

Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the study programme

“Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education” (Licentiate in Educational Sciences, equals B.Ed.)

offered by Tiraspol State University (TSU)

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 63rd meeting on 23rd/24th of May 2016, the Accreditation Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education**” (**Bachelor of Engineering**) offered by **Tiraspol State University (TSU)** is accredited according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The accreditation is **conditional**.

2. The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be processed within a time period of nine months.
3. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **28th of February 2017**.
4. The accreditation is given for the period of **five years** and is valid until **30th of September 2021**.

Conditions:

1. The **learning outcomes of the internships** and the step-by-step progression of the practical stages must be described in a more transparent manner, e.g. in the module descriptions or in an individual concept.
2. The **curriculum must be updated** particularly with respect to modern theories and methods of teacher education.
3. The **study plan** must be reviewed in a way that the different study paths become clearer, and a study plan for part-time studies must be developed.
4. The relation between the aims of the programme and the **learning outcomes** must be described in a transparent manner.
5. It must be described what **forms of examination** are used and how they are weighed to form the final mark. It is recommended to reduce the number of exams. More comprehensive exams should be included which enable the teaching staff to assess different competences.

The conditions were fulfilled within the given timescale.

The Accreditation Commission confirms the fulfilment of the conditions in its decision of 28./29.08.2017.



The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. A concept should be provided on how **research activities** of faculty will be planned and co-ordinated for the next five years and how research and teaching are connected.
2. The curriculum should be structured in larger, more comprehensive modules. After that, the **competence-oriented learning outcomes** must be described in more detail on module-level.
3. In some seminars the responsibilities between tutors and professors should be divided. Additionally, more importance should be given to the **reflection of practical work** applying the theoretical background.
4. The **internationalisation** should be strengthened in different ways: more options for mobility and more courses in English should be provided to both students and academic staff. Moreover, students should be encouraged to use more international research literature and international databases.
5. The university should provide a concept on how to improve the **situation of the scientific library** in the field of Pedagogy within the next years.
6. The academic staff should be further encouraged to **use ICT**. Accordingly, more support and staff development with respect to the use of ICT should be offered by the university.
7. The faculty should increase its efforts to implement **quality assurance measures** provided by the university and to enhance the use of feedback from different stakeholders in order to improve the programme. The instruments used for the **quality assurance** of courses on faculty level must be further developed, especially the questionnaires need revision.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Accreditation Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

Experts' Report

on the programme:

“Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education” (Licentiate in Educational Sciences, equals B.Ed.)

offered by Tiraspol State University (TSU)

Visit to the University: 27th and 28th of January 2016

Panel of Experts:

Prof. Dr. Christian Gleser	Karlsruhe University of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of School and Education Development for Primary and Secondary Schools
Prof. Dr. Claudiu Marian Bunăiașu	University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences
Prof. Dr. habil. Julia Kosinár	University of Applied Science Northwestern Switzerland, Institute for Primary Education
Serban Iosifescu	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, Bucharest (representative from the professional field)
Melanie Fröhlich	Student at the University of Mainz, Teacher Education Spanish/Chemistry (Student representative)
Coordinator:	
Doris Herrmann / Dr. Katarina Löbel	AQAS e.V., Cologne, Germany

1. Introduction

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor programme “Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education” offered by Tiraspol State University, Moldova. The review is based on criteria that were developed jointly as part of a TEMPUS project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and presented to the Bologna Follow-Up group in 2005.

The university provided a Self Evaluation Report (SER). The accreditation procedure was officially initiated by a decision of the AQAS Accreditation Commission on 18th and 19th of May 2015. The Accreditation Commission nominated the above-mentioned expert panel and the university did not raise any objections to the composition of the panel.

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university in Chisinau took place on 27th and 28th, January 2016. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders and consulted additional documents and student work. The visit concluded with the presentation of the preliminary findings by the group of experts to the university representatives.

2. General Information

Tiraspol State University (TSU) was the first higher education institution in the Republic of Moldova with a focus on training qualified teachers. In accordance with the TSU strategy, programmes in the field of Sciences of Education dominate among the offered programmes.

