



Erasmus+ Capacity-building in the Field of Higher Education

Project IHEI

Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran

Report on barriers for credit recognition and international mobility of students & academic staff

Final Version

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FH JOANNEUM - University of Applied Sciences, Graz (AT)



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1 Introduction

The first step within the IHEI project was to get an updated perspective of the current barriers for credit recognition and the international mobility of students and academic staff. Subsequently, an in-depth analysis among the Iranian partners was performed in order to identify the main bottlenecks and stakeholders involved in the process.

A needs analysis is the process of identifying and evaluating the needs of a community or another defined population of people. During the identification of needs the “problems” of a target population and possible solutions to these problems are described (Needs Analysis – University of Arizona, 2010). Within the IHEI project this analysis can be seen as the first step towards creating comparability of higher education standards among the participating countries. The project relevant information delivered by the analysis can be described as follows:

- Information which helps the consortium to define missing standards and gaps vs. the quality standards of the European Union related to internationalisation in higher education;
- Information which supports the IHEI project in understanding differences in internationalisation of higher education;
- Information that helps the consortium to understand “cultural” differences (regional, national, institutional).

In order to conduct this first analysis in a structured and coordinated way the following methodology will serve as a common guideline for the partners’ research. Thus, it will provide an overview of the Analysis Forms (questionnaires) to be filled out by the Iranian partners as well as the available research tools to be used by Iranian partners in order to collect the relevant information. The information gained from this analysis has been consolidated within a summary report (D1.1.2), together with information gained from a round table conducted during the Kick-off Meeting. The summary report will further provide



key information for the development of a White Paper for credit recognition & international HE mobility in Iran (D3.5.1).

2 Analysis Forms

The Analysis of barriers for credit recognition and international mobility of students and academic staff has been carried out using the following 4 questionnaires:

1) Needs Analysis Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves as a first tool to analyse the overall situation concerning the topic of internationalisation at Iranian HEIs.

2) Country Analysis Questionnaire

This analysis table is used for the creation of a detailed overview of the country-related differences regarding internationalisation.

3) Student & Staff Mobility Questionnaire

This questionnaire is meant to gather a deeper insight into already established processes of student and staff mobility at Iranian HEIs.

3 Research Tools

Each partner has selected appropriate research tools in order to obtain the information required by the Analysis forms prepared by UA and FH JOANNEUM. The selection is based on the fact that Iranian HEIs have different contexts and needs than European ones, which means some tools are more effective than others and the use of one single research tool was considered to be ineffective.

The following research tools were available:

- On-desk research
- Expert Interviews
- Focus Group Interviews

Partners had to collect information to complete the analysis forms, regardless of the type of tools used.

3.1 On Desk Research

On-desk research means the gathering and analysis of information that is already available either in print or online partners were asked to search for the necessary information required by the Analysis Form, either on the internet or in other printed documents prepared by their own institution, ministries, etc.

3.2 Expert Interviews

An Expert Interview is a specific form of semi-structured interview which focuses on expertise in a certain field of activity. The intent is to gain the knowledge of experts. An expert is defined as a person with a high degree of skill and knowledge in a certain domain, field or industry due to long-time experience and has status, power-to-act and decision-making opportunities based on these skills and knowledge.



Approach:

- 1.) Identify an expert to be interviewed
- 2.) Contact the expert and ask for an interview date
- 3.) Prepare a short questionnaire with the topics to be discussed
- 4.) Carry out the interview (via phone / Skype / face-to-face) and record the answers.
(Alternatively you can also prepare an Online-Questionnaire and send it to the expert)
- 5.) Prepare the answers in order to fill in the Analysis Form provided by this Methodology

3.3 Focus Group Interviews

A **focus group** is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting (preferably a round table) where participants are free to talk with other group members. Focus groups provide researchers with initial ideas during the exploratory part of a study which can be useful during the process of interpretation and evaluation of results and situations. They can also lead to the formation of further research questions.

Focus Groups are usually conducted with **5-8 participants and 2 coaches**. Concerning the participants it is recommended that a diverse group with multiple different backgrounds, a variety of experience and views on the topic is present in the meeting.

One of the coaches serves as facilitator and leads the group discussion by initiating the conversation, asking specific additional questions, passing on the word to the next participant and by taking care of the time management. The second coach takes minutes and provides support. Often focus group interviews are recorded on tape and/or filmed. This depends, however, on the willingness of the participants and whether they feel comfortable with recording and/or filming.



4 Needs Analysis Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been divided into different sections. Its main aim is to create a first level analysis in order to better define the proposal idea so that it will be interesting and useful for your institution.

1. YOUR INSTITUTIONAL DATA

1.1 CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS PROJECT	
TITLE (MS., MR., MRS...)	
FIRST NAME AND SURNAME	
INSTITUTION	
FUNCTION AT THE ORGANISATION	
TYPE OF ORGANISATION (PRIVATE, PUBLIC, NON PROFIT)	
FACULTY/DEPARTMENT	
ADDRESS (STREET, CITY/TOWN, POSTAL CODE)	
COUNTRY	
PHONE (INCLUDE COUNTRY CODE)	
FAX	
EMAIL	

1.2 STUDENTS AT YOUR INSTITUTION	
LEVEL	NUMBER
UNDERGRADUATE	NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL /
GRADUATE	NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL /
MASTER	NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL /
PHD	NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL /
TOTAL	NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL /

1.3 STAFF AT YOUR INSTITUTION	
TYPE	NUMBER
ADMINISTRATIVE	
TEACHING	
RESEARCH	
TOTAL	

1.4 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE (IRO) AT YOUR INSTITUTION	
DOES YOUR INSTITUTION HAVE AN IRO?	IF YES....
MAIN DEPENDENCY	
HIERARCHY / ORGANISATION / FLOW CHART	
MAIN SERVICES	
NUMBER & STAFF PROFILE	
ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL BUDGET (IN EURO)	
(MAIN SOURCES OF FUNDING)	
WEBSITE	
IT EQUIPMENT	

1.5 INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS WHICH YOUR INSTITUTION HAS PARTICIPATED OR IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN		
PROJECT NAME	PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER	PROJECT FUNDING PROGRAMME (EDULINK, ERAMSUS, FP7, ETC)
<i>ADD AS MANY LINES AS YOU NEED...</i>		

1.6 INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS & NETWORKS WHICH YOUR INSTITUTION IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN		
INSTITUTION/NETWORK	TOPIC	OBJECTIVE
<i>ADD AS MANY LINES AS YOU NEED...</i>		

5 Country Analysis

- What are the main challenges in the field of internationalisation in your country?
- According to your country's regulations does the University have to set up and develop a specific internationalisation policy?
- Is there any specific office/body providing internationalisation support at your institution? If yes, please provide the number of people working there and their background.
- How is internationalisation of higher education fostered in your country? Which bodies participate in this task?
- Please describe briefly the relevant current national policies to promote internationalisation of higher education.
- Does any national body offer courses or services (and produces materials such as guidelines) for University staff (academic and other) to support internationalisation activities?
- Which other actors do you see as relevant in the internationalisation of higher education (in addition to the competent authorities in your country)?
- How relevant is the proposed project idea for the improvement of your national policies and for regional cooperation in the internationalisation of higher education?



6 Internal Internationalisation Policies at your Institution

- **Is “internationalisation” part of your institutional mission and strategy? (Yes/No)**
 - If yes, please specify when this was first mentioned in your institutional strategy (if available, please include an extract of the text containing it).

- **Are there formal regulations and incentives (in addition to the national ones), indicators and specific criteria regulating internationalisation at your institution? (Yes/No)**
 - If yes, please describe them

- **What are the main difficulties and obstacles in internationalisation of higher education at your institution?**

- **Financial issues and internal bureaucracy**



7 Student & Staff Mobility Questionnaire

Part I – Outgoing International Students

1. Are there any of your students studying at a foreign HEI (e.g. some months, one term, one year etc.)? If yes, what is the percentage of your students studying abroad (during the past study year)?

2. Please list the (main) HEIs / countries your students studied abroad and describe in short why your students chose this university for a study abroad.

Name of HEI	Country	Reasons why HEI is chosen by students

3. Does your university have any contractual agreements with the foreign universities your students studied abroad? If yes, please describe the issues that are regulated within the contract.

4. Does your university actively support your students for their study abroad? Please indicate HOW the students are supported regarding the following issues and WHO is responsible for the support:		
	HOW are you supporting your students for their study abroad? Please describe the process.	WHO is supporting? (e.g. teaching staff, administrative staff, a special office, any external, etc.)
Visa process support in the application for a visa in the foreign country		
Travel and accommodation organization of travel and housing facilities for the stay abroad, payment of costs for travelling and housing		
Payment of study fees at the foreign university (if applicable)		
Choice of relevant courses selection of relevant courses for the student to be recognized at his home university		

Part II – Incoming International Students

1. What is the percentage of international students studying at your University (think about the past study year)?

2. Please list the (main) HEIs / countries your international students are coming from and describe in short why you think that these students choose your university for their study abroad.		
Name of HEI	Country	Reasons why international students choose your university



3. Does your university have any contractual agreements with the foreign HEIs your international students are coming from? If yes, which issues are regulated within the contracts?

