

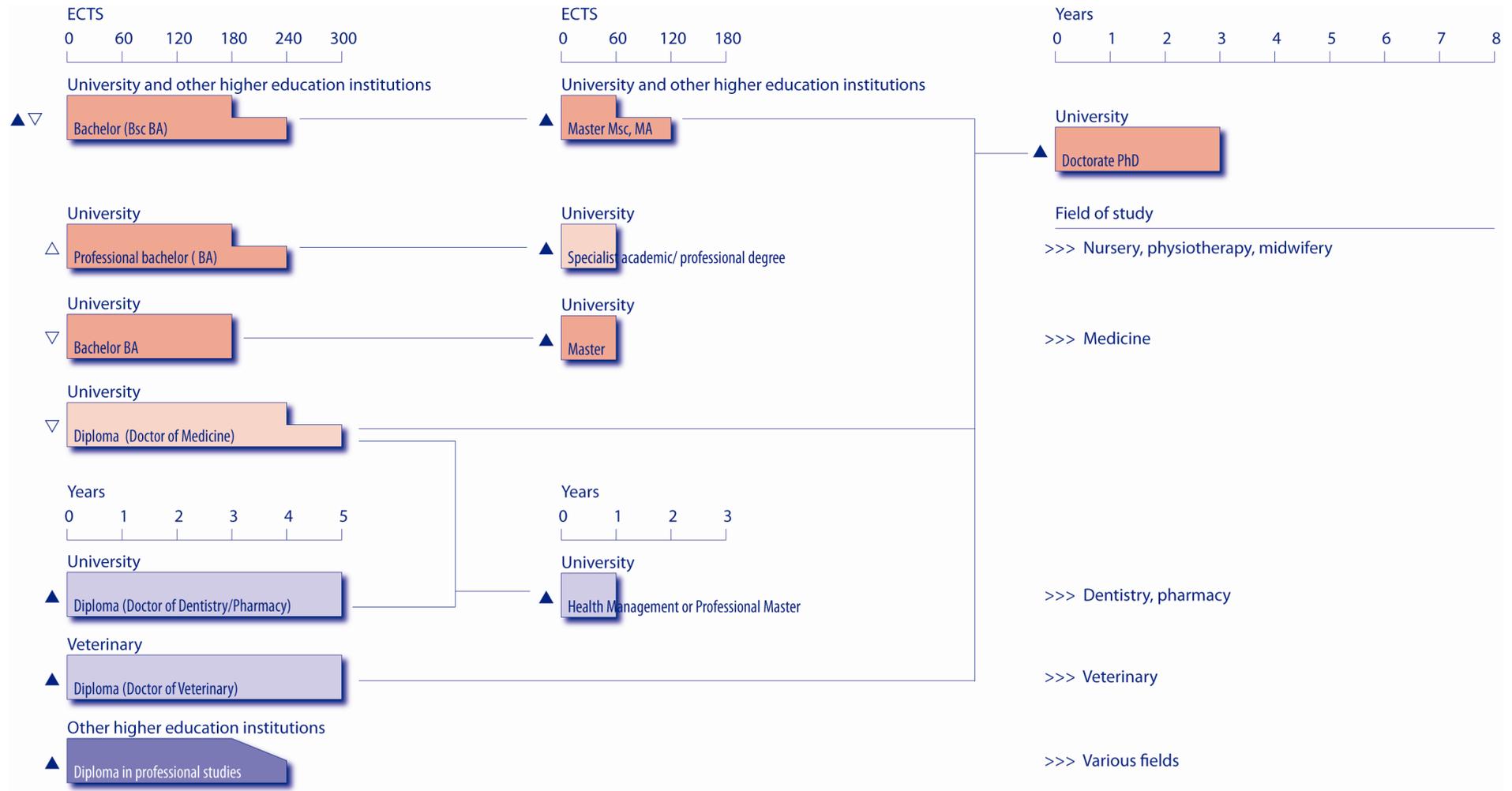


HIGHER EDUCATION IN KOSOVO¹

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¹ Under UNSCR 1244/1999.