The TSU is divided into five faculties (Physics, Mathematics and IT; Biology and Chemistry; Geography; Philology; and Pedagogy). The teaching staff of the TSU consists of 180 members. About 4,800 students study at the university.

In the years 2003 and 2007, the university was accredited with 21 programmes by decision of the Ministry of Education and Youth. In the years 2007 and 2012, TSU was accredited as an organisation from the area of Sciences and Innovation. According to the scientific accreditation certificate by the Ministry from 2013, TSU is accredited as an organisation from the area of sciences and innovation with all the related rights to carry out research, innovation and technological transfer activities in defined research fields. Within its faculties, TSU conducts programmes at the following levels: licentiate university studies (37 programmes), Master's university studies (17 programmes) and doctoral studies (10 programmes).

The programme “Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education” is offered by the Faculty of Pedagogy which is subdivided into two departments: 1. Pedagogy and Methodology of Primary Education, 2. Psychopedagogy and Preschool Education. The Faculty of Pedagogy directs its activities to the following objectives:

- ensuring a quality educational process centred on the student which contributes to the formation of professional skills of teaching staff from primary and preschool education;
- design and evaluation of didactic activities in the spirit of a modern curriculum orientation compatible with the requirements of the European education;
- promotion and elaboration of fundamental and applied scientific activities in the field of Sciences of Education;
- elaboration of a coherent system of continuous training of teaching and managerial staff.

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- The faculty is also responsible for the continuous professional development of all teaching staff members at all schooling levels.

Currently, the Faculty of Pedagogy trains students in the following specialties: Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education; Pedagogy of Primary Education and English Language; Pedagogy of Primary Education and Psychopedagogy; Pedagogy of Primary Education; and Preschool Pedagogy. In the SER, the faculty describes its research activities in different fields.

3. Profile and outcomes of the study programme

As laid down in the SER, the general aims of programme “Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education” are:

- training of qualified specialists in the field of Sciences of Primary and Preschool Education,
- scientific research,
- professional training,
- dissemination of modern information technologies and use of technological innovation,
- cultural awareness of pedagogical processes and
- promotion of a set of moral values.

The university describes that the reform of the educational process within the Faculty of Pedagogy is oriented towards implementing modern teaching methods centred on the student’s personality, science and teaching practice, training and self-training, a prospective character of the training, and an inter- and transdisciplinary integration.

The Faculty of Pedagogy enhances its activities in order to achieve the following objectives: ensuring a quality educational process centred on students which must contribute to the formation of professional skills of future teaching staff from primary and pre-school education; design and evaluation of didactic activities in the spirit of modern curriculum orientation, compatible with the requirements of the European education; promotion and elaboration of fundamental and applied scientific activities in the field of Sciences of Education; elaboration of a coherent system of the continuous training of teaching and managerial staff.

Experts’ Evaluation

The general objectives of the programme “Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education” are clear: the competence areas are recognisable and well described on programme level. The intended learning outcomes reflect both academic and labour market requirements. The aims of the programme comply with the profile of the institution. The programme is also consistent with the profile of the department in respect to teaching and research.

The concept of teacher education is mainly based on the national regulations given by the Ministry of Education of Moldova. Based on national standards and regulations, the professors discuss how to develop the competences and goals for the programme offered by TSU. In the different disciplines, the programme follows a visible and coherent idea of professionalisation, e.g. it is orientated towards the students’ knowledge development, a concept of problem-based-learning is used, and case studies help students to anticipate problems in classrooms. This way, students progress from basic theoretical knowledge in the beginning to in-depth knowledge and increasing skills in transferring the knowledge into practice at the end of the studies. During the site visit, the experts obtained the impression that the experienced teaching staff at TSU is able to provide theoretical courses on a sufficiently high level. The professors work on different theories in their

disciplines and they publish books. They also do research and stay up-to-date by visiting international conferences. However, in the opinion of the panel of experts there is a gap between the competences of the teaching staff and the integration of up-to-date knowledge into the curriculum. This situation has to be improved (see chapter 4). The students are able to explain theories and concepts they have learnt at the university and they know how to apply them in their work as future teachers. Based on this, the experts can confirm that the academic level of the content corresponds with the requirements of the Bachelor level of the European and the National Qualifications Framework.