4. Is your university offering any support to incoming international students? Please indicate HOW the students are supported regarding the following issues and WHO is responsible for the support:

	HOW are you supporting incoming international students? Please describe the process.	WHO is supporting? (e.g. teaching staff, administrative staff, a special office, any external, etc.)
Visa process support in the application for a visa in Iran		
Travel and accommodation organization of travel and housing facilities for the stay in Iran, payment of costs for travelling and housing		
Payment of study fees at Iranian University (if applicable)		
Choice of relevant courses selection of relevant courses for the student to be recognized at his home university		



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Part III – Higher Education Staff Exchange

1. Does your university have experience with the international exchange of staff (teacher, researcher, administrative) between universities? If yes, please provide some numbers in percentages.

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2. Please list the (main) HEIs / countries you already exchanged some staff with.

Name of HEI	Country	Reasons why university is chosen for staff exchange

3. Does your university have any contractual agreements with the foreign HEIs you exchanged staff with? If yes, please describe the issues that are regulated by the contract.

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4. Is your university offering any support to incoming or outgoing international staff?

	HOW are you supporting? Please describe the process.	WHO is supporting? (e.g. teaching staff, administrative staff, a special office, any external, etc.)
Visa process support in the application for a visa		
Travel and accommodation organization of travel and housing facilities for the stay, payment of costs for travelling and housing		

8 Results of the Need Analysis

8.1 Total number of graduated students

LEVEL	P4-ATU		P5-Shiraz		P6-FU Mashad		P7-Sistan Baluchestan		P8-Kurdistan		P9-Chamran Ahvaz	
	NUMBER		NUMBER		NUMBER		NUMBER		NUMBER		NUMBER	
	National	International	National	International	National	International	National	International	National	International	National	International
Undergraduate (bachelor)	6325	53	2040	0	12000	500	0	0	6500	0	10432	80
Graduate	0	0	2072	0	0	0	7782	0	2590	0	0	0
Master	6417	15	1628	0	6000	300	3606	0	2300	0	3577	0
PhD	1837	14	444	0			580	0	290	0	1140	0
TOTAL	14579	82	6184	0	18000	850	11968	0	11680	0	15149	80

This table shows that international students have graduated from two out of six universities.

8.2 International Relations Office

All the universities have an International Relations Office (IRO).

	P4-ATU	P5-Shiraz	P6-FU Mashad	P7-Sistan Baluchestan	P8-Kurdistan	P9-Chamran Ahvaz
NUMBER & STAFF PROFILE	12	4	6	1	2	3
Annual institutional budget (in EURO)	75.0000	15.000	na	na	na	na
Main sources of funding	University Budget	Government	Government	Ministry of science, Research and Technology	Ministry of Science, Research and technology	Government

Main services of the IROs:

- ✓ Internationalisation of the university
- ✓ International academic cooperation
- ✓ Academic activities
- ✓ Signing of Memoranda of Understanding with foreign universities
- ✓ Affairs related to international students
- ✓ Sending/receiving staff and students, international academic collaboration
- ✓ Internationalisation of the university by forming scientific research agreements with foreign universities / educational institutes, organisations and individuals; processing foreign student applications and providing services to international students; national and international promotion of USB presence; consular issues for foreign guests and students; providing employment and study certificates
- ✓ Organization of sabbatical of academics and PhD students
- ✓ International Conferences

8.3 International Agreements and Networks

1) *Agreements of Allameh Tabataba'i University with universities from Armenia, India, China, France and Turkey*

Topic

Memorandum of Understanding on Scientific-research, cooperation between Allameh Tabataba'i University and other universities.

Objectives

- ✓ To exchange scientific periodicals
- ✓ To exchange articles to be published in the related periodicals
- ✓ To publish joint books and periodicals
- ✓ To provide facilities meant for collaboration in scientific activities including but not limited to facilities provided for sabbatical purposes
- ✓ To exchange professors and students for the purpose of educational /research studies
- ✓ To hold specialized conferences and carry out joint scientific research
- ✓ To provide facilities required for sabbaticals
- ✓ To collaborate in the development of academic courses
- ✓ To exchange experiences in various scientific and research fields

2) *Agreements of Shiraz University with other universities*

Topic

Memorandum of Understanding, cooperation between University of Shiraz and other universities.

Objectives

- ✓ Exchange of students

3) *Co-operations of Ferdowsi University of Mashad in the field of IFUIW, IAU and COMSTECH*

Objectives

- ✓ Active participation in the Federation of the Universities of Islamic World
- ✓ Cooperation mainly in IT

4) Agreements of University of Kurdistan with Universities from Iraq, Japan and Finland

Topic

Cooperation agreements, Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement for Academic Exchange and Cooperation

Objectives

- ✓ Teaching and research cooperation and academic staff and student exchange
- ✓ Academic cooperation and exchange
- ✓ Cooperation in education and scientific research
- ✓ Academic exchange and cooperation in education and research
- ✓ Academic and cultural interchange in education, research and other activities

5) Agreements of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

Objectives

- ✓ Educational, Research and Technological Cooperation

8.4 International Projects of the Universities

1) *Ferdowsi University of Mashad*

- ✓ EIIY SALAM2 (Erasmus Mundus)

2) *University of Sistan Baluchestan*

- ✓ ERASMUS+

3) *University of Kurdistan (ERASMUS+)*

- ✓ Mineral Chemistry of Silicate and Sulfide in Porphyry Deposits of Iran
- ✓ PGES in Porphyry Copper Deposits of Iran
- ✓ Petroleum Geology and Geochemistry Research Centre
- ✓ Evaluation and Geochemical Modelling of Source Rocks, as well as Hydrocarbon Present in Different Reservoirs of Dashte Abadan, NW Persian Gulf
- ✓ In Silico Search, Characterization and Validation of New EST-SSR Markers in Prunus
- ✓ Abiotic Stress Adaptation in Prunus L. spp.: Drought, Salinity, Cold Hardness: Biochemical, Breeding, Molecular and Genomics Foundation



- ✓ Association Mapping of Quantitative and Qualitative Traits, Genetic Diversity, Population Structure, and Relationships with Agronomic Traits in Rice Germplasm from North Region of Iran and World Core Germplasm Set

8.5 Main Challenges in the field of Internationalisation

- ✓ Infrastructural obstacles such as bureaucratic processes in contact with ministries
- ✓ Lack of Knowledge in English
- ✓ International students need to know Persian to study in Iran
- ✓ Credit Recognition System to assess student's records acquired abroad
- ✓ Political instability in the region and until recently economic sanctions placed on Iran
- ✓ Lack of consciousness of the need for internationalisation
- ✓ Mistrust in foreign parties/ organisations/ individuals – suspicious view of all things foreign
- ✓ Inappropriate management
- ✓ Financial problems
- ✓ Lack of experience and expertise in the field of internationalisation
- ✓ International relationships of the country
- ✓ Language of Instruction (Persian by constitution)
- ✓ Academic staff having no knowledge or motivation for internationalisation

8.6 Specific Office/Body providing Internationalisation Support

- ✓ Ministry of Foreign Affairs: main body of the government which has international relations
- ✓ Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT)
- ✓ Islamic culture and relations organization: tries to expand cultural relations with various nations and communities in general



- ✓ International Relation Office in Shiraz University (since 2002). There are four employees responsible for international students and guests, as well as assigning MoU for further cooperation with foreign universities.
- ✓ Iranian MSRT has set up an administration skilled in the internationalisation of academic activities for all Iranian universities.
- ✓ International Affairs and University Cooperation Office Council including the University Chancellor and the Director of International Affairs.
- ✓ International Relations and Scientific Cooperation (IRSC) Office Council including the University Chancellor, Vice Chancellors and Head of IRSC Office.
- ✓ Office of International and Scientific Cooperation which is responsible for providing internationalisation support. At this institution the director and three employees are active

8.7 How is Internationalisation of Higher Education fostered?

- ✓ The office of international academic cooperation tries to provide sabbatical leaves for graduate students and professors.
- ✓ The Directorate of international academic cooperation invites international professors and lecturers to the university to present courses for students.
- ✓ The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology signs MoUs with Ministries of Science of other countries to create international programmes
- ✓ The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Iran, in addition to supervising the activities of all universities in Iran, encourages them to move toward the internationalisation of higher education in Iran.
- ✓ The Centre for International Scientific Cooperation (CISC) at the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology actively promotes the internationalisation of higher education by holding regular meetings inviting heads of international relations offices to discuss relevant problems and promote international academic agreements.



