EUт⁺

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Deliverable 87

D6.2.3 Professional development

Del. Rel. No 6.4

WP 6

Description: Establishment of professional development support mechanisms for relevant staff

Comments:

Dissemination level: **PU**-Public

https://www.univ-tech.eu/phase-1-results

Foreword to deliverable D87

This deliverable focuses on the administrative staff and establishes professional development support mechanisms for them. In order to make sure that these mechanisms are well suited to the needs of the administrative staff, a survey was conducted to probe their interests. A statistical analysis shows the different trends emerging from it.

The establishment of professional development support mechanisms for the administrative staff provides ways to include them in a European University of technology and to ensure its smooth administration. The analysis of the survey results shows a definite interest from the administrative staff in learning foreign languages and new skills.

Based on the results obtained and on known best EU practices, seven different supporting mechanisms for the relevant staff are proposed in this report.

Table of Contents

1 Purpose of the document

1.1 Scope of the task

All EUt+ partners had already integrated systems for e-administration of educational processes and other activities. Because specific profiling and some local features, the partners have implemented different possibilities in their systems related to the educational processes, scientific activities, social life of students, etc. In the previous activities of the 6.2 task's working team, the profiling of e-administration and optimal workflows were identified for all partners individually and globally. In all processes related to education, research and development, students' lifestyle and others, the role of the administrative staff is key. Often the administrative staff is not socially and emotionally involved in its local university life, which becomes a prerequisite for its difficult integration of the initiative of the European technological university. In this context the aim of this subtask is dedicated to the establishment of professional development support mechanisms for relevant staff.

1.2 Applied Methods

The work team by all eight partners is involved in the implementation of the task and every partner has previously declared the responsible person who gives and processes the information from the name of the institution. The applied methods during the common work includes: on-line discussions via video meetings; on-line discussions in Whaller platform; creation and further distribution of on-line surveys. Because of the specific profile of the administrative staff and language barriers in front of most of the people, the created questionnaire was translated into Bulgarian, Spanish, Romanian, Greek, French, Latvian and German and locally distributed. The results were collected, evaluated and analysed.

Questions for Surveys which were performed at local level, in the native language among the administrative staff (non-academic):

1. Identifying questions: what kind of administrative staff are you?
Answers' options: Students administrative office; Accountancy department; R&D department; Faculty administration; Other...

2. What is your educational level?
Answers' options: Secondary education; High education; Master of Science; PhD.

3. Do you feel satisfied by your work at all?
Answers' options: From 1 to 5 (from low to high)

4. Do you feel satisfied by your salary?
Answers' options: From 1 to 5 (from low to high)

5. Do you feel satisfied by your workplace comforts (room, Indoor comfort, ventilation, lightening, etc.)
Answers' options: From 1 to 5 (from low to high)

6. How do you assess the local students' attitude towards you?
Answers' options: Bad, contempt, good, very good

7. How do you assess the international students' attitude towards you?
Answers' options: Bad, contempt, good, very good, I do not communicate with the international students

8. How do you assess the academic staff (lecturer, researchers) attitude towards you?
Answers' options: Bad, contempt, good, very good

9. How do you assess the management staff (dean, rector, vice-rectors, head of department, etc) attitude towards you?
Answers' options: Bad, contempt, good, very good

10. Do you think you have the opportunity for career development?
Answers' options: Yes/No

11. What is your English level?
Answers' options: From 1 to 5 (from low to high)

12. If your employer offers you a free English course, how will you take it?
Answers' options: As an obligation; As an opportunity; I don't care

13. If your employer offers you free seminars on topics related to your work, how will you take it?
Answers' options: As an obligation; As an opportunity; I don't care

14. If your employer offers you a possibility for mobility (in EUt+ partners), how will you take it?
Answers' options: As an obligation; As an opportunity; I don't care

15. Please, leave your proposals in free text, what will be stimulation for your work?……………….

1.3   Evaluation

The purpose of the first part of the questions in the survey is to identify potential sources of discomfort that could lead to non-involvement on the part of the administrative staff. Their evaluation could create a mechanism to stimulate staff without the need for additional activities, but only by adjusting the current working environment. The second part of the questions and the respective given answers offer specific measures, which the administrative staff themselves assess as stimulating.

2   Non-academic staff role in E-administration

The main e-administration structure divided in modules has been identified throughout the partners. In this section of the report, it is noted that this structure represents summarized possibilities of the partners' local systems and it is not valid for all of them. The current state of the e-administration within the partners and the possibilities for the full implementation of the created structure and also the optimal workflows were evaluated in the previous part of this project under the Tasks 6.2.1 and Task 6.2.2.

Although the e-administration is divided by sections, it is important to note that different administrative staff is involved everywhere. In the next sections are listed the relevant information (the data) for each module, as well as the different usages for each one (the use cases). This can be thought of as answering two questions:

- What information should we store?
- With that information and more, what should we be able to do?

