

Pursuant to Article 40 of the Statute of the University of Niš ("Official Gazette of the University of Niš" No 8/2014), the Senate of the University of Niš at its session held on 09 March 2015, adopted the following

STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ

1. INTRODUCTION: FRAMEWORK

In the light of global trends, international affirmation and competition of institutions of higher education is becoming an increasingly important aspect of daily academic life. This document has been prepared with the aim to determine the main guidelines of the internationalization of the University of Niš. Following its tradition of openness, and mindful of its international reputation, geographical position and scientific and professional potentials, the University of Niš continues to invest efforts to promote the policy of establishing amicable and constructive academic relations with universities and scientific research institutions worldwide, as well as to promote international exchange of students, teaching and administrative staff.

2. INTERNATIONALIZATION OBJECTIVES

The general and specific objectives of internationalization are determined in line with the strategic goals of the University of Niš.

2.1. GENERAL AIMS

2.1.1. More intensive inclusion of the University of Niš into the mainstream of academic cooperation in the region, Europe and the world; and

2.1.2. Training of students to operate equally well in other environments and cultures, by providing adequate:

- a) Study programs;
- b) Exchange programs for students who wish to complete part of their studies abroad;
- c) Joint programs of academic and professional studies (undergraduate, graduate, specialist and doctoral) with universities abroad;
- d) Greater engagement of prominent foreign professors and researchers, as well as an increased number of foreign students at the University of Niš;

e) Regular and proper information for the international public on vacancies for teaching positions at the University of Niš. In order to encourage the academic staff from other countries to apply for and accept teaching positions at the faculties of the University of Niš, the managements of the faculties and the University of Niš will, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, make special efforts to provide adequate conditions for their life and work at the faculties in Niš;

f) Training of the University administrative staff to work with foreign students and faculty.

2.2. SPECIFIC AIMS

2.2.1. To create ample opportunities for faculty and student exchange in order to add an international perspective to study programs and their implementation, as well as to the professional development of the teaching staff and students;

2.2.2. To forge stronger links with former students of the University of Niš who live abroad by supporting alumni associations;

2.2.3. To educate students internationally to be competent in their respective fields;

2.2.4. The University's short term objective is to ensure that in the next three years at least 3% of all students enrolled be foreigners, whereas its long term objective is 10% foreign students enrolled.

3. TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve the general and specific objectives of internationalization, the tasks and activities that should continuously be worked on in the forthcoming period are identified. Thematically, they can be grouped as follows:

- a) Promotion of the university internationalization,
- b) Improvement of study programs,
- c) Development of academic mobility programs, and
- d) Creation of synergy between education, research and innovation.

3.1. PROMOTION OF THE UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONALIZATION

3.1.1. Point to the importance and benefits of internationalization;

3.1.2. Provide adequate financial support for internationalization;

3.1.3. Enable adequate evaluation of potential partner institutions;

3.1.4. Develop institutional and organizational framework for internationalization;

3.1.5. Ensure coordination of internationalization across the University. The support of the faculties of the University of Niš shall be provided through the respective Deans' decisions on appointing one mobility coordinator from the teaching staff, as well as one person from the administrative staff;

3.1.6. Provide conditions for an easier implementation of the teaching staff mobility programs. Faculty management should support mobility programs by providing the necessary conditions (sabbatical leaves, short-term absences granted for the mobility purposes, contacts with the host university), which will facilitate the process of teaching staff mobility;

3.1.7. To ensure students the possibility of complete transfer of ECTS credits accumulated abroad during the mobility period. University, to that end, should establish clear rules for a simple recognition of exams passed at the foreign university (as stated in the Learning Agreement);

3.1.8. To promote good practice examples in the sphere of internationalization, related either to successful international projects implemented at the University of Niš, or to the work of individuals;

3.1.9. Encourage international activities at the faculties where their level is lower than expected;

3.1.10. Stimulate joint participation of different faculties in the international projects within the University of Niš;

3.1.11. Prepare young teaching and research staff for successful participation in international projects;

3.1.12. Ensure formal recognition of the participation in international activities at the election for teaching positions.