- ✓ The Centre for International Scientific Studies and Collaboration (CISSC) at the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology
- ✓ Internationalisation is an integral part of the current and future plans and policies of Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran. The Office of International and Scientific Cooperation at the Ministry is responsible for devising and implementing these policies for the Ministry and the universities.

8.8 Current National Policies promoting the Internationalisation of Higher Education

- ✓ **For the purpose of internationalisation universities sign memoranda:**
 - To provide facilities meant for collaboration in scientific activities including but not limited to facilities provided for sabbatical purposes
 - To exchange professors and students for the purpose of implementing educational /research studies
 - To hold specialized conferences and to carry out joint scientific research
 - To provide facilities required for sabbaticals
 - To collaborate in the development of academic courses

- ✓ **MSRT and centre of international collaborations:**
 - Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT) promotes international scientific- academic agreements
 - MSRT funds international fellowships allowing PhD students to spend 6 to 9 months in a foreign academic institute for research purposes
 - Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT) promotes international scientific academic agreements

In Dr. Rouhani's administration great efforts have been undertaken for the easing of tensions and strained relations with the international community; accordingly,

internationalisation has become the focus of both the Iranian economy and education system. One of the key policies in the Fifth Development Programme of the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology is the internationalisation of the education system encouraging universities to establish relations with foreign universities.

- ✓ **Actors who are responsible for the internationalisation process of higher education:**
 - Security Forces
 - Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs
 - Iranian Consulates Abroad
 - Local Governments
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- ✓ **The following institutions are responsible for the internationalisation process in Iran:**
 - Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT)
 - Centre of international collaborations.
 - The Office of International and Scientific Cooperation in the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology

8.9 Internationalisation Policy at Universities

Allameh Tabataba'i University: The Directorate of international academic cooperation was established in 1984 and the internationalisation policy and strategy have been applied since October 2013.

Shiraz University: Internationalisation as an objective of the University resulted in the establishment of an International Relations Office in 2002.



Ferdowsi University of Mashad: The FUM mission agenda for development prepared 8 years ago included the target of becoming rank 500 amongst the world universities within the next 5 years. Its achievement has been monitored closely.

University of Sistan Baluchestan: No written documentation.

University of Kurdistan: University Strategic Plans and Mission Statement are mentioned in the UOK brochure

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz: No written documentation.

8.9.1 **Formal regulations and incentives, indicators and specific criteria regulating internationalisation?**

- ✓ There are some crucial incentives for the university such as: international students, international articles and publications, a high index to the publications of university
- ✓ The university as a public and non-profit institution should follow national regulations, it is worth mentioning that Shiraz University aims to use all its capacity to move toward
- ✓ FUM has in many ways set regulations and has offered incentives for academic staff to participate in international activities. The majority of current academic staff have graduated from top US and European universities and are usually highly motivated to keep academic ties as alumni.

8.9.2 **Difficulties and obstacles**

- ✓ Low correlation between professors of university and International professors
- ✓ Financial issues and internal bureaucracy
- ✓ There are some ministry regulations as well as some on institutional levels which have to be met. There are some conceptual differences in the way humanities are taught and researched here and at other universities. The language still remains a



challenge for internationalisation. The education system at Iranian universities shows major differences to that of European ones.

- ✓ Lack of appropriate technological infrastructure i.e. lack of IT resources, lack of high-speed Internet connections etc.
- ✓ Lack of administrative staff at the International Relations Office.
- ✓ No formal training in international relations development or skills needed for implementing internationalisation of higher education
- ✓ Negative attitude of people in authority and academic staff who are not fully aware of the importance of internationalisation and their lack of support
- ✓ Lack of administrative staff at the International Relations Office, currently just one.
- ✓ International relationships of the country
- ✓ Staff and academic have no knowledge and motivation for internationalisation



9 Outgoing International Students

9.1 Students studying abroad

Allameh Tabataba'i University

During the last academic year a total of 75 students were sent to study abroad, which constitutes 0.44 percent of the 17000 students at this university. The main reasons why they choose to study abroad are a good collaboration, good facilities and a good knowledge ability. In many cases the university has signed memoranda of understanding which clarify the conditions for joint activities. There is no problem if students want to study at universities without a MoU. The conditions will be clarified through correspondence. Students are supported by the IRO which facilitates their visa application by providing them with the necessary recommendation letters. Additionally students are supported in their travels and accommodation in order to enable them to attend workshops, conferences, sabbaticals or scientific visits. There is financial support if students have to pay study fees. The IRO department consult with faculty members to select a set of suitable courses for outgoing students.

Shiraz University

Almost 10% of the PhD students are going abroad for 6 to 12 months. They study mainly in Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, USA, UK and Canada. The main reason why this countries have been chosen are good collaboration, good facilities and knowledge ability. Almost 50 memoranda of understanding with foreign universities have been signed and one of the main issues are student exchanges. The IRO issues certificates showing that the visa applicant is a student of the university and he/she will return after completing the studies in a foreign country. Travel and accommodation are paid for by the students themselves, but they are reimbursed for the costs by the Iranian government (Ministry of Science, Research and Technology). Study fees are not paid by the university. Relevant courses are usually promoted at the home university before students depart.



Ferdowsi University of Mashad

Currently there are no students studying abroad. The IRO issues certificates indicating that they are full-time students and they support the visa process with all the necessary documents. Travelling and accommodation costs of PhD students are financed for 6 months by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. There is no financial support for study fees.

University of Sistan Baluchestan

Currently there are no students studying abroad. The IRO supports students in the visa application process. The Vice Chancellor of the Research Office confirms the allocation of grants. Travelling and accommodation costs are financed by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. If study fees exist, they must be paid by the students. The relevant courses for the students are selected by experts of the university.

University of Kurdistan

Less than 1% of the students study abroad. The students study mainly in France, Germany and Brazil. The main reason why they choose to study abroad is the expertise of the university. The IRO supports the students in the visa application process. The Vice Chancellor of the Research Office confirms the allocation of grants. The Vice Chancellorship of Research finances travelling and accommodation costs. If study fees exist, they must be paid by the students.

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

1% of the students study abroad (12 out of 1140 PhD student). The students study mainly in Italy, Spain, USA, Sweden, France and Finland. The main reasons why they choose to study abroad are professors who have expertise in the relevant fields, modern lab facilities and the projects in Iran are time consuming. There is an agreement with the University of Picardi Jules Verne, France. The university has signed an agreement for a joint electronic doctorate programme, and two PhD students conducted their research at that university. The IRO supports students in administrative issues. Students receive their costs before their trip (accommodation & travelling) by the ministry. There is no financial support for study fees. Their Iranian supervisor advises and helps them to choose the best foreign advisor based on their research.



10 Incoming International Students

10.1 Foreign students studying in Iran

Allameh Tabataba'i University

In this period, ATU offered education to 193 foreign students. In many cases the university has signed memoranda of understanding which clarify the conditions for joint activities. There is no problem if students want to study at the Allameh Tabataba University without a MoU. The conditions will be clarified through correspondence. Students are supported by the IRO which facilitates their visa application by providing them with the necessary invitation letters. The university provides accommodations for the foreign students. Students have to pay tuition fees by their own and they are free to choose the courses they need.

Shiraz University

1.5% of the students are international students mainly coming from Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Mali, Dubai and Turkey. Reasons why international students choose to study in Iran are: good collaborations, facilities, knowledge ability and cultural similarities. One of the main issues is to sign MoU in order to run students exchange. The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology is responsible for visa issues for foreign students. Concerning accommodation and travel costs we can divide students into 3 groups. Students who own a scholarship from the Iranian government, travel and accommodation are organized by the Iranian government. Students who use MoU, the travel costs are paid by their government but the accommodation is organized by the University of Shiraz. The third group of students are not financed by any institution and they have to cover the expenditures by their own.

Ferdowsi University of Mashad

5% of the students are international students mainly from Iraq, Afghanistan, UK and Germany. Reasons why international students choose to study in Iran are: well recognized universities



and good Persian teaching skills and skills in theology. The university offers postgraduate programmes, group enrollment tuition fee discounts, exchange and mobility services. The office of international students, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are responsible for visa issues. The office of international students is responsible for the accommodation arrangements.

University of Sistan Baluchestan:

0% of the students are international students. The IRO is responsible for all the administrative issues of foreign students.

University of Kurdistan:

Currently there are no information how many international students study at university of Kurdistan. The students are mainly coming from Iraq and Kurdistan. Reasons why international students choose to study in Iran are: geographical proximity, high standard of scientific knowledge, lacks in their own universities and common language and culture. The University has 5 agreements with universities from north Iraq. The main cooperations are in the field of exchange of students, academic knowledge and research, split-side or joint PhD programmes, and student scholarships. For visa issues the IRO applies on behalf of the students to the student organisation, Consular Section. The IRO and Scientific Cooperation Office provide students accommodations. The students pay their own fees unless they have a scholarship.