The faculty presented the cooperation project which is established with diverse preschools and primary schools in which students carry out their practical training. The organisation of the internships follows high and modern standards. Because the cooperation with schools is well established and long lasting, the students can be in contact with individual children over a longer period, observing and supporting their development. The respective seminars take place in the school or kindergarten in a room which is equipped for reflection. In return, the mentors from the schools or kindergarten also get a regular input of new ideas and research results from the academic staff. This beneficial cooperation helps to improve the quality of the work of the kindergarten or school with the students. The only critical point worth mentioning is that the internships should be described in a more transparent manner, particularly the learning outcomes of each stage and how the stages build upon each other. This would be also helpful for the students. **(Finding 1)**

With respect to the title of the programme, the experts would like to mention that the order could be revised according to the logic of the child development, for example "Pedagogy of Preschool and Primary Education". As far as the experts understood, the title is prescribed by the Ministry of Education so that the university has little influence in this matter. Still, the reversed title would fit better into the European context of Pedagogy.

4. Curriculum

The programme can be completed in a full-time version and in a part-time version. The standard period of study is four years for full-time students and five years for part-time students. In the full-time programme, 240 ECTS credit points are acquired, in the part-time programme 180 CP. The academic year is divided into two semesters of 15 weeks each.

In the curriculum for the *Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school Education* specialty, the fundamental disciplines cover 55 credits (23%), the disciplines orientated towards the basic specialty - 68 credits (28%) and those orientated towards the secondary specialty - 46 credits (19%), school practice (term 6), pedagogical practice in kindergartens (term 7) and licence practice (term 8).

In the curriculum for the *Pedagogy of Primary Education* specialty, the number of credits per groups and disciplines is distributed in the following way: Fundamental - 55 credits (30.5%), specialised - 65 (36%), practical stages - 20 credits (11.1%), school practice (term 7), licence practice (term 8). The period of study comprises 4 years for colleges and high schools graduates. The specialist is awarded the qualification of Licentiate in Sciences of Education and he/she is prepared to work in the domain of primary and preschool education as a primary school teacher or as a methodologist and educator in preschool education.

For the specialty *Pedagogy of Primary Education and English language*, the period of study for colleges and high schools graduates covers 4 years; the duration is the same for *Pedagogy of Primary Education and Psychopedagogy* as well as for the programme *Psychopedagogy*. For the specialty *Pedagogy of Primary Education* as well as for *Preschool Pedagogy*, the period of study is 4 years for high schools graduates, and 3 years for the pedagogical colleges graduates, part-time.

For students who want to continue their studies Master degree studies are offered at TSU.

According to the SER, the teaching-learning activities differ depending on the organisation forms of the didactic activities such as lectures, seminars, and laboratory works. Thus, different teaching forms are used in the programme: classical lecture, interactive lecture, lectures with the use of ICT methods, the elaboration and presentation of scientific works, essays, writing reviews, text interpretation, case studies, research projects, role-playing games, and field research presentations.

Assessment

In the programme, three forms of students' assessment are applied: initial, current and final assessments. The initial assessment is performed in order to identify the initial level, required for the beginning of the course, to determine the prospects for the professional development of each student at each basic and specialisation course. The current assessment is carried out in the immediate process of teaching and learning through observation and applying special tests to diagnose the students' current professional progress. For the discipline/subject which is evaluated through different forms (written, oral, projects, lab tests, etc.) the examiner will give only one mark (a number from 1 to 10) by assessing the student's performance. The final assessment for each discipline is performed at the end of the course.

Some disciplines are included in the final assessment at the licence exams. The current assessment of Licence Theses is performed by the submission procedure within the internal committees of the Chair and the final assessment is performed by the State Commission.

Internationalisation

The faculty departments are responsible for the proper implementation of the courses of the different programmes in Pedagogy. In planning these courses, similar programmes of various European universities have been consulted. According to the SER, the faculty departments cooperate both scientifically and academically with European departments or institutions on the basis of different collaboration contracts (for example, Pitesti University, Romania, Oradea University, Romania).