The higher education system in Kosovo



- Most common length of a Bologna cycle
- Other length of a Bologna cycle
- Programme outside the typical Bologna model
- Professional programme

ECTS
Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

		regulated at national level	decided at institutional level
ALL	programmes have admission requirements	▼	▲
SOME		▽	△

I. Overall description

1. Major characteristics of tertiary education in Kosovo

The transformation of the higher education system in Kosovo is occurring in the context of the transition and capacity building period.

Legislation covering the field of the tertiary education

The Strategy for the development of Higher Education 2005-2015 has entered a second phase of implementation (2010-2015) for which the priorities are the development of institutional and intellectual capacities. The 6 strategic objectives are in the process of implementation, such as the promotion of an all-inclusive education policy, the finalisation of the Higher Education law and the establishment of a higher education quality assurance system. There is room for improvement in terms of efficient managing of financial resources and development of a complete functional infrastructure of the higher education system.

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology is now developing a single sector strategy for education with costed action plan to cover the period 2010-2015.

The organisation of higher education is based on the Law on Higher Education (Law 2003/14) (currently under revision) The Statute of the University of Pristina, drafted with extensive international support and expertise (in coordination with the Council of Europe and the European University Association) has served to further implement and make operational the Bologna Process objectives and principles, and modern European Standards regarding the autonomous operation of universities such as global budgeting, transparent operational processes and internal organisation, quality assurance and evaluation, modern management systems.

The development of a National Qualifications System and National Qualifications Framework in Kosovo was given a significant boost by the enactment of the Law on National Qualifications in November 2008. The Law regulates the National Qualifications System, based on a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) regulated by a National Qualifications Authority (NQA). The NQF encompasses all types and levels of qualifications and certifications within a structure of levels. The NQA's functions in relation to the NQF are: a) to design the NQF, by defining the levels of the Framework and the types and levels of certificates and diplomas to be included; b) to establish criteria and processes for the

approval of qualifications proposed for inclusion in the NQF.

The Constitution as well as the Law on Education in Municipalities (Law.03/L-049 and 03/L-048) promulgated in June 2008 gives to the Municipality of Mitrovica North, which is yet to be established, enhanced competencies in higher education. According to this law the University of Mitrovica is an autonomous public institution under the authority of the municipality. At present, this university continues to operate under Serbia's legal framework.

Types of tertiary education institutions

The higher education system operates through public and private universities and other higher education institutions (colleges, institutes, higher professional schools).

1. The University of Prishtina (Universiteti i Prishtines) has 37902 students. This university consists of 17 academic units located in the seven major towns of Kosovo: Prishtina/Pristina, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Prizren, Gjakova/Djakovica, Peja/Pec and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. Education is delivered in the following languages: Bosnian, Turkish, English, French and German.
2. The University of Mitrovica (Univerzitet u Mitrovici) where Serbian is the language of instruction comprises 8732 students.
3. The University of Prizren (Universiteti i Prizrenit) which will start operating in October 2010.
4. The American University of Kosovo located in Pristina, where the language of instruction is English
5. 13 private higher education institutions (colleges, institutes and higher professional schools) gathering more than 20000 students.
6. Three professional higher education institutions where the language of instruction is Serbian: the Higher Technical Professional School, Zvecan - *Visoka Tehnicka Skola Strukovnih Studija* (270 students) - the Higher Economic Professional School, Leposavic - *Visoka Ekonomska Skola Strukovnih Studija* (2300 students) and the Higher Technical Professional School, Urosevac-Zvecan - *Visoka Tehnicka Skola Strukovnih Studija* (275 students).

These various institutions cover a full range of higher education services from professional to purely academic programmes. Since 2006,

Lifelong Learning Programmes have been under development.

Types of tertiary education programmes and qualifications

The majority of the higher education institutions (except the American University) have now implemented the Bologna three cycles structure

Universities offer programmes at Bachelor, Master and Doctorate levels.

Bachelor programmes usually last between 3 and 4 years (180 - 240 ECTS credits), with some exceptions in medicine, veterinary science or in education.