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

0,57% of the students are international students and are mainly coming from Iraq. Reasons why international students choose to study in Iran are: culture & language and geographical proximity. The university has signed agreements with the universities: Basra (Iraq), Nant, Picardi Jules Verne (France), Montan in Leoben (Austria), Oslo (Norway) and Aidin (Turkey). The main objectives are to: 1) to exchange students in the areas of mutual interest consistent with regulations of both countries, 2) To facilitate the visit of academic members, researchers, students of both universities, 3) To provide the facilities for participation of students in sport competitions. For visa issues the IRO sends the relevant documents such as ID & Graduation



Certificate copy, etc. to the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology and then to the Foreign Ministry.

10.2 Higher Education Staff Exchange

Allameh Tabataba'i University

The university has exchanged many academic staff with foreign universities. In the last academic year, 18 academic staff went abroad to teach in foreign universities, that considering the total number of ATU's academic staff (450) is about 4 percent. In the same period, 42 faculty members came to ATU for teaching reasons. In many cases the university has signed memoranda of understanding which clarify the conditions for joint activities. There is no problem if students want to study at universities without a MoU. The conditions will be clarified through correspondence. The IRO provide the staff with necessary letters. Travel and accommodation costs depend on the conditions which have been agreed in the MoU's.

Shiraz University

There is an exchange of academic staffs. The staffs normally teach Persian Language. Incoming staffs are sharing their knowledge with the academic staff and students. The staff exchange has been in the following countries: Turkey, France, Oman, Italy, South Africa, Canada and USA. The following issues are supported by the IRO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: filling out the forms and sending them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to issue the visa for incoming staff. To issue an English certificate showing that the visa applicant is a staff of the university and he/she will return after completing the research and teaching in a foreign country. For invited staff the university pays all the costs. For outgoing staff the university pays their salaries.

Ferdowsi University of Mashad

For research reasons 30 persons per year are awarded for sabbatical. They apply for at least 6 months at a reputable university. The staff exchange has been in the following countries:



Canada, Sweden, Italy, USA and Australia. Reasons why staff choose those countries, because they are mainly graduated from those countries. The university offers visiting fellow, research position and sabbatical to foreign HEIs. The IRO and MSRT support in the visa process. The university facilitates the accommodation for the incoming staff.

University of Sistan Baluchestan

There has been an exchange of 6 staffs. The staff exchange has been in the following countries: Pakistan and Malaysia. The reason is because a MoU has been signed with universities of those countries. The University has scientific – academic agreements with 35 universities. In all academic staff exchange is mentioned for teaching from Pakistan and Malaysia. The IRO handles all the visa applications and organizes the travel arrangements. In some cases the accommodation is for free.

University of Kurdistan

The University of Kurdistan has scientific – academic agreements with 8 universities (5 with Iraq, 2 with Japan, and 1 with Finland) but so far there has not been any exchange of staff. There has been instances of short mutual visits paid by academic staff as per the terms of the agreements as well as international workshops, seminars and conferences.

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz

There is no staff exchange.



11 Appendix - Observation Sessions in Graz

11.1 Foreword

Within the first work package of the IHEI project an observation session for IRO Staff level was conducted at FH JOANNEUM (Graz, Austria) with the aim of discussing different internationalisation practices and managerial skills, facilitate peer learning and create leadership at the IRO level through an observation session during the visit of Iranian HEI's IRO staff to FHJ.

The main purpose of this observation session report is to summarise the main learning outcomes of Iranian partners, specifically with regards to HEI internationalisation strategies, initial constrains insights at micro-level (IRO) by Iranian partners. Data on training needs detected through discussions with top-management level staff from Iranian HEIs will be collected for upcoming activities/trainings (WP2). Furthermore, the main result expected is the transfer of good practice, innovative ideas on how to incorporate international relations as an integral part of institutional strategy and policy. For this, discussions of European HEIs internationalisation support models, practical presentations of EU partners' experiences, and exchange of initial insights and institutional constrains by Iranian partners should facilitate the creation of a basis for the development of institutional strategies on internationalisation.

Different aspects are to be detailed in this report by the partner institutions as presented thereafter:

- Please describe what you consider **your main learning outcomes** of your participation in the visit in Graz;
- Identify **the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices** at Graz you observed during the meetings, such as those related to new approaches or methods, engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.;
- Identify **aspects** that sound **interesting** to you, but will **probably not be feasible to be implemented** in your university setting;

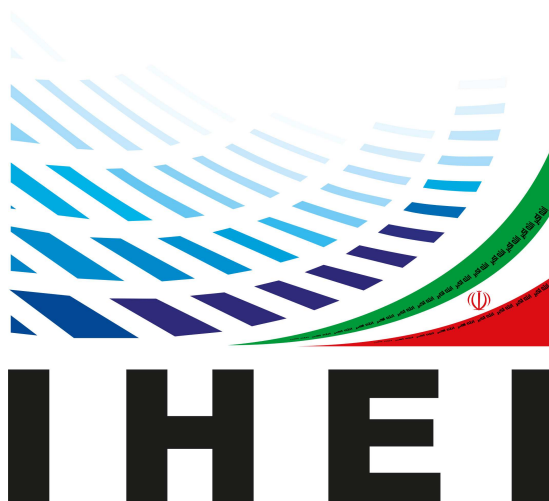


- In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a **'good practice'**, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be **applicable** in your setting and why as well as how you would implement them;
- Please stipulate **your 'good practice'** explaining which of them **should not be removed** as well as the ones that could and should be **improved**.

In the following sections information about the two days observation session will be given in order to get a good overview of the most important issues discovered.



11.2 Shahid Chamran University (SCU)



TEMPLATE

Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Capacity Building
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	27 th – 29 th April 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for IRO Staff level
Partner	Shahid Chamran University_SCU

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- Please describe what you consider **your main learning outcomes** of your participation in the visit in Graz;
 - Familiarizing with the concept of internationalisation of higher education
 - The role of R&D in the internationalisation of universities and the profit generated from activities and projects conducted by R&D center.
 - Mobility strategy for outgoing and incoming students
 - Massive Open Online Courses as internationalisation strategy
 - Diverse Study programmes for international students
 - Challenges an institute face internationalisation

- Identify **the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices** at Graz you observed during the meetings, such as those related to new approaches or methods, engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.;
 - International mobility programmes
 - Developing study programmes
 - Marketing strategy plan
 - MOOCs as a part of internationalisation strategy

- Identify **aspects** that sound **interesting** to you, but will **probably not be feasible to be implemented** in your university setting;
 - Part of the student familiarizing process with the new environment like Buddy-system service
 - Diversifying study programme

- In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a **'good practice'**, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which

features could be **applicable** in your setting and why as well as how you would implement them;

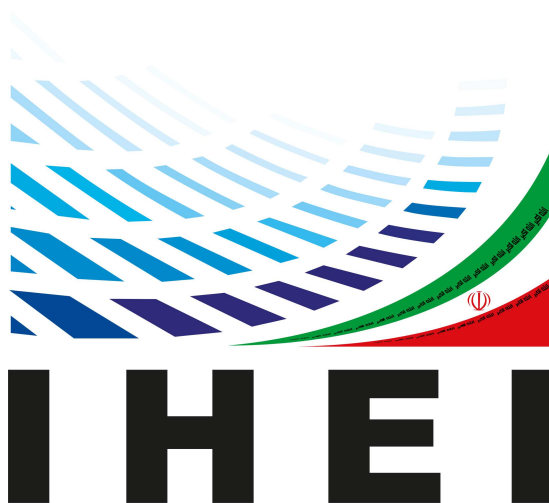
- The process of admission of students and socialization: the orientation programme, language programme, social event, Tandem programme
 - MOOCs: we can organize some online courses in a setting where we have a competitive advantage. That means we can choose the topics and issues which our university staff have expertise on.
- Please stipulate **your 'good practice'** explaining which of them **should not be removed** as well as the ones that could and should be **improved**.
 - We have an R&D centre at our university without international activities. This centre does company consulting projects. So we can improve its activity and become involved in international projects.
 - Providing good facilities for our international students.

Conclusions

The main conclusion we can reach via this observation is that the internationalisation of higher education is a systematic process that cannot be implemented without recognizing the strengths and weakness of an institute. Also it is necessary to find a suitable model for internationalisation at each university that forms a perfect match with the specific conditions every university faces. So developing a good strategic and marketing plan should be the priority of our university.



