



Report with findings of the Peer Review Meeting (WP4.3)

The peer review meeting took place on **18.08.2020** from **10 am to 12 noon (CEST) / 11 am to 1 pm (AST)**.

Reviewed Institution		
<i>KRG Partners</i>	<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>	<i>Represented in person of</i>
KISSR		
UOS		
SPU		
UOR		
UOH		
CHU		
DPU	✓	Prof. Dr. Adnan M. Abdulazeez Dr. Nawzat Sadiq Ahmed Muhammad A. Ahmed Salar A. Abdulazeez Dr. Ammar Edress Mohamed Qais Mustafa Abdulqader Swar A. Zubair Shireen S. Saqed
EPU		
SU		

Peer Reviewers		
<i>EU Partners</i>	<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>	<i>Represented in person of</i>
UGOE	✓	Dr. Uwe Muuss, Jakob Hedderich
KUL	✓	Jef Schrooten
MU	✓	Violeta Osouchová
RUG		Maaïke Wagenaar

I. General institutional setup for the internationalisation of the Higher Education Institution (HEI)		<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>		
#	Item	Assessment		
		Yes	In part	No
1	An institutional setup conducive to the internationalisation of the university and implementation of the international strategy has been achieved.	✓		
2	The International Relations Office has been set up properly within the institutional framework of the HEI with reporting lines established.	✓		
3	Apart from the International Relations Office, other structural units of the university important for internationalisation have been identified and are included in the internationalisation process.	✓		
4	An appropriate (inclusive) process for the continued development of the international strategy and related policies is in place.		✓	
5	Monitoring of the internationalisation process and implementation of the international strategy is established.		✓	
6	Institutional arrangements for collaboration with the colleges (faculties) on internationalisation are in place.	✓		
7	A framework for the recognition of studies abroad is in place.		✓	
8	An institutional process for implementing Bologna Process reform elements (e.g. student-centred learning, ECTS, learning outcomes etc.) has been initiated.	✓		
Written assessment / Comments:				
<p><i>Generally, European partners found that an institutional setup conducive to the internationalisation of the university and implementation of the international strategy has been achieved with the International Relations Office properly set up and other structural units important for internationalisation identified and involved in the process.</i></p> <p><i>In line with other KRG partners, DPU employed a dedicated committee for developing international strategy and related policies that reportedly has consulted with stakeholders during the process such as the colleges. However, the full scope of students' involvement could not be established during the meeting. In general, European partners think that for future developments the participatory element and inclusiveness of the process could be strengthened and should involve all relevant stakeholders including students.</i></p> <p><i>Similarly, although monitoring of the international strategy and internationalisation as a whole is set up and reportedly managed by the IRO and based on data collection in collaboration with the colleges and other relevant university structures, European partners see the need for DPU to solidify monitoring and reporting procedures thereby also defining a regular reporting schedule. Furthermore, European partners would stress that despite reporting to the university leadership is a mandatory element, expanding reporting to a broader audience and relevant stakeholders is important in terms of inclusiveness, transparency and quality assurance. Here, reporting regularly in the University Council as the university's main deliberation and decision making body seems to be a proper step.</i></p> <p><i>Arrangements for collaboration with the colleges are found to be in place, mostly employing the deans and dean's offices or head of departments, which is appropriate for the current level of internationalisation and, as seen in the presentation, clearly produces results. However, some ambiguity remained regarding the existence of dedicated coordinators at the colleges, institutes and branch campuses, which were reported on in "Section I" of the peer review but were obviously not evident to the IRO and its staff. Here, DPU should see to it that everybody involved in internationalisation is at the same page and aware of relevant contact points.</i></p>				