Experts' Evaluation

The study plan is consistent, the relevant disciplines are included. The theoretical basis is solid. The curriculum is adequate for the development of professional competences needed for primary and preschool pedagogy as well as for the development of skills for lifelong learning. The disciplines in the study plan ensure the compatibility with the National Qualifications Framework in Moldova. The programme's approach reflects valued paradigms of a postmodern curriculum: the multidimensional approach of the curriculum, the curriculum's design focused on skills, and the student-centred approach. The mission of the programme with respect to employability is highlighted by a) the curriculum content of academic disciplines; b) the educational strategies focused on personal and professional development; c) the cooperation established with preschools and primary schools where internships are conducted and where some of the employees are graduates of TSU. The needs of the labour market are well-analysed and included in the programme. The practical elements are also well implemented in the programme.

Nevertheless, the experts would like to mention some aspects for improvement.

TSU has clustered the intended learning results in three groups: the processes of knowledge, acquiring skills and intellectual abilities. The professional and transversal competences are approached in detail in the curriculum and skills are grouped by categories: cognitive competences, learning competences, application competences, analysis competences, communication compe-

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tences. In the opinion of the panel of experts the definition of transversal competences is too much limited to communication skills. Furthermore, some aspects of the curriculum seem to be rather dated. The curriculum must be updated particularly with respect to modern theories and methods of teacher education; especially more international approaches should be considered. **(Finding 2)** When reviewing the module handbook, modern literature could also be included more prominently.

The experts experienced highly motivated teachers doing interesting and useful research. However, to get a better overview of research activities the experts suggest that the faculty develops a concept on how research activities of the faculty will be planned and coordinated for the next five years and how research and teaching are connected **(Finding 3)**.

For reasons of transparency, especially regarding the needs of the students, the study plan must be reviewed; it must outline different study paths within the programme. Because a high number of students study part-time, attention should be paid to the documentation of the curriculum for this target group. A study plan for part-time studies must be developed and in general, part-time studies must be more visible in the official documentation. **(Finding 4)**

The relation between the aims of the programme and the learning outcomes of the courses lack comprehension at times so that changes in the documentation are needed. **(Finding 5)** Compared to curricula in other European countries it is obvious that the curriculum consists of a large number of small courses and that the idea of modularisation has not been implemented yet. The faculty explained during the site visit that they had already discussed the restructuring in the direction of modularisation. Therefore, the experts recommend that the curriculum should be structured in larger, more comprehensive modules instead of a multitude of small courses. **(Finding 6)**

The elements of the curriculum are described and information is publicly available. The study plan contains the disciplines' shares expressed in ECTS credits and illustrates the sequential organisation of the disciplines. Also, the curricular variables such as contents, instructional strategies, temporal resources, and assessment strategies are defined. However, improvement is needed with respect to the transparency of some elements. When the curriculum is changed in a way that larger modules are included, the competence-oriented learning outcomes must be described in more detail on module-level. **(Finding 6)**

Furthermore, connected with the concept of modularisation is the problem that a large number of small exams is offered at the moment. When the TSU implements larger modules in the curriculum, fewer yet more comprehensive exams should be included which enable the teaching staff to assess different competences. Also, it must be clear what forms of examination are used and how they are weighed to form the final mark **(Finding 7)**.

The teaching and assessment methods applied are relevant to the development of the intended professional and transversal competencies. The teaching methodology facilitates learning through research and collaborative learning. Along with classical methodology and teaching strategies, interactive learning strategies are widely used. The students are familiarised with the methodology of scientific research both for empirical and experimental research, which is trained in project and license work. The examination for each discipline is conducted by reference to the planned results. The organisation and content of the graduation exam are based on a summative exam certifying the acquisition of cognitive and academic qualifications as professional. Formative and summative exams are used alternatively and complementary. The exams include traditional methods of assessment (oral and written examinations) useful to verify knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as alternative methods (project work, reflexive portfolio, and self-evaluation) relevant for assessing the skills' development. The experts suggest utilising even more of these innovative instructional strategies and methods such as constructivist learning strategies, metacognitive strategies, virtual learning environments, and collaborative learning.

In addition, the experts recommend dividing the responsibilities in the seminars between tutors (training practical things/doing handcrafts) and professors (reflecting the practical work) in order to strengthen the academic aspect in the curriculum and to save resources of the scientific teaching staff. Furthermore, more importance should be given to the reflection of the practical work applying the theoretical background (**Finding 8**).

