
- it approves the proposal of budget of public HEI and controls its economy,
- it approves By – laws of HEI,
- it approves long term strategy/policy documents of HEI and its actualization,
- it approves two reports – the Narrative Annual Report and Financial Annual Report,
- it comments proposals of study programs before they are submitted to the Scientific Board realized on level of HEI not on level of Faculty,
- it approves conditions of the study entrance based on Rector’s proposal in the case if it is not necessary to be approved by the Academic Senate of Faculty,
- it comments proposals of Rector concerning the establishment, fusion, dividing, cancelation, change of name or change of residence of organizational units of HEI
- it comments suggestions and views of the Board of Trustees,
- it elects representative of HEI to the Council of Higher Education Institutions of Slovak Republic,
- a student part of Academic Senate elects its representative to the Student Council of Higher Education Institution of Slovak Republic
- it submits to academic community its Narrative Report concerning the realized activities once per a year.

HEIs adapted all above mentioned responsibilities of Academic Senate from the national legislation. The results of the research showed a real influence of students as stakeholders on

decision - making and governance processes of HEIs. It is caused by a high share of their membership as well as procedural rules concerning approving processes valid in the Academic Senate.

d) Disciplinary Commission and other commissions

All HEIs have to establish the Disciplinary Commission. Their establishment is obligatory and it results from a national legislation. Membership of students in the Commission represents 1/2 of global number of all its representatives. The Disciplinary Commission solves disciplinary offences of students and submit individual cases to Rector.

The results of the research also discovered other Commissions with participation of external stakeholders, which are not obliged by law in some HEIs. They act in the following areas:

- Commission which reviews an occupation of positions “associate professor” and “professor” with representation of at least two external academic stakeholders.
- Council of Research Centre with participation of minimally 2 professionals from educational or research institutions and 1 professional from other external area (from Slovakia or abroad).
- Commission for Educational Activities with membership of students of the appropriate HEI.
- Commission for Scholarship Fund with participation of students of the appropriate HEI.
- Commission of Sport with participation of representatives of sport clubs who are not employees of HEI.

Field No.4

Organizational units and stakeholders

National legislation prescribes to Faculties of individual HEIs to establish academic self - governance bodies. Individual Faculties determine stakeholders in the following faculties' bodies:

- a) Scientific Board of Faculty
- b) Academic Senate of Faculty
- c) Disciplinary Commission of Faculty

Representation of stakeholders is included in the following internal regulations of Faculties:

- a) By-laws of Faculty
- b) Internal regulations concerning procedures of self – governance bodies of Faculty

a) *Scientific Board of Faculty*

Members of Scientific Board are important professionals representing fields in which the Faculty realizes its educational, research, artistic and other creative activities. At least 1/4 and at the most 1/3 of the Scientific Board's members have to become from external environment of HEI in which the Faculty is included.

The Scientific Board of Faculty acts in the following spheres:

- It comments the Faculty's long term strategy/ policy documents,
- it regularly (at least once per a year) evaluates the educational results of the Faculty in fields of science or art,
- it approves the study programs proposed by Faculty (representatives of students nominated by the Faculty Academic Senate are involved to the negotiation processes),
- it approves the professionals who have a right to execute the state exams for the study programs realized in the Faculty as well as the PhD supervisors operating on the Faculty level,
- it comments and submits to the Scientific Board of HEI the conditions and criteria necessary to gain the degrees "associate professor" and "professor",
- it comments and approves proposals of nominations for degrees "associate professor" and decides about the results,
- it comments and submits to the Scientific Board of HEI nominations for the degrees of "professor",
- it comments and submits to the Scientific Board of HEI general criteria to occupy the positions of professors and associate professor at the Faculty,
- it comments and submits to the Scientific Board of HEI specific criteria for tenders to occupy the positions of professors and associate professor at the Faculty,

- it comments and submits to the Scientific Board of HEI the Dean's proposals concerning candidates for positions of visiting professors.

b) Academic Senate of Faculty

Academic Senate of Faculty has to consist of at least 11 members, at least 1/3 has to be represented by the student community. It is divided to two parts – the part created by representatives of employees and representatives of students. The members representing employees are elected by secret ballot by other personnel of the Faculty. Students are elected by secret ballot by the students community.