Master programmes last 2 years (120 ECTS credits) or 1 year (60 credits) if the previous Bachelor programme lasted 4 years.

The University of Mitrovica also proposes vocational degrees and second cycle one-year specialist vocational or academic degrees.

The other higher education institutions also offer 2 to 3-year long vocational diplomas.

2. Distribution of responsibilities

At central level, the main responsibilities for Higher Education lie with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

The new Law on Education in Municipalities promulgated in June 2008 gives to the Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North enhanced competencies in Higher Education.

3. Governing bodies of the Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions are governed by their councils and executive officers. The different councils are the University Boards and the Senates.

A University Board is the principal governing body of a University pursuant to the Law on Higher Education (Law 2003/14). Boards have overall strategic responsibility for the efficient institutional operation of universities. They are in charge of all general decisions regarding resources issues (budget, staff, infrastructure), in order to provide appropriate conditions for the sustainable operation of their universities in accordance with their obligations. Boards are accountable collectively to the Ministry for the proper and efficient use of funds allocated to universities by ministries or any other public source.

The executive officers are the Rectors

(universities), or the heads (vocational institutions).

A Rector is elected by a Board. The Senate of a University is the highest academic body of that university.

A Senate is responsible for: 1. general strategic issues relating to research, scholarship, teaching and courses at a university, including: a. criteria for the admission of students; b. the appointment of teaching staff; c. policies and procedures for the assessment and examination of the academic performance of students; d. the general outline of study programmes; e. provisions for lifelong learning; f. academic standards and the validation and review of courses; g. quality assurance and evaluation; h. procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles; i. procedures for the exclusion of students for academic or other reasons; 2. the development of strategies for the academic activities of a university and the resources needed to support them, and the provision of advice thereon to rectors and boards; 3. development of a policy for the protection of the intellectual property of a University and its commercial utilisation;

According to the statutes of each institution, additional bodies may be established to support and advise the existing councils and the Rector.

4. Financing

The financing of public higher education institutions is regulated in accordance with the *Law on Higher Education in Kosovo*.

Public higher education institutions may receive funding from the following sources: allocations made by the Ministry for Education and Research; tuition and other fees paid by students; income from commercial and other services; donations, gifts and endowments; and contracts with local, international, public or private bodies involved in teaching, research and consultancy activities.

The University of Mitrovica as well as the three above mentioned professional higher education institutions can benefit from the Kosovo Budget and international sources of funding as stated in the Law on Education in municipalities. This includes funding from the Government of Serbia which must be transparent and made public, in accordance with the laws of Kosovo.

The private higher education sector is mostly self-financed (mostly by student fees).

5. Students' contributions and financial support

Students contribute financially through tuition and exams fees. For students with good results, the education institutions partly support their living expenses. Students receiving social assistance are exempted from food and housing fees.

The majority of students are self-financed.

6. Licensing, quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and/or programmes

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) has become fully operational in March 2008, and has already started the accreditation process following best European practices. During this period the Ministry has also established a National Academic Recognition and Information Center (NARIC) and has appointed members of the National Commission for Recognition.

In principle, the MEST discharges licensing duties, whereas the KAA is primarily involved in evaluation of quality at institutional and programme levels. The KAA produced and made public all relevant documents, accreditation standards and procedures and carried out the process of accreditation of both public and private institutions.

The University of Prishtina established a Quality Assurance Unit in 2007. The Quality Assurance Unit together with the ECTS Unit is part of the Office for Academic Development and involves coordinators at the level of each faculty.

In 2008, the Ministry obliged all private higher education institutions to establish Quality Assurance Offices and consolidate their internal quality assurance mechanisms. In 2009 all private Higher Education Institutions established quality assurance units.

The University of Mitrovica was accredited by the UNMIK (UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) in 2007.

7. Admission

A student wishing to enrol in higher education should possess the matura exam of secondary education.

At Bachelor and Master levels, a selection procedure is organised every year to enroll students in the first year of the programme.

For doctoral studies recruitment is based upon a competitive exam.

Faculties propose to the University Senate the number of students they can admit per study programme.