The structure of the programme contains elements that promote international mobility such as ECTS, diploma supplements, transcripts of records, learning agreements, etc. Unfortunately, only few students have benefitted from mobility so far. The students mentioned that especially the limited number of places in mobility programmes and the lack of English language competences constitute obstacles. Nevertheless, internationalisation is crucial in the modern academic world and therefore the faculty should increase its efforts. Particularly, more mobility options and more courses in English should be provided to both students and academic staff. Moreover, students should be encouraged to use more international research literature and international databases. (**Finding 9**)

5. Student Support

The Centre for Career Counselling and Orientation (CCCO) coordinates all counselling activities at TSU. The counselling activities include: advertising educational offers; distribution of information regarding student life, study areas and specialisations, admission, promotion and study finalisation rules, competences that students can acquire by following a specific educational track; counselling in choosing an educational track; counselling in finding employment opportunities suitable for the professional profile and employers' requirements; organising student meetings for detailing and explaining the contents of the programme; counselling in choosing study packages, optional courses, licentiate and master's theses topics; as well as counselling in social and cultural problems, etc. The CCCO also has the mission to encourage extracurricular activities, e.g. with student organisations and associations from the university, with NGOs, and with representatives from the private and the public sector.

At every department a schedule for individual consultations is established. Lecturers provide advisory and guidance services, e.g. for the students' individual work in each subject and to elaborate Licence and Master theses.

In the programme, the workload is defined according to ECTS. One credit point is equivalent to 30 hours of work which includes the students' individual preparation work. Credit points that are acquired at other universities during mobility programmes can, according to the agreements between the partner universities, be recognised.

Experts' Evaluation

The TSU provides up-to-date information on its programmes. Student advisory service is available to students. These services are offered continuously and information on these services is made available in an adequate way. There are specific advisory services on the programme and substance level. Teaching staff offers frequent consultation hours and is available to students. The students feel well-informed about all aspects of the programme. Most often, they receive information from the Internet. Nevertheless, the experts criticise that external stakeholders do not receive sufficient information especially on the part-time programme. This is why the university must develop a study plan that outlines the different study paths of the programme. In particular, a plan for part-time studies must be developed. (see Finding 4).

The programme includes practical elements and the students receive credits for this. The students highlighted that they are widely supported in finding practical placements and also during their internships.

The assessment regulations are defined and published. They are available to students. Changes to the examination concept can be documented and explained. The responsibilities and structures with regard to the organisation of the exams are clearly defined. The organisation of the exams is appropriate with regard to timing. Examination dates are published with appropriate timing. The students confirmed that all exam dates are published already at the beginning of each semester. Re-sits are offered in a suitable way. The students appreciated the support from the professors to improve in case they fail. There are transparent and published regulations to compensate for disadvantages, illness, absence or other mitigating circumstances. However, it remains unclear in the module descriptions what forms of examination are used and how they are weighed to form the final mark (see also chapter 4). The students mentioned that they receive the information at the beginning of each course. For reasons of transparency the experts see the need that this information must be available to external stakeholders, too.

The entrance requirements, transition possibilities and selection processes are clearly defined and adequate. They largely follow the processes defined by the Legal Authorities.

Analyses of the number of failed course examinations in the programme are used to enhance the programme. The distribution of grades among the grading spectrum is documented and assessed by Faculty.

Electronic platforms and other ICT means are used within teaching-learning-assessment processes. The students know well how to use these means.

The programme uses a credit point system to describe the student workload. The student workload is calculated for all elements of the programme. The calculation of the workload is transparent and reasonable. There are procedures to monitor the student workload and to adapt the curriculum or credits if necessary. There are regulations for the recognition of credits gained at other higher education institutions and outside of the higher education institution. Specific offers for exchange students are available. Learning agreements are used to facilitate the mobility of students. However, as already mentioned in the former sections, the university should increase their efforts towards internationalisation (see chapter 4).

The experts experienced highly motivated and satisfied students. The relation between students and teachers seems to be very good. The students acknowledged the communication with their lecturers as well as the fact that the teaching staff listens to them in case of problems. In summary, all measures are suitable to ensure the feasibility of the programme.