The responsibilities of Academic Senate of Faculty are as follows:

- It approves internal regulations of the Faculty,
- it approves candidates for position of Dean as well as proposal of Rector for cancellation of Dean from the position,
- it approves Vice – Deans based on the Dean's proposal,
- it approves and withdraw members of the Scientific Board of Faculty based on Dean's proposal,
- it approves proposal of the Faculty's budget and controls using of financial resources of Faculty,
- it approves long term strategy/policy of Faculty concerning its educational, research, development, art or other creative activities including its actualization,
- it approves the Narrative Annual Report and Financial Annual Report,
- it comments proposals of study programs planned to be realized on level of the Faculty,
- it approves conditions of study entrance in the study programs realized by the Faculty,
- it comments the proposals of Dean concerning establishment, fusion, dividing or cancellation of organizational units of the Faculty,
- it elects a representative of the Faculty to the Council of the Higher Education Institutions of Slovak Republic

- it submits the Faculty Activity Report to the academic community of Faculty once per a year,
- it comments proposals of the Rector concerning transfer of property (establishment of easement or refusal of the property) which is used for filling of the Faculty aims.

c) Disciplinary Commission of the Faculty

Disciplinary commission solves disciplinary offences of students attending the study programs realized at the Faculty and submits individual cases to Dean. Its members as well as its Head are appointed by Dean they are chosen among members of academic community based on approval of Academic Senate of Faculty. One half of the Commission consists of students.

Stakeholders acting on level of individual Departments, resp. study programs influence mainly the following areas:

- Realization of education within study programs realized on level of Faculty,
- consulting of diploma works,
- membership in State Exam Commissions,
- membership in the Commissions for Student's competitions,
- membership in the research teams.

The activities are partly specified in the Study Regulations of HEIs. In generally, the regulations enable a participation of external stakeholders represented by professionals from other HEIs or employers in the pedagogical processes. Based on content analysis of internal documents, we didn't find the exact rules regulating details of the activity of stakeholders.

Field No. 5

Competences and responsibilities of stakeholders in context of QA

a) Profile of graduates and learning outcomes

Description of study fields is prepared on national level by experts representing of individual HEIs based on coordination of Slovak Rectors Conference. Document

containing the study fields descriptions serves as adjunctive material for preparing of study programs of individual HEIs as well as for the study programs evaluation process realized by state Accreditation Commission. General description of profiles of graduates including basic areas of their knowledge gained in the study, create a part of the description of study fields. Description of study fields is published on the web page of Accreditation Commission.

Stakeholders participate in establishment and approval of study programs. New study program (including profile of graduates, learning outcomes, study plans, description of study subjects, criteria for acquisition of credits etc.) is negotiated in Academic Senate of Faculty in which at least 1/3 is represented by the students of the appropriate Faculty. The program is subsequently approved in the Scientific Board of Faculty including external stakeholders. Representatives of students nominated by the Faculty's Academic Senate are invited to negotiations of the Board concerning the new study programs. The competences of the Scientific Board indicate important and real influence of stakeholders on all decision - making processes provided on level of HEIs as well as Faculties. They are determined by a national legislation and transferred to internal documents (by-laws of HEIs, faculties, Academic Senates...).

The following additional areas of influence of stakeholders in regard of profile of graduates and learning outcomes were identified within our research:

- Alumni Clubs
- Discussions with external professionals realized within conferences
- Discussions with external professionals realized within State Exams Commissions
- Discussions with actual graduates realized within state exams

The above mentioned processes are not formalized in the internal policy documents and it is not possible, based to them, to measure the stakeholders' influence on creation of profile of graduates and learning outcomes.

The research results also showed weaknesses in formulating of student profiles. They are more oriented in definition of gained theoretical knowledge than in description of students

skills and competences necessary for their next employment. It signifies a challenge for the future action of stakeholders in the QA processes.

b) Criteria of the exams evaluation and review of study programs

Faculties regularly review the study programs as well as study subjects (educational processes, criteria of the exams...) based on students questionnaires filled every year. Their results are negotiated based on level of Head of Departments and other Faculties' bodies. Other forms of official feed - back from side of the other stakeholders were not identified in our research in this area.

Proposals of changes in study programs are submitted by their guarantors, resp. Heads of Departments to the Scientific Board which them comments and approves. This system enables a direct participation of external stakeholders in.

c) Acquisition of soft and entrepreneurial skills

External stakeholders indirectly influence an acquisition of soft and entrepreneurial skills through the cooperation of Departments with employers which provide the pedagogical or other professional practice or traineeship of students. We didn't identify within our research, the official and formalized description of this process in the internal policy documents including identification of direct influence of the external stakeholders (employers) on changes of study programs.

d) Processes of internal quality assurance

Processes of internal QA at HEIs are commented by members of Scientific Boards of HEI or Faculty. They evaluate pedagogical activities as well as activities in area of science or art every year. Some HEIs or Faculties have provided the ISO norms in area of internal QA. In this case, internal evaluation process is evaluated by the external agency. Informal internal evaluation is realized within the state exams in which external stakeholders participate in. They can comment and evaluate the submitted diploma work as well as content of state exams.