	<p><i>In terms of recognition, KRG partners report a framework for the recognition of studies taken abroad to be in place at DPU. However, during the meeting European partners were not able to review the procedure in more detail. In response to two post-meeting inquiries, this was further clarified with DPU pointing to a recognition procedure involving both the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research as well as in-house procedures. From the side of DPU, the President's Office, the Scientific Affairs' Office and also the International Relations Office and General Registration Office are involved in the process with a dedicated committee engaging in the review and recognition of studies taken abroad. Despite the additional information, some open questions remain. Furthermore, during the meeting European partners had the impression that the understanding of recognition of studies and its concept could be reinforced. Therefore, European partners would once again like to highlight the importance of recognition, in this case especially in regard to periods of study, which is a key element in student mobility and joint international education, and encourage KRG partners to make sure that formal procedures are properly set up and implemented rendering recognition a standard at DPU.</i></p> <p><i>An institutional process for the implementation of Bologna Process has been started and ongoing for the past 3 years resulting in the implementation of ECTS throughout the university, its colleges and institutes in varying degrees. In their reporting, partners highlighted the past involvement of international experts and related capacity building.</i></p>
	<p>Recommendations:</p>
	<p><i>For the future, strengthen the participatory element and overall inclusiveness of the internationalisation process at DPU. This also includes students. Furthermore, solidify monitoring and reporting procedures for internationalisation, thereby also expanding reporting to a broader audience informing all relevant stakeholders. Involving the University Council seems advisable.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure a solid understanding and implementation of recognition procedures for studies taken abroad, since recognition is an important element in student mobility and joint international education. As part of this, DPU is invited to revisit the respective training conducted during the workshop held in March 2020 at the University of Göttingen.</i></p> <p><i>Continue with the implementation of the Bologna process and related reforms thereby ensuring a proper implementation throughout the university, its colleges and departments. European partners encourage DPU to continue with the involvement of international experts.</i></p>

II. The organisation of and resources available at your International Relations Office		<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>		
#	Item	Assessment		
		Yes	In part	No
1	The organisational structure of the International Relations Office is appropriate/functional and clear responsibilities are established.	✓		
2	Appropriate personnel resources are available at the International Relations Office.		✓	
3	Staff with English language proficiency is available at the International Relations Office.		✓	
4	Based on photo evidence, the International Relations Office and its premises are found to be suitable for the purpose and sufficiently equipped.	✓		
5	Equipment purchased with funds of the Erasmus+ TIGRIS Project is installed properly and marked according to Erasmus+ requirements.	✓		
Written assessment / Comments:				
<p><i>As presented via the photo evidence, European partners find the IRO and its premises to be suitable for their purpose and sufficiently equipped with equipment purchased with TIGRIS funds marked accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of staff, although being able to manage the current workload as well as being supported by other structure of the university, European partners find it likely that additional staff is to be added to the IRO in the future - a wish also clearly expressed by the head of the IRO itself. Most certainly, DPU should not let the number of staff available at the IRO fall below the current number.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of English language proficiency, European partners also agree with the head's self-assessment that proficiency levels could be improved. This could be achieved by investing in language training for existing staff as well as setting language requirements for new staff to be recruited.</i></p> <p><i>The current organisational structure of the IRO is found appropriate for the current level of internationalisation. However, European partners would encourage DPU to ensure a clear functional differentiation between units.</i></p> <p><i>In regard to the organisational chart, European partners would like to point out that for international partners the designation of the unit "Cultural Relations" (which as informed earlier stems from a direct translation) can be misleading. In the eyes of European partners, the term "International Relations" would be more fitting in this context.</i></p>				
Recommendations:				
<p><i>Retraining the current number of staff available at the IRO is a must, while allocating more staff in the future is advisable. For this, DPU should closely monitor if personnel resources at the IRO are sufficient to stem the increasing workload that comes with increasing levels of internationalisation.</i></p> <p><i>Similarly, European partners recommend to DPU to invest in continuous staff development and as part of this enhance the English language proficiency of current staff while setting language requirements for new staff to be recruited.</i></p> <p><i>For future development of the IRO, DPU should ensure a clear functional differentiation between units. Furthermore, European partners would encourage DPU to consider renaming the unit "Cultural Relations" in order to make the structure more relatable and accessible for third parties, especially potential international partners.</i></p>				