6. Employability

The programme "Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school Education" awards the qualification of Licentiate in Sciences of Education and graduates are supposed to work in the domain of primary and preschool education as teachers in primary schools as well as methodologists and/or educators in preschool education.

For students who want to continue their studies, the Faculty designates programmes on master level in the following specialties: 1. Pedagogy and Methodology of Primary Education; 2. Psychopedagogy of Pre-university Education; 3. Social and Family Psychology; 4. Management of Preschool Education.

Most of the graduates work in the education system and in the social assistance system; fewer graduates find employment in the national army and in other spheres of the national economy.

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TSU annually receives information from the Ministry of Education concerning the distribution of teachers in pre-university institutions.

The university describes in the SER that the Quality Assurance Commission (QAC) of the Faculty conducts surveys regarding the students' integration into the labour market as well as the level of satisfying students' professional interests that are related to this study programme. The QAC examines these data periodically (usually annually), which will form the basis of the department and faculty management analysis. The systematic monitoring of the correlation between the programme and the current requirements of the labour market and national authorities lies also in the responsibility of the QAC.

Experts' Evaluation

The programme responds to the needs of the labour market and offers good job opportunities for graduates. The programme was developed in cooperation with other universities in order to respond adequately to the needs of the labour market.

There is a clear and comprehensible description of potential fields of employment of graduates: the students know precisely their employment opportunities and the added value of the programme for their teaching career, especially for part-time students, who usually enrol in this programme in order to compete for management and inspection positions within the system.

The university management estimates that, based of the information available, almost 100% of the graduates are employed after graduation (85% in primary schools, 15% in kindergarten).

The attractiveness of the programme and the perspectives for employment are enhanced by legal provisions stating the obligation of initial education in universities for all teachers, regardless of the level of education (i.e. including pre-primary and primary teachers). For this reason, there is a high demand for the part-time programme, in which employed teacher are enrolled but trained in pedagogical high schools or other tertiary non-university schools. Moreover, the students underline the usefulness of the double qualification (i.e. pre-primary and primary) in order to find an appropriate job placement.

The university and the faculty ensure good feedback loops from stakeholders (mainly employers and graduates) by multiple ways; specific information is collected and analysed. Besides the feedback offered by part-time students (already occupying teaching positions in kindergarten or primary schools), there are other ways in which information is collected:

- In-service (refresher) programmes for teachers and head teachers organised by faculty.
- Research papers realised by students (several compulsory courses and via graduation paper).
- Surveys with questionnaires for students regarding the correlation between theoretical courses and the reality encountered during the internships.
- Surveys with questionnaires for teachers, head teachers and for the personnel of the county management structures - during conferences, seminars, workshops and other events organised by the Faculty for the teaching and management staff.
- Analysing the demand for teachers, coming from national and regional public authorities indicating the vacant teaching positions.
- Cooperation contracts signed between the university and school and County Directorates for Education.

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By using information collected from multiple sources, the appropriateness of the programme for the needs of the labour market is enhanced.

A diploma supplement is handed to the students upon completion of the programme reflecting and describing the qualifications achieved.

As an important area for improvement, the experts may mention the predominant conservative character of the programme. Due to a traditional theoretical background, to conservative internships practices (encouraging to a lesser extent critical reflection) and to relatively outdated literature existing in the library (and, hence, recommended by teachers), the graduates might have a diminished potential for innovation and for reforming classroom practices. This is why the experts recommend updating the programme (see also chapters 3 and 4).

7. Resources

In the department of "Pedagogy and Methodology of Primary Education", 4 associate professors, 2 senior lectures in full-time-positions, 1 associate professor, 1 senior lecturer and 3 university assistants in part-time-positions are responsible for the programme. They are supported by 1 university professor, 4 associate professors, 4 senior lectures in full-time-positions, 1 senior lecturer and 1 lecture assistants in part-time-positions of the department of "Psychology and Pre-school Education".

The didactic positions are filled based on a competitive procedure in compliance with legal requirements and for a period of 5 years.

The number of part-time students enrolled in the programme is four times higher than the number of full-time students according to the overview handed in.