3.2. IMPROVEMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMS

3.2.1. Provide the internationalization of study programs;

3.2.2. Increase the offer of study programs in English and other foreign languages, with the ultimate goal to include all study programs;

3.2.3. Prepare students for new international professions through harmonization of the existing national with the international qualifications framework;

3.2.4. Consider the labor market situation in the region and take advantage of education in the Serbian language;

3.2.5. Develop inter-disciplinary study programs;

3.2.6. Support and further develop foreign language programs as integral part of efforts toward internationalization. This is of the utmost importance both for students (to make it easier and faster to fit into educational programs abroad), and for teachers (to enable them to conduct subject teaching in a foreign language);

3.2.7. Intensify the promotion of study programs that are realized at the University of Niš;

3.2.8. Develop and implement programs that will lead to the realization of joint and double/multiple diplomas;

3.2.9. Exploit the results of Tempus projects that have been successfully implemented to further improve teaching at all faculties (internal dissemination);

3.2.10. Use already established contacts and networks of higher education institutions in the framework of the Tempus Program to participate in the Erasmus +.

3.3. DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY PROGRAMS

3.3.1. Attract larger numbers of foreign students at all levels: undergraduate, graduate and doctoral. Carry out activities aimed at enabling the greatest possible numbers of students, academic and administrative staff to come to the University of Niš in the framework of various programs of academic mobility;

3.3.2. In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to:

- introduce and start issuing student visas for foreigners,
- provide sufficient and adequate accommodation in students' halls of residence as well as in private accommodation, through licensed agencies that will guarantee standard quality and prices of accommodation,
- provide for adequate health insurance for foreign students,
- provide adequate facilities for student's social life,
- introduce student identification card that will allow foreign students subsidized meals in student restaurants, public transportation at reduced prices, entry to the library and laboratories, and other student benefits,
- after the mobility period, issue transcripts in English and confirmation of stay at our University (to be introduced as an obligation for all faculties),
- organize summer courses and summer internship at the University of Niš for foreign students,
- introduce a centralized system of recordkeeping for foreign students at the University of Niš, which would enable follow up on their careers after they return to their home countries;

3.3.3. Offer reasonable tuition fees that would be acceptable for foreign students;

3.3.4. Provide adequate multi-functional support for foreign students to successfully complete their (entire or part of) studies at the University of Niš, through engaging younger teaching staff, administrative staff and student volunteers (help with accommodation, residence permits, enrolling specific faculty, information about procedures of health care, transportation, food, etc.);

3.3.5. Create the conditions for administrative services to be able to accommodate larger number of foreign students;

3.3.6. Provide functional and informative websites in English in all faculties and rearrange the English page of the University website. The websites should contain current catalogs of study programs with all relevant academic and logistical information (in the English language);

3.3.7. Strengthen the University International Relations Office by capacity building, in order to adequately respond to the increasing demands for incoming/outgoing of students/teachers.

3.4. CREATION OF SYNERGY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

3.4.1. Use previously acquired experience and contacts in research work for the internationalization of teaching;

3.4.2. Develop the scientific and research capacities at the University of Niš in order to raise the quality of teaching at master and doctoral studies;

3.4.3. Focus attention on the "Horizon 2020" and work on preparing companies from the region to participate in projects under this program;

3.4.4. Take on a key role in defining regional strategy of smart specialization, through participation in a rigorous assessment of the potentials of the community in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, including those originating from the University itself, as well as from local businesses, aiming to identify areas of potential growth and development;

3.4.5. Joint work with the local industry and the local community on the preparation of student projects and internship for students from abroad;

3.4.6. Cooperate with international companies which invest in the region in the development of new study programs;

3.4.7. Strengthen the operation of the Center for Technology Transfer, to make it easier to ensure commercialization of research results at the international level;

3.4.8. Encourage international mobility of personnel between the University and the economy;

3.4.9. Promote student entrepreneurship internationally.

4. CONCLUSION

The University of Niš and all its constituent faculties accept responsibility to:

4.1. Promote and sustain relations with foreign universities and international scientific and other institutions;

4.2. Represent the University and faculties in all matters involving the elements of internationalization;

4.3. Cooperate in initiating, formulation, implementation and representation of the international projects;

4.4. Identify, analyze and promote information concerning international cooperation;

4.5. Coordinate and monitor the participation of the University and faculties in academic and other networks, consortia, associations and institutions of international cooperation and update the relevant information;

4.6. Support the services in charge of international mobility of students, teaching and other staff and coordinate their activities;

4.7. Organize international conferences at the University or Faculty level, as well as visits by representatives of foreign universities and international institutions;

4.8. The faculties of the University of Niš carry out their individual international cooperation programs and provide participation in international projects in close coordination with the University.

SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ

No: 8/16-01-002/15-004

In Niš, on the date of March 3rd, 2015

PRESIDENT

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ SENATE

Prof. Dragan Antić, PhD, sgd.