11.3 Shiraz University (SU)



TEMPLATE Observation Session Report IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Capacity Building
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	27 th – 29 th April 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for IRO Staff level
Partner	Shiraz University _ SU

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Graz**
 - The presentation by Thomas Schmalzer on “internationalisation and research through EU funded projects” was one of the most useful speeches and it really showed us how to maximize our chances of funding in different projects.
 - The presentation by Christian Fiedl was also useful and introduced us to the MOOCs and COPE15 project which aimed at attracting a large sum of students with very low costs.
- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Graz you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - One of the subjects which caught our attention after the Graz meeting was the role of marketing in internationalisation and how branding can help the promotion of universities as one of the main focuses for internationalisation. We believe that this is an interesting topic to look into.
 - As mentioned earlier, maximizing the chances of funding for different projects was something useful we achieved during this programme.
- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - The MOOCs plan for attracting a large number of students with low costs was very interesting but the scales of academic procedures is somewhat different to that of Europe and will probably face some difficulties in their implementation in Iranian universities. This programme is mostly an answer to high costs in universities but it doesn't give a powerful solution

for promotional difficulties which is mainly what Iranian universities lack in their internationalisation process.

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a ‘good practice’, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**
 - The greatest problem that most Iranian universities face in their internationalisation process is promotion and not being able to fully introduce themselves to the outside world. All strategies that are in any way related to commercial issues can be of interest in the internationalisation process of these universities.
 - Issues concerning funding are very crucial to all universities and especially Iranian universities. It seems that the strategies for maximizing funds for internationalisation procedures can help many Iranian universities and especially us.
- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - One of the major focal points of our internationalisation team at the university is the teamwork found between all members which is perceivably a point of strength especially in the internationalisation office.
 - It seems that all subjects pertaining to commercial and promotional issues such as branding and marketing can have many positive impacts on the internationalisation process of our university.

Conclusions

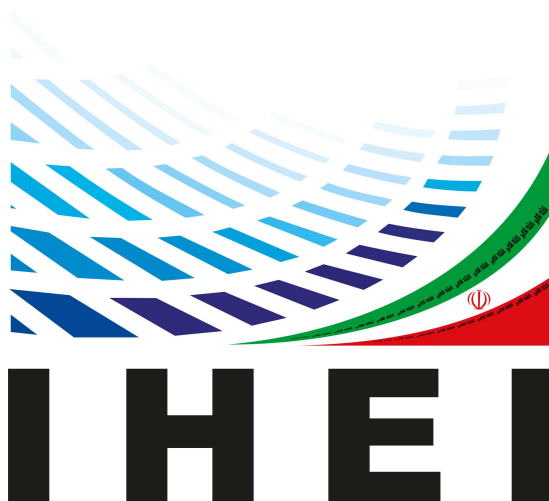
The Graz meeting was very useful in some ways and not so powerful in others. Some lectures were very informing, as mentioned earlier, and really satisfied all group members. On the other hand, some visits were clearly a waste of time and it seemed that even in some cases they were fit in just to fill out the plan and there were no significant connection with the intended topic and the place visited. For instance, the visit we had to the Pedagogical University of Graz had nothing to do with



internationalisation and many of the members thought that this was even underestimating the team in a way. But the visit was good and there were clearly efforts made and we are truly thankful for every one of them.



11.4 University of Kurdistan (UoK)



TEMPLATE Observation Session Report IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Capacity Building
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	27 th – 29 th April 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for IRO Staff level
Partner	University of Kurdistan_UOK

The observation sessions for IRO Staff level were conducted in Graz (Austria) between 27th and 29th April, 2016. The partner who held the study visit was FH JOANNEUM. The University of Kurdistan delegation included Dr Abdollah Hassanzadeh (Head of International Relations), Prof. Nematollah Azizi (Academic Staff – Department of Educational Sciences) and Ms Lamiah Hashemi (Senior International Relations Administrative Officer).

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Graz.**
 - Initially, an understanding of the Austrian city of Graz in terms of its geography, history, demographics, culture as well as the higher educational system was gained.
 - The interconnectedness of the higher educational system in Austria which is almost non-existent in the Iranian higher educational system. The various higher educational institutes visited and those not visited had either cooperation agreements or some form of collaboration between them. Furthermore, there was much collaboration between the various faculties at FH Joanneum through different departments and faculties working on common projects. There was a sense that the university worked as a whole unit and not as separate, disconnected entities. This was also evident via the multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary degree programmes
 - Close link with industry and student employability were shown to be crucial factors for universities in Graz and Austria and particularly FH Joanneum. These factors were not only important for the sustainability of universities through gaining financial support but enhanced the visibility of universities on a national and international level.

- Language barriers must be broken down in order to become internationalized. Universities in Austria with only German based courses did not have any international students nor collaborated much on an international scale. This was exemplified by the Institute of General Subjects in Secondary Teacher Education which had no international students and even its Chancellor was not aware why the six delegations from Iran would want to visit their university. Furthermore, students at the aforementioned university could only apply for mobility at the institute where they are registered and their curriculum did not have any mandatory international elements.
- Although the website of OEAD (Austrian agency for international mobility and cooperation in education, science and research) contained many opportunities for international students to study and collaborate on research projects in Austria, the representative speaker did not convey this and all questions by the Iranian delegation were met with a non-response of “it is not in my pay grade to answer your questions”. This led to the conclusion that the representative either did not have an understanding of internationalisation or felt a need for it.
- The funding opportunities offered by the European Union for international projects as well as studying globally which in Iran is not taken advantage of.
- Educational conferences (e.g. EAIE, NAFSA, APAIE) important for finding prospective partners for bilateral cooperation agreements.
- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Graz you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - **MOOCs**- diversity and variety of MOOCs is not realized by other formats of learning. It encourages contributions and participation by a vast number of learners/ participants. MOOCs tailor courses to company needs or can offer

consultancy services on projects. In addition, zero investment in marketing is needed and relatively low cost to set up.

- **Student and Staff Mobility-** this was mostly in the form of short exchange programmes, observation programmes (for incoming mobility at the Medical Sciences University – International Hospital Management course), double degree programmes and degree programmes offered in English achieved through bilateral cooperation agreements. Moreover, some degree programmes having a mandatory exchange semester e.g. for all bachelor students at FHJ and some Master’s programmes (MA Business in Emerging Markets).
- **Double Degree Programmes** with long-standing and trustworthy partners and 100% acknowledgement of courses at both institutes.
- **Degree Programmes geared toward Entrepreneurial Functions and Practiced-based Education.** This needs close links with industry which FHJ were very successful at.
- **International Projects and Funding from Europe.** The opportunities for research and education offered by the European Commission, in such programmes as Erasmus+, are varied and wide and needs to be explored by Iranian higher educational systems. In addition the know-how of writing research proposals is needed for the Iranian partners in this project in order to be successful. FHJ present 40 research proposals to the European Union per year and only a small percentage are successful. However, it is a good source of income for universities.
- **International Office at FHJ-** well organized and active. **Orientation Programmes** a week before start of course, **Buddy system, Intercultural evenings, events and certificate, City Trips, Study Abroad Fair, International Cooking Festival and Cookbook, Intensive German Language Programmes, Signposting** and **general physical environment** of the office was very easy to understand and friendly, and **Mentoring Programmes** all evidence of the importance of the internationalisation and international community at FHJ and the wider society.

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting.**
 - **Student Mobility** – this might be difficult to implement due to financial limitations of our students almost all of whom are not in employment or financially independent. Other reasons include religious and cultural restrictions especially in regards to female students, wider political and economic sanctions against Iran and visa restrictions.
 - **MOOCs**- it is a relatively novel concept and at UOK do not have the necessary IT infrastructure for having MOOC or similar programmes. Furthermore, the unstructured learning process with informal exchanges and edutainment is opposed to the traditionalist Iranian higher education system. Other problems of implementing MOOCs in Iran and in particular the University of Kurdistan is unwillingness of staff who are not very technology oriented in implementing such a learning programme as it is something novel and difficult to track individual learning outcomes and all learners do not achieve the same learning effect.
 - **Double Degree Programmes.** For this to occur, accreditation systems of our university need to fit in with systems at overseas partner universities. Moreover, the language of teaching would need to be in English and at the moment, the official language of teaching in Iran is still Persian.
 - **Degree Programmes geared toward entrepreneurial functions and practice-based education.** This would need a close link with industry which UOK does not have mainly because industrial plants are almost non-existent in Kurdistan Province.
- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a 'good practice', which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**

- All of the above are “good practices” and could be applied to the University of Kurdistan but the university needs to take gigantic leaps in changing its own managerial, administrative structures and viewpoints as well as improving its basic IT and non-IT infrastructures. There has to be a systemized and organized way of adopting and implementing its internationalisation goals. More academic collaborative partners need to be found and agreements signed in order to carry out student/ staff mobilities and joint degree and research programmes. Moreover, our accreditation systems need to be recognized on an international level. International projects with European funding is an area that the University of Kurdistan is very interested in and aims to explore vigorously. Link to industry is a very important aspect of learning and UOK is keen to take explore this area. The knowledge for the last two mentioned points need to be gained through workshops provided by our European partners in how to start the process of linking to industry, write successful research proposals, market our university and advertise our programmes and services.
- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved.**
 - **Academic Staff Mobility / PhD Student Mobility.** Need to make staff and students aware of research and educational opportunities available in Europe and the rest of the world and encourage them to take advantage.
 - **Cooperation Agreements.** Currently, MOU signed are with universities in neighborhood country of Iraq, Japan and one inactive in Finland. UOK needs to widen its cooperation agreements with universities in Europe, Asia and the rest of the world by starting a systematic way contacting overseas universities with common interests, attending international educational fares to make our presence known and creating an informative and easy to use website (currently under construction) that have similar.