Experts' Evaluation

The number and the qualification of the teaching staff seem to be sufficient for the programme and the intended outcome. However, the panel of experts identifies a scope for improvement concerning a more effective use of the competences and the knowledge of professors: A considerable amount of resources is used for practical courses and internships. While the consultation during the internship is necessarily provided by academic staff, it is possible to build up a peer-mentoring-system for the practical courses. Elder students could help younger students to develop competences in handcrafting objects they use for their lessons in class. The academic staff should thereby find more time for the reflection with students on the children's learning processes while doing arts. The peer-mentoring programme could enable the academic staff to do research projects with students. Elder students could receive credits for their work in the peer-mentoring-system.

Currently, circa one quarter of the students study full-time. However, in a few years the group of employed teachers going back to university for an academic education will decrease. This might have the effect that the number of students decreases.

All positions of staff involved in the teaching of the programme are documented including the staff's academic and related qualifications as well as their research activities. Important for the evaluation of resources is the number of students. In the SER, the university pointed out that nearly 80 % of students study part-time which means that they are working in a school or kindergarten while only 20 % of the students study full-time. It would be helpful for the planning of staff resources if the number of contact hours in relation to the number of hours for self study of students would be transparent. This overview should be available for every discipline and it should be differentiated between part-time and full-time students.

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During the site visit, the panel of experts gained the impression that the academic staff is highly motivated and that several discussions take place concerning the profile of the programme. The professors are aware of the need to deliver an education to the students which pays considerable attention to the aspect of interlinking theory and practice.

There are procedures in place at TSU to ensure appropriate didactic qualification and training of the teaching staff. The university has strategies and mechanisms of performance promotion and staff motivation in place.

A rather strong aspect of available resources has to be mentioned: the preparation of the internship is very effective; students are well informed about the requirements and the expectations of their professors. The relation between students and teachers seems to be very good. In critical situations students benefit from personal consultation. Weak students (often due to a lack of discipline) drop out of the programme – this can also be interpreted as a sign of a good quality standard.

In general, appropriate material resources seem to be available for carrying out the programme. Facilities are appropriate in terms of room and space required for the number of students enrolled. However, the panel of experts has to state that there is a very small number of books and papers for pedagogy available in the library due to the economic conditions. The university should provide a concept on how to improve this situation within the next years (**Finding 10**).

The academic staff should be encouraged to use ICT, particularly the Moodle platform. Accordingly, more support and staff development with respect to the use of ICT should be offered by the university (**Finding 11**).

8. Quality Assurance

TSU, by the Senate decision from 27.10.2009, approved the Regulation regarding the Quality Management System (QMS). The TSU quality management system consists of university, faculty and department level structures.

At the university level, activities in the area of quality assurance is coordinated by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC). The QAC is subject to the direct control of the university rector and consists of the following members: vice-rector, the Head of the Studies section/of the Department of Quality Management, a member from each faculty (vice-dean for quality), student representatives (5 persons), and employers' representatives (1 person).

As laid down in the SER, the QAC carries out the following basic activities: evaluation of the quality of educational and research services and other services offered by TSU; elaboration of the university strategy of quality assurance and monitoring of its implementation at department, faculty, university level; monitoring of the activities of the Quality Commissions within the faculties (QCF); safeguarding the compatibility of institutional activities with international standards in the field; guaranty of the transparency of audit and internal evaluation processes; usage of the performance indicators as tools for determining the fulfilment of the functioning objectives of the quality management system

The programme is supposed to be periodically revised on the basis of questionnaires directed to students, graduates and employers' representatives.

Experts' Evaluation

The university has a strategy for quality assurance, a quality assurance council, quality related regulations, quality improvement plans and reports (for the academic years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015), all made public on the university website. There are established QA structures at Faculty level and, at department level, there is an appointed "quality manager". Nevertheless, there is no

specific provision regarding quality assurance for the part-time programme, especially regarding the control of the learning outcomes obtained with considerably more independent work of students. However, all teachers have dedicated hours for student tutoring.