Field No.6

Influence of stakeholders on study programs in regard of key areas

a/ Employment requirements for staff

We identified within our research that the requirements of stakeholders representing labour market/employers are not directly and systematically considered within policy documents focused on formulating of the study programs. One researched HEI identified that the requirements of employers occurred e.g. in minutes of meetings of decision making bodies or commissions. But it was not possible to find if the requirements have been enforced. Influence of external stakeholders on study programs in regard of requirements of labour market/employers is visible mainly in the following area:

- Creating of new study programs – e.g. study program called “ Safety and health protection” was initiated by the Labour Inspectorate of Slovak Republic, other study program “Museology” was encouraged by two libraries - State Science Museum Library of Central Slovakia in Banská Bystrica and Slovak National Library in Martin.
- Creating of new study subjects- they are initiated based on cooperation with external institutions (e.g. Industrial Property Office, Certification Agency SGS Slovakia)

Requirements of labour market as well as graduate employment records became a very important criteria for study programs and process of internal QA. HEIs currently take into consideration the results of analysis of regional Bureaux of Labour Markets or statistics on graduate employment offered by Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education of Slovak Republic in regard of the study programs . The statistic results affect e.g. numbers of students admitted to the individual study programs. It is expected that influence of external stakeholders on study programs in regard of requirements of labour market will significantly reinforce in the future.

a) Traineeships

Even though stakeholders indirectly affect the study programs through realized traineeships, it doesn't exist the policy documents/regulations formalizing procedures in

transfer and implementation of stakeholders' proposals to changes of the study programs. One of researched HEI indicated an example of good practice in this area concerning the pedagogical study programs. Teachers of secondary schools, who supervise students of HEIs within their traineeships, prepare the evaluation reports which include recommendation concerning their skills and competences.

b) Special professional development courses

The themes of special professional development courses realized by HEIs or individual Faculties are initiated based on requirements of labour market or they are formulated based on needs of external stakeholders (employers, graduates, Bureau for Unemployment...). It was not identified in our research a direct liaison among the study programs and influence of external stakeholders in regard of special professional development courses.

c) Contacts with business and other institutions

The cooperation among HEIs and business is developed on the signed agreements. It is mainly aimed at:

- Research activities realized in cooperation of business partners (common research) as well as based of requirements from business sector (contract research). Their results are transferred to lectures and exercises used within the study programs,
- cooperation in realization of the research experiments,
- participation of representatives of business in verification of the results of academic research and their transfer into practice,
- cooperation in specification of themes of the diploma works,
- participation of representatives of business in selective lectures focused on specialized topics within the profile subjects,
- participation of representatives of business in State Exams Commissions,
- elaboration of reviews of diploma works,
- provision of consultancies within diploma works,

- participation in organizing of the students' activities (workshops, professional competitions...)
- cooperation in organizing of professional excursions,
- cooperation in organizing of traineeships,
- cooperation in realization of seminars, conferences and other professional events.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the submitted report was to analyse to what measure an implementation of ESG affect nominal and real influence of stakeholders on internal processes of QA at HEIs in Slovakia. The report is focused on a description of stakeholders' involvement to the internal QA process. It tries to identify barriers as well as examples of good practice in this area.

Filed No1.

National legislation and stakeholders. How is influence of stakeholders on decision - making and governance bodies determined in national policy documents, how do they changed in the last 5 years.

- National legislation significantly affects participation of stakeholders in internal processes of QA based on definition of their positions in the individual decision - making and governance bodies of HEIs or Faculties.
- National legislation determines exact or minimal numbers (resp. share) of stakeholders in the HEI's or Faculty's bodies.
- Any important changes in national policy documents affecting the stakeholders position in processes of internal QA in the last 5 years were not identified within our research.

Filed No. 2.

Internal policy and stakeholders. How is influence of stakeholders on decision - making and governance bodies defined in internal policy documents and how do they changed in the last 5 years.

Internal policy documents of HEIs or Faculties transfer definitions of position of stakeholders and their roles in decision - making and governance bodies from national legislation. HEIs don't initiate a possible enlargement of the stakeholders responsibilities.