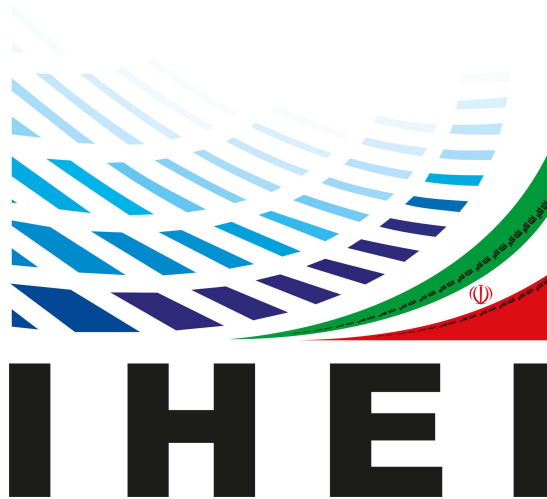
- **International Projects.** To explore the wider international research and educational opportunities and attempting to get funding for research projects from such programmes as Erasmus+.
- **UOK International Relations Office.** Currently, under-staffed and as such difficult to implement some of the ideas stipulated in the presentation by FHJ International Relations Office. The buddy system could be used to help with understaffing issues.

Conclusions

Overall, the observation sessions for IRO Staff level conducted at FH JOANNEUM in Graz, Austria offered an interesting window to various good practices of internationalisation. The organisers were extremely welcoming, friendly, and helpful and made our time at FHJ enjoyable by incorporating in the intensive workshops programme cultural activities like a walking tour of the city. Some of the presentations, especially ones regarding MOOCs, International Office of FHJ and by the Medical Sciences University transferred well the knowledge of good practices and innovative ideas on how to incorporate international relations as an integral part of institutional strategy and policy. However, the workshops were felt to be too intensive and to some extent either not very relevant (i.e. Institute of General Subjects in Secondary Teacher Education) or helpful (i.e. OAED). Furthermore, some of the presentations were too general and did not give specifics on how to begin implementing the good practices (i.e. how to write research proposals, to do marketing or advertisements).



11.5 Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU)



TEMPLATE

Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	27 th – 29 th April 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for IRO Staff level
Partner	Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU)

Main Findings from the Visit to FH JOANNEUM (Austria)

- The visit to Graz (Austria) was conducted on the 27th – 29th April, 2016. The partner who held the study visit was FH JOANNEUM. The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are as follows:
 - The main learning outcomes of ATU’s participation in the visit to Graz were as follows:
 - A spirit of cooperation and friendship among the universities’ IRO’s and other departments;
 - Facilitating the attraction of foreign students through making the learning a rather funny activity, called as “edutainment”;

- **The most interesting Internationalisation of HE practices we observed during the meetings in Graz were as follows:**
 - Improving the international activities through investing in the R&D activities;
 - Increasing the number of IRO staff through justifying the university’s financial and administrative departments that internationalization of HE is a must for each university;
 - Recruiting specialized personnel in IRO’s enable to talk, think and behave internationally.

Among the aspects that sounded interesting to us, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in our university setting are those viewed in the laboratories manufacturing and designing automobiles and airplanes; these are not at all feasible because of the nature of ATU’s specialty in and focus on the Humanities and Social Sciences.

- **Regarding the aspects identified above, some aspects could be “good practices” which can be applied in our institution. To be more specific, the following aspects can be named:**
 - Development of Research and Development Centres in ATU so as to enhance the spirit of practical research in our institutional setting. This can be achieved by negotiating the task with our university and related ministry’s officials.
 - Closing the gaps between the IROs and other departments and offices in our universities, that can be called “networking”;

ATU has also its ‘good practices’ and a large experience, in its own setting, in international activities. Having signed more than 15 international Memorandums of understanding, ATU has tried in the recent years to implement the MoUs through numerous instances of student and professor exchange, holding numerous international conferences, seminars and workshops, and supporting its students and professors to take part in international conferences, workshops and seminars.

Conclusions

Evidently, travel enriches the treasury of experiences of individuals. The scientific travel and visit to FHJ and other universities of Graz were also no exception. ATU, like other Iranian delegations, learned many things from this visit, to some of which we have pointed above. However, each activity has its shortcomings and can be improved for further rounds; ATU is specialized in Humanities and Social Sciences, and it was much better if the visits were planned by FHJ to some other universities nearer in specialty to Humanities. For example, the visits to the Faculties of Medicine and Automobile Production could not appeal to and be of many help to ATU, consequently. The arrangements could also be made more appropriately in advance; Rector of FHJ School of Management was not even aware of a visit to his School and was asking his staff who we were. The presentations of the Austrian institutes during the visits were also more akin to promotional speeches. Rather than trying to introduce and outline the structures and strategies of their IROs, they embarked

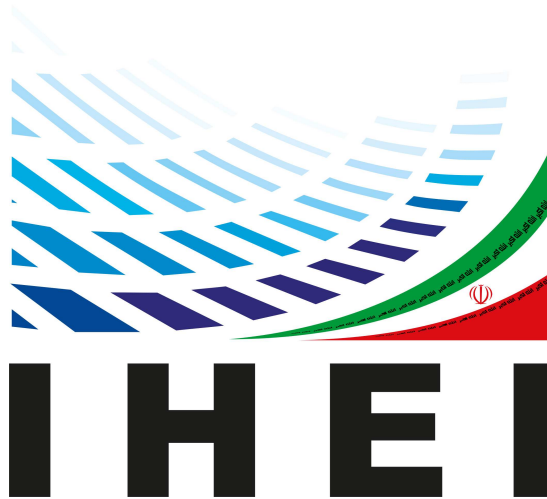


upon introducing their degree programs and departments! This is also useful in our future academic student and professor exchanges and other international academic cooperation, but they could not help us have a general grasp of the international activities and potentials of the host institutes.

The travel to Graz had also its strong points: many connections were created with corresponding partners in the visited institutes; the spirit of practical research was strengthened through observing the success stories of the MOOC Group; different ways of capital collection through international activities were observed; and many other benefits were taken from this visit. ATU hopes that the next visits will be organized in a way other parties' convenience will be taken into consideration more thoroughly.



11.6 Fedowsi University of Mashhad (FUM)



TEMPLATE

Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	27 th – 29 th April 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for IRO Staff level
Partner	Fedowsi University of Mashhad

Main Findings from the Visit to FH JOANNEUM (Austria)

Among the main learning outcomes for the Internationalization strategy were:

- Understanding the significance of social networking such as, Inked-In, Facebook
- Using visual themes such as colors for easier orientation
- Special welcome guide based on USP =unique selling proposition
- Importance of activities which are not necessarily academic, like cooking events, etc
- The importance of sending the non-academic staff to international events and networks
- INTERNATIONAL SKILLS CERTIFICATE by FHJ issues: intercultural Education, time and purpose of stay, commitment to social and Intercultural connection done officially. It is awarded as an incentive to home students who help the incoming students
- FHJ affiliates work for ONLINE COURSE as a part of their teaching
- Getting to know different university types in Austria
- Establishing connections and relationships with industries based on mutual interest.
- Creating interdisciplinary student projects

Other interesting facts observed in Graz:

- Using the so-called Buddy System for better orientation and settlement of international students
- Searching for new funds for internationalization projects
- Online courses, infrastructure and internationalization such as MOOCs

Interesting but probably not feasible aspects of internationalization

It would be very hard to find funds for the internationalization.

Observed good practices in Graz

- The buddy system practiced in FHJ can be implemented in Iran for international students. However, there is a need for cooperation on the side of other units at university for organizing the system and keeping it up and running.
- The visual guys can also be of great help as the middle-eastern students tend to notice visual clues. In addition, painting the ways to different parts of the university could be very helpful for the incoming students.
- Another important fact is the involvement of the non-academic staff rather than the academic staff in joining networks. Also, more observation for the non-academic staff in other international institutes will render better results as they have first-hand encounter with the issues and challenges.

Good practices at FUM to keep

- FUM holds international Food Days, something similar to FHJ, which creates an international air at the FUM Campus.
- FUM tries to encourage international students to participate at Sports events at the Campus, creating a fun and healthy way to raise their spirit and good memories.