The regulations approved at university level ensure the participation of all main stakeholders (teachers, students and employers) in the decision making process. The quality assurance procedures and instruments are disseminated at faculty level. Therefore, the experts may state that a quality-culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance is developing: quality assurance activities were implemented and their results used in order to improve the programmes. Moreover, specific quality indicators are used for reporting and for improvement purposes.

Student “self-governance” structures are established at all levels (reflected by specific information on the university portal) with potential for consistent feedback on multiple aspects of student life. The students were able to give examples of improved course content after feedback had been collected via satisfaction surveys among students. Nonetheless, the instruments used on the faculty level for the quality assurance of courses (especially the questionnaires) must be revised and further developed, mainly from the methodological point of view. More specific questions regarding the courses are needed instead of general questions with respect to national aspects (**Finding 12**).

All students are regularly questioned on their satisfaction regarding the courses and the usefulness of the study programme and individual courses. The feedback is collected and, according to the statements of the university professors and students, used for content improvement.

In summary, on the basis of the evidence, the experts may state that the strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality at programme level is in a development and improvement stage: more efforts are needed in order to use the feedback mechanisms, involving different stakeholders as has been described in section 6 of this report: the faculty has access to considerable feedback information from students, graduates, employers as well as other stakeholders, but this information is not fully used for programme improvement.

The information available to students and the public (on the university website) refers mainly to the content of the programme, the students’ timetable, tasks and expected results. Statistical information related to QA processes refers mainly to budget provisions and graduates’ employment.

However, the development of the quality-related information systems should include as well information related to:

- Student progression and success rates.
- Students’ satisfaction with their programmes.
- Profile of the student population.
- Evaluation of the programme by graduates.
- faculty / programme key performance indicators.
- Results of teaching-staff and course evaluation,
- *De facto* student workload.

Course/module descriptions (the intended learning outcomes, methods of learning and teaching, assessment methods, and the expected workload, self-study and presence, including internships) are available to students, mainly as printed materials (the information published on the university website is scarce – the study plan but not the course contents are published,). The programme

(including internships) is implemented in a way that allows students to complete their studies in the advertised regular course duration.

Nevertheless, there is no obvious procedure (besides Faculty and Department formal and informal meetings) to avoid overlaps and gaps in delivering individual courses.

The faculty should increase their efforts to implement quality assurance measures provided by the university and to enhance the use of feedback from different stakeholders in order to improve the programme (**Finding 12**).

9. Recommendations of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to accredit the Bachelor programme "**Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education**" (B.Ed.) offered by **Tiraspol State University**, Republic of Moldova with conditions.

Findings:

1. The **learning outcomes of the internships** and the step-by-step progression of the practical stages must be described in a more transparent manner, e.g. in the module descriptions or in an individual concept.
2. The curriculum must be updated particularly with respect to modern theories and methods of teacher education.
3. A concept should be provided on how research activities of faculty will be planned and coordinated for the next five years and how research and teaching are connected.
4. The study plan must be reviewed in a way that the different study paths become clearer, and a study plan for part-time studies must be developed.
5. The relation between the aims of the programme and the learning outcomes must be described in a transparent manner.
6. The curriculum should be structured in larger, more comprehensive modules. After that, the competence-oriented learning outcomes must be described in more detail on module-level.
7. It must be described what forms of examination are used and how they are weighed to form the final mark. It is recommended to reduce the number of exams. More comprehensive exams should be included which enable the teaching staff to assess different competences.
8. In some seminars the responsibilities between tutors and professors should be divided. Additionally, more importance should be given to the reflection of practical work applying the theoretical background.
9. The internationalisation should be strengthened in different ways: more options for mobility and more courses in English should be provided to both students and academic staff. Moreover, students should be encouraged to use more international research literature and international databases.
10. The university should provide a concept on how to improve the situation of the scientific library in the field of Pedagogy within the next years.
11. The academic staff should be further encouraged to use ICT. Accordingly, more support and staff development with respect to the use of ICT should be offered by the university.
12. The faculty should increase its efforts to implement quality assurance measures provided by the university and to enhance the use of feedback from different stakeholders in order to improve the programme. The instruments used for the quality assurance of courses on faculty level must be further developed, especially the questionnaires need revision.

AQAS

Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch
Akkreditierung von
Studiengängen