III. The scope and mode of operation of the International Relations Office		tick as appropriate (✓)		
#	Item	Assessment		
		Yes	In part	No
1	Core services and tasks ¹ of an International Relations Office are offered/performed by the local International Relation Office.	✓		
2	Core services and tasks not offered/performed by the local International Relations Office are offered/performed by another unit of the university (<i>only if applicable</i>).	✓		
3	The mode of operation of the International Relation Office as portrayed in the meeting is found to be appropriate for the related task(s).		✓	
Written assessment / Comments:				
<p><i>European partners found core services and tasks to be offered by the IRO or in collaboration with other units or structures, both central and decentral (e.g. mobility with colleges, Scientific Affairs Directorate, project and grant applications with “Cooperation & Coordination” unit of the IRO and a relevant committee). International students are also served by the General Registration Directorate and its “International Students Unit”.</i></p> <p><i>Nevertheless, from the reporting and in regard to the IRO’s operations, European partners had the impression that IRO staff members are still in the process of asserting themselves in their roles as international officers and managers. Here again, having a clear understanding of the IRO’s core mission and business as well as related responsibilities would be conducive to facilitate this process. Additionally, investing in continuous development of IRO staff should also be considered by KRG partners.</i></p>				
Recommendations:				
<p><i>Supporting staff members to accommodate to their new roles as promoters and managers of internationalisation by ensuring a clear understanding of the IRO’s mission and business as well as related responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, invest in continuous staff development to contribute to the professionalisation of IRO staff. Looking for further training opportunities is highly encouraged, of which some are available internationally, e.g. through participation in international staff weeks.</i></p>				

¹ For this purpose, core services & tasks are defined as (1) coordination and management of **international relations** (with foreign university, networks, partnerships, etc.), (2) coordination and management of **international mobility** of students and staff, (3) conducting **intl. marketing/promotion** incl. recruitment of intl. students and staff, (4) offering **project support** (consultation incl. funding advice), (5) offering **support for incoming students and staff**.

IV. Experience of students and staff with internationalisation at the university and services offered by the International Relations Office		<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>		
#	Item	Assessment		
		Yes	In part	No
1	Students report to be well informed on internationalisation activities and opportunities offered by the university.	✓		
2	Students report on having received appropriate support before, during and after their international experience.	✓		
3	Students report to be satisfied with support received.	✓		
4	Students report that their studies abroad have been recognised by the home institution (<i>only if applicable</i>).	Not applicable		
5	Staff members report to be well informed on internationalisation activities and opportunities offered by the university.	✓		
6	Staff members report on having received appropriate support before, during and after their international experience.	✓		
7	Staff members report to be satisfied with support received.	✓		
Written assessment / Comments:				
<p><i>Some technical issues were prevalent during this section. Nevertheless, partners were able to conduct the interview.</i></p> <p><i>Both students (PhD) and staff reported to be well informed on internationalisation activities and opportunities to engage in them, mainly pointing out the university website, the IRO or official notifications by either the presidency or departments as sources of information. However, staff members see potential for yet improving the dissemination of information related to internationalisation.</i></p> <p><i>Both students and staff report to have received comprehensive support by the IRO and are satisfied with the service received from the IRO and its staff. In their reporting, staff members confirm their close cooperation with the IRO as well as other central structures to develop internationalisation at DPU.</i></p> <p><i>Especially staff members show to be aware of aware of internationalisation and its benefits and express the desire for more internationalisation and opportunities to engage in it clearly showing the demand prevalent at DPU.</i></p> <p><i>Recognition of studies abroad (item 4) was not applicable in this case, since activities participated in did not involve any award of credits or recognition.</i></p>				
Recommendations:				
<p><i>European partner encourage DPU to review its dissemination channels for relaying information on internationalisation in order to identify potential areas of improvement.</i></p>				



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