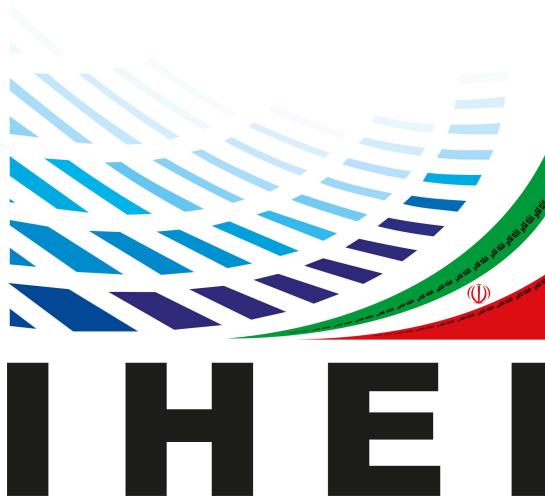
Conclusions

The observation sessions in FHJ (Graz) was a great opportunity to catch a glimpse of the activates in a student city for furthering the internationalization goals.

Internationalization of all parts of the university demands a full-scale planning and improvements in the managerial goals and views and at the same time there is a need for improving the staff, both by increasing their experience by more contact with other institutions.



11.7 University of Sistan and Baluchestan (USB)



TEMPLATE

Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	27 th – 29 th April 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for IRO Staff level
Partner	University of Sistan and Baluchestan USB

Main Findings from the Visit to FH JOANNEUM (Austria)

The in Graz (Austria) was conducted on the 27th – 29th April 2016. The partner who held the study visit is FH JOANNEUM.

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Graz**
 - How to intake international students in FH Joanneum and supporting services for them.

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Graz you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - Different sources of project grants for academic members
 - High percent of international students in FH Joanneum

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - Academic staff exchange

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a 'good practice', which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**
 - The methods for international student admission and marketing



- **Please stipulate your 'good practice' explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - We exposed to the internationalization if FH Joanneum and heard about some statistics. However we would like to know about methods and strategies and how to implement it in Iran especially in USB.

Conclusions

We have been familiar with different sources of project grants for academic members and supports for international students in FH Joanneum and heard about some statistics. However we would like to know about methods and strategies and how to implement this in Iran especially in USB.



12 Appendix - Observation Sessions in Alicante

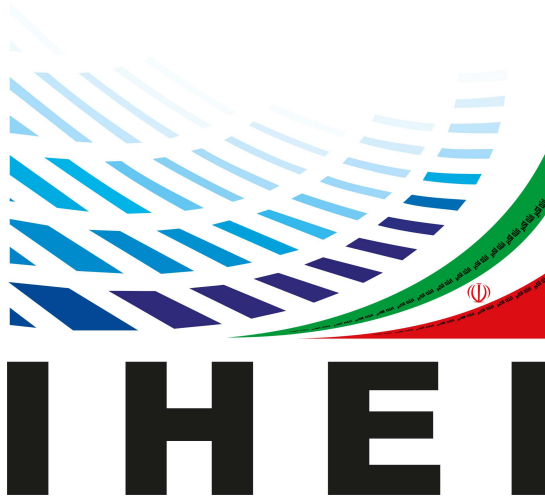
12.1 Foreword

Within the first work package of the IHEI project an observation session for top-management level staff was conducted at the University of Alicante with the objective of discussing different internationalisation strategies and models, facilitate peer learning and create leadership at the strategic level through a observation session visit of Iranian HEIs top management staff to the university of Alicante (hereinafter UA).

The main purpose of this observation session report is to summarise the main learning outcomes of Iranian partners, specifically with regards HE internationalisation strategies, initial constrains insights at micro-level by Iranian partners. Data on training needs detected through discussions with top-management level staff from Iranian HEIs will be collected for upcoming activities/trainings (WP2). Furthermore, the main result expected is the transfer of good practice, innovative ideas on how to incorporate international relations as an integral part of institutional strategy and policy. For this, discussions of European HEIs internationalisation support models, practical presentations of EU partners experiences, and exchange of initial insights and institutional constrains by Iranian partners should facilitate the creation of a basis for the development of institutional strategies on internationalisation.



12.2 Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU)



Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	2 nd - 3 rd June 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for Top-Management level Staff
Partner	Allameh Tabataba'i University (ATU)

Main Findings from the Visit to the University of Alicante (Spain)

The in Alicante (Spain) was conducted on the 2nd – 3rd June 2016. The partner who held the study visit is the University of Alicante.

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Alicante**
 - The most interesting aspect learned by ATU in this visit was UA's novel approach in offering Entrepreneurship to UA students and the virtual, distance education applied;

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Alicante you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - Although UA had tried to organize a complete session wherein to offer new approaches and methods to its audience, it did not happen in practice and the participants' expectations were not met.

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - We expected UA to invite **higher** officials from different successful UA international divisions; their experiences could be more productive in this session.

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a 'good practice', which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**

- The international distance education/learning section, and the method of participating in international projects were among the most interesting parts presented by UA officials; these can be applied in Iranian universities, too.

- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - The sessions had better be organized and conducted more accurately, so that both faculty members and administrative staff can share experiences; the UA session relied mostly on the staff’s.

Conclusions

As stated before, the UA Top-Management Observation Session, like the previous sessions, had its positive and negative points. It opened new windows to Iranian universities on how to use the virtual and electronic potentials for teaching students and staff with fewer costs and mobility. The negative point, however, was that the sessions could include higher-ranked officials from the host university. We hope that, thanks to the experiences gathered so far, further sessions could be held more regularly, and be more fruitful.



12.3 Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (FUM)



IHEI

TEMPLATE

Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	2 nd - 3 rd June 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for Top-Management level Staff
Partner	Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

Main Findings from the Visit to the University of Alicante (Spain)

The meeting in Alicante (Spain) was conducted on the 2nd – 3rd June 2016. The partner who held the study visit was the University of Alicante. The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Alicante**
 - Student mobility appeared to be a good practice to learn. It proved to be a major part of the education and research system in UA as has been the case in some other European universities.
 - Also academic activities with Spanish -speaking countries in the America Continent was interesting.

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Alicante you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - At UA we witnessed the importance of target groups for students recruitment. An emphasize on Spanish language learning for the award of scholarship to study at Spain was also noticeable.

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - The flawless practice of mobility between UAL and the Europe universities is indeed a consequence of European Union which has facilitated the incoming and outgoing students among European nations more like a domestic practice which is in function inside Iran.
 - Such a practice though excellent cannot be easily implemented between Iran and Europe or even between Iran and neighbouring countries.

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a ‘good practice’, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**
 - We observed a good number of student mobilities each corresponding to a target group. It appeared an interesting good practice to be applied at FUM.
 -
- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - At this point there seems no one to be removed. There are however some to be improved. Credit recognition for outside Europe need a sincere attention as part of global mobilities. The circle of student exchange seemed to be still limited to Europe. It has to be widened as an improvement to the larger mobility region.
 -

Conclusions

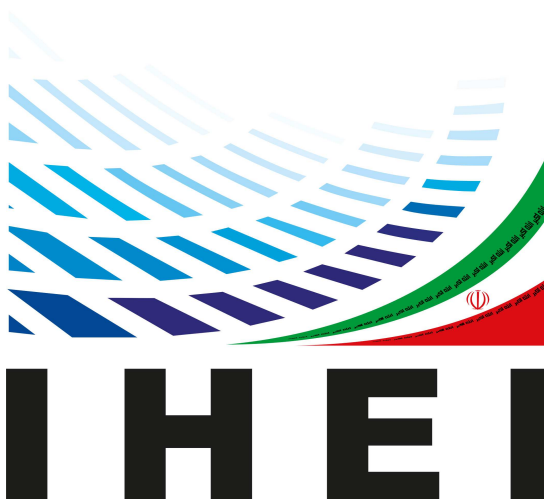
Meeting Alicante largely contributed to the mutual awareness of the management possibilities as well as higher education systems of both countries. After this 2-day session I came to the conclusion that future collaboration between the two universities is promising. Emphasize on both Spanish and Persian languages could be the common desire for both UA and Iranian Universities to start from toward a bilateral/multilateral activity. However there were some negative points to mention. The HE top delegation from Iran would expect to meet the President of UA as was scheduled beforehand which did not happen. No top level university management staff bothered to come along. Even the president cancelled his own invitation for diner to the honour of the delegate. From other universities also technical staff participated. In this meeting which was aimed as a round table of discussion between the top managerial bodies. It was very reasonable to expect that the presidents and



deputies from Spain share their attitudes as how they have approached toward the management of an International university, their experiences, difficulties, negotiations and solution etc.



12.4 Shiraz University (SU)



Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	2 nd - 3 rd June 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for Top-Management level Staff
Partner	Shiraz University SU

Main Findings from the Visit to the University of Alicante (Spain)

The in Alicante (Spain) was conducted on the 2nd – 3rd June 2016. The partner who held the study visit is the University of Alicante.

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Alicante**

A friendly environment with the participations of some Iranian and some non-Iranian universities that allow a variation of ideas and experiences. Such an environment was different from being all Iranians and all non-Iranians discussing various issues. I did not image how much good ideas could come out of such a meeting.