- Internal policy documents contain the explicit description of the rights and responsibilities of decision - making and governance bodies .
- Internal policy documents describe the exact number /share of stakeholders represented in the decision - making and governance bodies.
- Internal policy documents are public and available on web pages of HEIs, resp. Faculties.
- Our research identified several informal processes, by which the stakeholders affect internal QA at HEIs and which are not included systematically into internal policy documents . The processes were realized beyond the requirements of national legislation.
- Any important changes in internal policy documents affecting the stakeholders influence on the processes of internal QA in the last 5 years were not identified within our research.

***Recommendation:** Extension of range of stakeholders, reinforcement of their position in decision - making and governance bodies of HEIs and Faculties, more exact identification of rules and processes of stakeholders' participation in the official internal policy documents.*

Field no. 3.

Nominal and real representation of stakeholders in decision –making bodies.

- Stakeholders are represented in all key governance and decision making - bodies of HEI.
- Because of relatively high authority of bodies which stakeholders participate in, their influence on decision making processes is real.
- The highest portion of the stakeholders is represented in the Boards of Trustees, Scientific Boards and Academic Senates.
- The results of our research didn't identify any important changes concerning representation of stakeholders in decision making bodies of HEIs in the last 5 years.

Field no. 4.

Organizational units and stakeholders

In the case the HEI is divided to Faculties, model of stakeholders' representation in decision- making and governance bodies of individual Faculties copies a model of the whole HEI .

Field no. 5.

Competences and responsibilities of stakeholders in context of QA

a) Profile of graduates and learning outcomes

Profile of graduates and learning outcomes are defined based on description of the study fields on national level. They are obligatory for all HEIs. Stakeholders – chosen representatives of HEIs enter to the process of their establishment on national level as individuals. Process of description of study fields is not enough flexible and doesn't reflect the changes ongoing on level of individual HEIs in the last period.

Recommendation: *To provide the regular revision of description of study fields on national level reflecting actual needs of HEIs with participation of stakeholders from other than academic environment.*

- Stakeholders representing academic environment (mainly students and members of Scientific Boards) directly affect profile of graduates or learning outcomes in the study programs which should be accredited by the state Accreditation Commission.

Recommendation: *To expand a range of stakeholders affecting formation of study programs on professionals operating out of academic environment.*

- Stakeholders affect profile of graduates and learning outcomes by informal way, their influence is not formalized and included in the internal policy documents.

Recommendation: *To formalize informal forms of influence of stakeholders on study programs and include them into the internal policy documents.*

b) Criteria of the exams and review of curricula of study programs

- Students as stakeholders evaluate individual study subjects, study programs and pedagogues every year. The results of evaluation initiate changes of curricula of study programs and adjustment of the new study criteria.
- Any other systematic tools and processes formalized in policy documents , initiating changes in review of study programs , were not identify in our research.
- An example of good practice : Stakeholders active in Alumni clubs, participating in conferences, professional events etc. expressed their opinions on criteria of the exams and review of curricula of study programs.
- Stakeholders as members of Scientific Boards have the appropriate tools to affect directly revision of the study curricula and criteria of exams.

Recommendation: To expand a range of stakeholders on persons working out of academic environment (e.g. members of Alumni clubs who work in the appropriate area and have practical experiences with content of study programs realized at the appropriate HEI) and reinforce their role in changes in review of study curricula of study programs and criteria of exams

c) Acquisition of soft and entrepreneurial skills

- Influence of stakeholders in this area is indirect and is realized within professional practices and traineeships of students.

d) Processes of internal QA

- Influence of stakeholders is provided by their membership in Scientific Boards which directly affect decision making and governance processes realized at HEIs.

Filed No. 6.

Influence of stakeholders on study programs in regard of key areas

a) Employment requirements for staff

- Influence of stakeholders is not systematic and formalized in policy documents, it is provided on irregular base e.g. in establishment of new study programs or study subjects.

a) Traineeships

- Influence of stakeholders is not systematic and formalized in policy documents, it is provided on irregular base e.g. in establishment of new study programs or study subjects.

b) Special professional development courses

- The systematic influence of participants of professional development courses as stakeholders on review and innovation of study programs was not identified in our research.

External stakeholders representing institutions like e.g. Bureaux for Unemployment or other key institutions of labour market play often a role of trigger in initiating of special professional development courses.

c) Contacts with business and other institutions

- HEIs have well developed contacts with business and other institutions but they don't use the potential in creating of new study programs and review their content.

Recommendation: *To expand the forms of cooperation with stakeholders (employers, alumni who became the professionals in the appropriate fields of study, participants of special professional development courses, businessmen...) and increase their impact on revision of study curricula and creating of new study programs.*