8. Organisation of the academic year

The academic year is usually organised on the basis of two semesters.

At the University of Prishtina, each semester lasts 15 weeks and stands for 30 ECTS credits. According to the university statutes, exams should be organised on January, June and September.

At the University of Mitrovica, each academic year has two semesters, 6 examination periods as well as two academic breaks.

9. Curriculum content

At Bachelor and Master levels, reforms of the content and teaching methods are being undertaken to introduce the 3+2 or 4+1 Bachelor/Master programmes and to modernise and adapt the current programmes to the needs of the labour market.

The higher education institutions are continuously harmonising their programmes with relatively comparative (relevant) curricula of other European Universities in order to facilitate understanding and recognition of degrees at international level. The curricula include compulsory, core and elective subjects.

Doctoral studies are organised through research work and public presentation of a dissertation.

10. Assessment, progression, certification and degree

The most common forms of assessment of students are exams. Student's progress from one year to another only if they succeed with the exams required. At Bachelor level, when they have passed all the regular exams, students have to prepare the certification exam (which consists of the composition of a thesis) and to defend it in front of a faculty commission. They can then apply for admittance to a Master programme.

11. Academic staff

The recruitment of staff is organised at university level. Faculties submit their requests and the vacancies are then advertised. An evaluation committee reviews applications, interviews candidates and reports to the faculty council. The senate takes the final decision.

Academic staff includes the following categories:

- Full professors
- Associate professors
- Assistant professors
- Lecturers
- Teaching assistants

At the University of Pristina, the academic staff comprises 1169 and 363 administrative staff members whereas at the University of Mitrovica there are 688 professors and 354 administrative staff.

Private higher education institutions use their own procedures for recruiting staff as stated in their statutes.

12. Research activities

The National Scientific Research Programme aims at identifying research priorities, establishing provisions for infrastructural investments, enhancing participation in international scientific research projects and working out a systematic education programme for researchers. The objective is to allocate up to 0.7% from the budget of Kosovo to fulfil the necessary conditions for scientific research and to provide the means to undertake research. The current allocation (0.1% of GDP) is far below European average. The 5-year National Research Programme is expected to improve the situation in the field of research and its linkage to higher education.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology plans to establish a National Research Fund for Kosovo, aiming at increasing the internationalisation activities of researchers from Kosovo, in particular under the 7th European Research Framework Programme (FP7) and building up the capacity of research institutions to undertake research in sectors of importance such as the environment, health, food safety, social science, ICT and participating in collaborative regional and Europe-wide research activities. Several initiatives are being launched to

strengthen the capacity for research to the benefit of economic and social development in Kosovo, to improve awareness of S&T policy and its international dimension, to increase international contacts and collaboration with research organisations, to enhance knowledge transfer in research fields targeted by the 7th European Research Framework Programme and to increase the participation of Kosovo research organisations in FP7 projects.

13. University-enterprise cooperation

Cooperation between the academic world and enterprises is very limited. Concrete steps to promote partnerships with businesses are being undertaken. The Business Start Up Center of the University of Pristina was established through a Tempus project. The Business Start up Center Kosovo was launched with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

14. International cooperation

In 2008, the Centre for International Cooperation on Higher Education, Science and Technology was established. It deals with activities such as the FP7 programme and the national coordination of CEEPUS, the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies.

It provides various services including face-to-face consultancy, organisation of information workshops, on-line information services and distribution of information material.

International cooperation is a priority area for most higher education institutions which are currently developing strategy plans and launching numerous initiatives, in particular with the support of EU programmes, the OSCE and NGOs.

II. Current challenges and needs

1. Trends and challenges

Although Kosovo has not yet officially joined the Bologna Process, its implementation is the main trend in terms of higher education policy. The consolidation of the three-cycle system, including the PhD cycle is still a priority for the HE system of Kosovo. There is a growing trend of the higher education policy to respect the autonomy of HE institutions and to grant maximum academic freedom, as well as to

fully respect student interests and to ensure their active participation in the HE reform processes.

