



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

The peer review meeting took place on **20.07.2020** from **9 am to 11 pm (CEST) / 10 am to 12 noon (AST)**.

Reviewed Institution		
<i>KRG Partners</i>	<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>	<i>Represented in person of</i>
KISSR		
UOS	✓	Dr. Ridha H. Hussein Dr. Karzan G. Khidhir Dr. Rezhen H. M. Rashid Dr. Daroon F. Abdula Mr. Aari K. Rifat Mrs. Sivan T. M. Saeed Mr. Zhir F. Mohammed Mr. Dana A. Qadir
SPU		
UOR		
UOH		
CHU		
DPU		
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, EU 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>During the meeting, partners from UOS were able to portray the monitoring set up as well as the process for continued development of the strategy and related policies. Although found to be appropriate for the current state of internationalisation, EU partners would like to emphasise the importance of solidifying these processes at UOS to truly render internationalisation an institutional process and to ensure its proper implementation and long-term sustainability. Here, the continued involvement of the university council, in which both university leadership and the colleges are represented, is seen as highly desirable and conducive to achieving said goal.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, the current arrangements for the collaboration with the colleges by employing the deans and the deans' offices is found to be an appropriate setup for the current state of internationalisation. However, with the progression of time and internationalisation personnel capacities for internationalisation might have to be established in the future at the college level as well.</i></p> <p><i>A framework for the recognition of studies abroad is found to be in place with the partners from UOS being able to portray recognition procedures during the meeting for both the recognition of degrees and periods of studies.</i></p> <p><i>An institutional process for the implementation of Bologna Process has been started and relevant committees have been formed. However, EU partners recognise the yet early implementation stage, which is in line with other KRG HEIs and the Kurdistan Region as a whole.</i></p>				

	Recommendations:
	<p data-bbox="256 232 1390 297"><i>European partners recommend for UOS to solidify monitoring and reporting lines and to ensure the future involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the process of internationalisation.</i></p> <p data-bbox="256 338 1390 443"><i>European partners encourage UOS to continue with the implementation of Bologna Process reform elements, best by developing its in-house expertise and with continued support from (international) experts in the field.</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>The organisational structure of the IRO as portrayed during the meeting is found adequate for the current state of internationalisation.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise, sufficient resources are available at the IRO and equipment purchased with TIGRIS funds is found properly installed and marked accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>For the future, sustaining the current level of resources allocated to the IRO is considered by EU partners to be highly important for the continued and successful internationalisation of the university.</i></p>				
Recommendations:				
None.				

III. The scope and mode of operation of the International Relations Office		<i>tick as appropriate (✓)</i>		
#	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>).	<i>Not 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>Core services and tasks of an IRO are found to be offered/performed. The management of academic mobility and other services offered were described in detail and are found to be appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>As result of TIGRIS, the Erasmus+ Coordination Office was established within the IRO, which in the future could greatly facilitate cooperation with European universities and the EHEA in general. However, EU partners still see the need for UOS to fill this new structure with life thereby clearly defining its operations.</i></p> <p><i>As a side note, EU partners perceived the IRO to employ a rather centralised organisational model, which in the future due to an increasing need for functional differentiation might need to be revised relying more on self-dependent employees and work.</i></p>				
Recommendations:				
<i>None.</i>				

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>).		✓	
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>Both students and staff report to have received comprehensive support from the IRO and its staff and report to be satisfied with the IRO and the services offered by its staff.</i></p> <p><i>While staff reports to be well informed on internationalisation activities and opportunities, EU partners perceived room for improvement when it comes to the dissemination of information to students with one student reporting to having relied more on information from social media and later the foreign host university that informational resources provided by UOS. However, this was not the case for the other student.</i></p> <p><i>Generally, both students and staff were generally aware of internationalisation and its importance and benefits. They are also aware of the TIGRIS project. Also, both groups consider increased internationalisation of their university to be desirable but see mainly external restraints such as lacking funding and opportunities as well as restrictive visa regimes for Iraqi citizens.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of recognition, one participant reported that 1 subject of the studies taken abroad was not recognised by his home university (UOS) and experienced the process of establishing the Learning Agreement to be rather difficult. However, since the participant also reports to have received crucial assistance in solving this issue by the Head of the IRO, the issue seems not directly related to the IRO or a general lack of support, but more to the implementation of the recognition process at the college. With the mobility dating back about 3 years, it cannot be determined if such issues are still prevalent today.</i></p>				
Recommendations:				
<p><i>EU partners encourage UOS to review its recognition procedures to identify potential issues that could impede on the recognition of studies abroad. Assessing existing communication channels for identifying potential blind spots could also be considered.</i></p>				



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