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Alicante you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**

The general approach that Alicante University had toward international students was quite interesting. The campus environment for all national and international students was also interesting. Nevertheless, no specific method unique to Alicante University I did find.

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**

In general, almost all aspect may be theoretically feasible to be implemented in Shiraz University. In fact, before our Islamic revolution, for more than two decades, the teaching in Shiraz University was in English, near 20 percent of the students were oversea students from about more than 20 countries. Many Professors from American and European Universities used to teach

here. After revolution some of the constraints may be considered some religious regulations, the international bans most importantly for money transfer, a relatively lengthy visa process, and the information against Iran are unrightfully propagated via the international media.

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a ‘good practice’, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**

I think, as the international ban are gradually released, we can have some more successes via the following collaborations with the foreign partner universities:

- a. Exchange of students and faculties for short time periods.
- b. Starting joint research projects.
- c. Starting some joint degree programs or just one degree programs in which 6 month or one year the student will attend the other university.
- d. Holding a day or a week of introducing the partner universities in the other universities.

- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**

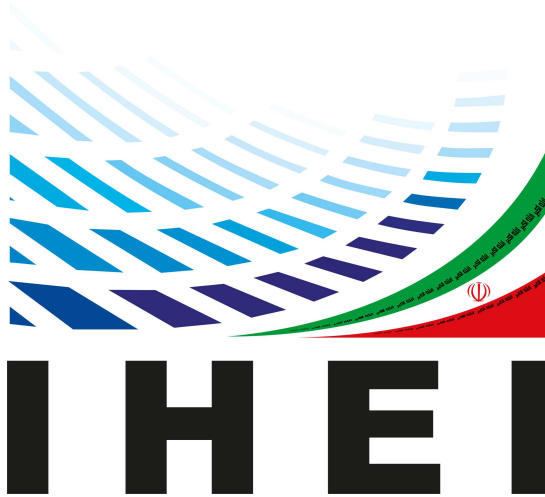
All the above (4) recommendations could be easily pursued. We have some experiences on each case.

Conclusions

In short, while the meeting was fruitful, I think it could have been more effective if we could have proposed some specific plans like the ones mentioned above in (4) and then discuss their possible challenges and/or possible other approaches. We at Shiraz University would be ready to take the responsibility and help in the management of the next meeting in Shiraz with proposing and discussing the above approaches.



12.5 University of Kurdistan (UoK)



Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	2 nd - 3 rd June 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for Top-Management level Staff
Partner	University of Kurdistan UoK

Main Findings from the Visit to the University of Alicante (Spain)

The IHEI project observation session for top-management level staff was conducted at the University of Alicante on 2nd – 3rd June, 2016. The partner holding the study visit was the University of Alicante. Participants from the University of Kurdistan included Dr Fardin Akhlaghian Tab (University Chancellor), Prof. Abdollah Salimi (Vice Chancellor for Research), Dr Adel Siosemardeh (Vice Chancellor for Education) and Dr Abdollah Hassanzadeh (Head of International Relations).

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Alicante**
 - How to incorporate international relations as an integral part of institutional strategy and policy

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Alicante you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - The University of Alicante Central Mobility Office's administrative activities being outsourced to third party (an outside company under the supervision of the university) to deal with all matters regarding international students such as accommodation, cultural activities, insurance and so on.

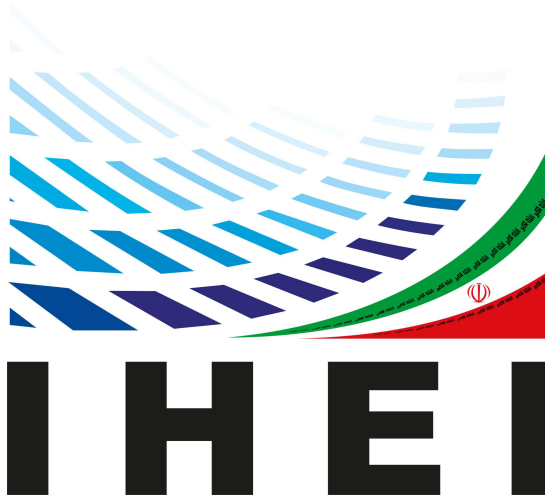
- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - Student Exchange is not currently feasible at the University of Kurdistan due to such factors as national military service, cultural constraints, visa restrictions and financial constraints.

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a ‘good practice’, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**
 - The outsourcing of some activities related to international student services to deal with related matters of accommodation, cultural activities, insurance etc...

- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - Student Visa process to be simplified which is currently complex and time-consuming and not to be carried out by the University’s administrative staff
 - Lack of accommodation for international students to be addressed as it is a major issue currently at the University of Kurdistan.



12.6 University of Sistan and Baluchestan (USB)



Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	2 nd - 3 rd June 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for Top-Management level Staff
Partner	University of Sistan and Baluchestan USB

Main Findings from the Visit to the University of Alicante (Spain)

The in Alicante (Spain) was conducted on the 2nd – 3rd June 2016. The partner who held the study visit is the University of Alicante.

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Alicante**
 - The place of international support centre in University organization chart

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Alicante you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - Supporting companies and outsourcing some international services.

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - Academic staff exchange

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a ‘good practice’, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**
 - International student marketing is our priority for USB.

- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - Our academic members are very active in international scientific activities including research projects and conferences. At the moment, despite of having legal permissions from the ministry of higher education in Iran, we do not have any international students.

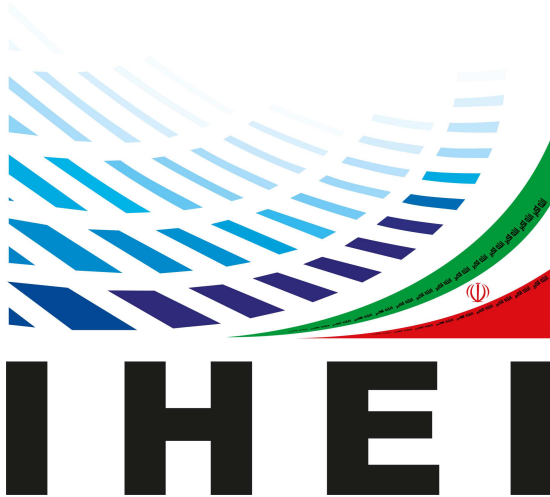


Conclusions

The agenda of meetings in Alicante was well prepared and the sessions organized very well. The contents was very useful for the director of international office in USB, however chancellor and vice chancellor have not been satisfied as the methodologies of internationalization was not discussed and they expected to meet and discuss the strategies with high level manager of universities.



12.7 Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz (SCU)



Observation Session Report

IHEI Project

Project Acronym	IHEI
Full Project Title	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Iran
Project No.	561753-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Funding Scheme	ERASMUS+ Programme
Project Coordinator	University of Alicante
Date of the Activity	2nd- 3rd June 2016
Name of the activity	Observation Session for Top-Management level Staff
Partner	Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz

Main Findings from the Visit to the University of Alicante (Spain)

The in Alicante (Spain) was conducted on the 2nd – 3rd June 2016. The partner who held the study visit is the University of Alicante.

The main findings of the visit according to the answers generated from the participants are the following:

- **Please describe what you consider your main learning outcomes of your participation in the visit in Alicante**
 - We learned about the model for internationalization in each faculty and how to implement it.
 - UNiMOOC can be a good model for us to adopt in our university regarding the similar condition of the country in general
 - We also learned about the strategies for attracting foreign students and we found many of the strategies applicable in our university

- **Identify the most interesting aspects of Internationalisation of HE practices in Alicante you observed during the meetings, such as those related to: new approaches or methods, recruitment and engagement activities of target groups, methods to engage with stakeholders, etc.**
 - MOOC seems to be the most helpful strategy which both our university and country can benefit from

- **Identify aspects that sound interesting to you, but will probably not be feasible to be implemented in your university setting**
 - We have problems in terms of mobility policy (exchange of students and teachers)
 - Offering joint courses and programmes.
 - Have wide range agreements with other university in overseas countries.
 - Students exchange

- **In relation to the aspects identified above, what do you consider could be a ‘good practice’, which could be applied in your institution? Explain which features could be applicable in your setting and why, as well as how you would implement them.**
 - We can organize some online courses in the setting we have competitive advantage. That s means we can choose the topics and issues which our university academic staffs have expertise on them.
 - We can prepare the equipment needed to run these courses and identifying faculty members that have special skills.

- **Please stipulate your ‘good practice’ explaining which of them should not be removed as well as the ones that could and should be improved**
 - We have an efficient admission process that s must be improved.
 - Extending our agreements with partner institutions.

Conclusions

Generally we can say that in the way of internationalization, universities need to prepare two plans: a strategic international plan and a business plan. We also need to gain some experiences from successful universities in this regard.