The recent most important achievements are: the effective functionality of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency; the Center for the International Cooperation in HE, Science and Technology; the National Academic Recognition

and Information Center; the implementation of the Higher Education Strategy 2005 – 2015; the drafting and approval of the Administrative Instructions for implementing the Higher Education Laws; setting the criteria and provisions for the financing of the higher education and drafting the new law for higher education; and consolidation of the private sector of higher education.

Nevertheless some issues such as an effective quality assurance system as well as a national qualification framework are still a top priority on the agenda.

Youth form a large part of the total population in Kosovo (60%) but they face high unemployment rates. Therefore, there is a real challenge to provide young graduates with jobs and better connect higher education institutions with the private sector. The current priorities are: establishing a new university in Prizren; identifying market and social needs in a number of fields in order to stimulate the development of attractive curricula; setting up new study programmes while at the same time improving their level of quality; providing more flexible and individualised study programmes by structuring them into modules and course units (to have a more learner-centred approach); developing study programmes determining relevant learning outcomes expressed in generic and subject specific competences for respective profiles. The development of vocational education is also a way to further explore how to increase a young graduate's employability and to respond to the demands of the market. Establishing good conditions for practical work is important.

Improving the professionalism of academic and supporting staff is another challenge for higher education.

In order to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence at all Higher Education Institutions concrete actions should aim at: (i) providing a challenging and supportive environment in which staff and students can realise their potential and develop the skills and flexibility needed in a rapidly changing world; (ii) improving access to Higher Education and stimulating research and teaching to the highest international standards in accordance with the Bologna Declaration; (iii) developing quality assurance systems; (iv) providing higher education through distance learning and lifelong learning; (iv) reinforcing the strategic management and infrastructure of higher education institutions.

Recent challenges and developments in higher education are embedded in the new political, social and economic reality of Kosovo.

The political isolation of the previous decade has caused a delay to HE reforms.

However, Kosovo is strongly determined to accomplish all objectives of the Bologna process. Any other option would only undermine all the commitment and engagement of the academic community and leadership in Kosovo during the last decade including their firm orientation towards the European Higher Education Area.

2. The Bologna Process

The Bologna cycle structure

Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process	Bologna structure fully implemented in all or most study fields		
Student workload/duration for the most common Bologna programmes			
Bachelor programmes	Various combinations	Master programmes	Various combinations
Bachelor/Master cycle structure models most commonly implemented	Various combinations		

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Legislation on ECTS	Legislation governing the arrangements for implementing ECTS has been introduced.
Level of implementation of ECTS	Over 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on learning outcomes and student workload.

Diploma Supplement (DS)

Implementation of the Diploma Supplement	Partial and gradual introduction of the Bologna DS	
Diploma Supplement issued	Various combinations	In the language of instruction and/or more official languages

National Qualification Framework (NQF)

Stage towards establishing a National Qualification Framework		Not yet started formally.
		<u>Step 1</u> : Decision taken. Process just started.
	X	<u>Step 2</u> : The purpose of the NQF has been agreed and the process is under way including discussions and consultations. Various committees have been established.
		<u>Step 3</u> : The NQF has been adopted formally and the implementation has started.
		<u>Step 4</u> : Redesigning the study programmes is on-going and the process is close to completion.
		<u>Step 5</u> : Overall process fully completed including self-certified compatibility with the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Quality Assurance System

Name	Kosovo Accreditation Agency	
Year of establishment	2008	
Status	Independent agency	
Principal "object" of the evaluations	Institutions plus programmes	
Body responsible for	Both public and private higher education institutions	
Main outcome of the review	X	A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate/teach at certain levels/undertake research, etc.
	X	Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality in specified areas

Recognition of qualifications

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention	NO	
Adoption of national laws/regulations required to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention	NO	
Institution responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of academic study	National Commission for Recognition (Ministry of Education)	
Institution responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of work	National Commission for Recognition (Ministry of Education)	

III. Participation in EU programmes

1. Tempus

Institutions located in present-day Kosovo* have participated in the Tempus Programme since 2001.

1. Statistics

Number of projects in which one or several institutions have been involved (as coordinator, contractor or partner)

	TEMPUS I and II	TEMPUS III	TEMPUS IV		
	1990-1999	2000-2006	2008	2009	2010
Joint European Projects	-	19	4	5	5
Compact Projects	-	0	0	0	0
Structural & Complementary Measures (Tempus III) Structural Measures (Tempus IV)	-	10	2	1	0
Total	-	24	6	6	5

Higher education institutions with highest TEMPUS participation during TEMPUS I to III (1990-2006)

Institutions	Total	Number of projects	
		JEP	SCM
UNIVERSITY OF PRISTINA	5	5	0

2. Impact of the TEMPUS programme

Tempus projects in Kosovo have concretely supported the implementation of the HE strategic objectives by establishing three-cycle study systems in compliance with the Bologna Process, by introducing experiences and procedures for the implementation of the ECTS and the provision of the Diploma Supplement, by strengthening the mobility of academics and students both within the Western Balkans Region and to EU countries, by making distance learning methodologies functional, and by promoting interactive teaching and learning methods within the academic environment of Kosovo.

Most of the projects have addressed curriculum development needs in a variety of fields, such as Agriculture, Economy and Business, Law, Medicine, Mechatronics, Psychology, Translation and Interpretation, Education and Sports, whereas some of them have initiated interdisciplinary curricula such as Computer Science, European Studies, and Biotechnology. Some projects have introduced a strong

component of cooperation with industry, such as Mechanical Engineering, or have stimulated cooperation with the non-academic sector, such as the Master in Civil Society and Local Development, or Entrepreneurship and Local Economic Development.

Some projects have addressed University Management, and one has addressed the LLL process such as Teacher Training. It is of great importance that two projects have been launched in the field of Quality Culture, covering the public and private HE sector, a very important issue in the HE scene of Kosovo. As the situation for research is not very favourable, one Tempus project is addressing Research and Development Capacities and Education-Economy cooperation.

In the future, strengthening the quality assurance system, the cooperation of higher education institutions with the labour market, as well as the development of lifelong learning will remain a priority for Tempus projects.

* Under UNSRC 1244/1999.

2. Erasmus Mundus

Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education with a strong international focus. It operates through three actions:

Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (Master Courses and Joint Doctorates)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes are operated by consortia of higher education institutions (HEIs) from the EU and (since 2009) elsewhere in the world. They provide an integrated course and joint or multiple diplomas following study or research at two or more HEIs. Master Courses and Joint Doctorates are selected each year following a Call for Proposals. There are currently 123 Master and 24 Doctorate programmes offering EU-funded scholarships or fellowships to students and scholars from all over the world.

Action 2 – Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (former External Cooperation Window)

Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and from a particular region in the world on the other. Together the partnerships manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – bachelors, masters, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff. The programme is focused on geographical "lots" of countries or regions covered by the EU's financial instruments for cooperation. These lots include most Tempus countries. New partnerships are selected each year through Calls for Proposals.

Action 3 – Erasmus Mundus Attractiveness projects

This Action of the Programme funds projects to enhance the attractiveness, profile, image and visibility of European higher education worldwide. HEIs (and other key players in the HE sector) may apply.

More information: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus

Number of students/staff participating in the programme

Erasmus Mundus – Joint degrees (Action 1)

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Students	1	3	7	8	3	2
Scholars					1	n/a

Individuals participated in the programme for the first time in 2005-2006 (students) and in 2009-2010 (scholars)

Erasmus Mundus– Partnerships (External Cooperation Window, Action 2)

Year of Grant Allocation	2007	2008	2009
Undergraduate	-	10	21
Master	-	12	15
Doctorate	-	6	2
Post-graduate	-	0	0
Academic staff	-	1	2
Total	-	29	40

Institutions participating in the programme up to and including 2010

Institutions	Action 1 Joint Programmes	Action 2 Partnerships	Action 3 Attractiveness projects
UNIVERSITY OF PRISTINA		X	
SHERBIMET AKADEMIKE TE KOSOVES		X	

IV. Bibliographical references and websites

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