2.1   Educational process

*Students' module - resources and activities allowable by students
with their personal access*

+ Data:
  o Student status (enrolled/unenrolled in some courses)
  o Passed / failed exams and grades
  o Curricula, upcoming courses, list of electives courses
  o Personal calendar (incl. schedule, assessments, issues etc.)
+ Use cases:
  o Electronic selection and enrolment in elective courses
  o Administrative services - certificates, applications, fees, etc. Students request with their personal access issuance of official documents.
  o On-line applying for scholarships, research programs etc.
  o Communication with teachers
  o Reporting function

+ Data:
    o Students status
    o Student attendance, control over the implementation of tasks, grades in the personal students' files
    o Curricula
    o Personal academic load, incl. course, type of classes (lectures, seminars, labs) and enrolled students
+ Use cases:
    o Approval of requested students' enrollment in elective courses
    o Reporting function with statistical options

University administration module

+ Data:
    o Administration of the personal students' files
+ Use cases:
    o Enrollment / un-enrollment of students
    o Completion and approval of the curricula in the personal files of the students
    o Control of assessments and tasks
    o Issuance of student documents as assurance, certificates, diploma, etc.
    o International student mobility
    o Reporting function with statistical options

2.2 University's administration and document management system

Activities and resources regarding to the document management system

+ Data:
  o Timesheets
+ Use cases:
  o Issuing orders/tasks and tracking the movement of documents between persons and departments that must execute and approve them.

  o Incoming and outgoing mail, incl. digitalization of official correspondence between different institutions

  o Messages from managers and administration to certain groups of employees, incl. task assignment.

  o Tracking the current status of implementation of tasks

  o Follow-up of upcoming tasks to specific employees and departments

  o Tracking backlog

  o Accountancy activities, incl. budget distribution, invoice settlement, payments, etc.

  o Human resources department document management, incl. announcing vacancies, monitoring the development and progress of available staff, etc.

  o Tracking employees' leave and providing information on their deputies during this period.

  o Possibility for integration with the State Electronic Systems

  o Reporting function

2.3   Research activities

Activities and resources regarding to the research activities of academic staff

+ Data:
  o Personal profiles of academic stuff filled with research data (papers, project, patents, citation, etc.), automatically filled and with possibility for manual data inclusion.
  o Research teams and/or research projects own virtual space for information sharing, assignment of tasks and their completion tracking in real time.

+ Use cases:
  o Scientific project proposal preparation on life system with the possibility to grant access rights by the project proposal manager to the other participants.
  o Data entry and reporting of research project activities
  o Announcement of vacancies for participants in research projects
  o E-management of all activities related to the laboratory equipment supply, incl. offering, invoicing, supplying, accountancy department e-document transfer, etc.
  o Monitoring the implementation of the activities of other participants in specific projects
  o Schedule and request for access to common institutional laboratories
  o Reporting functions

3 Results

The results obtained after collecting the given answers by the participants in the survey are presented below.

1. Identifying questions: what kind of administrative staff are you?
Students administrative office – 21.4 %
Accountancy department – 19 %
R&D department – 2.4 %
Faculty administration – 50 %
Other… – 7.1 %

2. What is your educational level?
Secondary education – 11.9 %
High education – 26.2 %
Master of Science – 54.8 %
PhD – 7.1 %

3. Do you feel satisfied by your work at all?
Bad – 0 %
Contempt – 9.5 %
Good - 26.2 %
Very good - 31 %
Excellent - 33.3 %

4. Do you feel satisfied by your salary?
Bad - 7.1 %
Contempt – 28.6 %
Good – 35.7 %
Very good – 11.9 %
Excellent – 16.7 %

5. Do you feel satisfied by your workplace comforts (room, indoor comfort, ventilation, lightening, technical resources, etc.)
Bad – 2.4 %
Contempt – 9.5 %
Good – 21.5 %
Very good – 33.3 %
Excellent – 33.3 %

6. How do you assess the local students' attitude towards you?
   Bad – 0 %
   Contempt – 2.4 %
   Good – 7.1 %
   Very good – 23.8%
   Excellent – 47.6 %
   Not applicable – 19.1%

7. How do you assess the international students' attitude towards you?
   Bad – 0 %
   Contempt – 2.4 %
   Good – 7.1 %
   Very good – 11.9 %
   Excellent – 31 %
   Not applicable – 47.6 %

8. How do you assess the academic staff (lecturer, researchers) attitude towards you?
   Bad – 0 %
   Contempt – 2.4 %
   Good – 7.1 %
   Very good – 45.2 %
   Excellent – 42.9 %
   Not applicable – 2.4 %

9. How do you assess the management staff (dean, rector, vice-rectors, head of department, etc) attitude towards you?
   Bad – 0 %
   Contempt – 2.4 %
   Good – 2.4 %
   Very good – 35.7 %
   Excellent – 59.5 %

10. Do you think you have the opportunity for career development?
    Yes – 45.2 %
    No – 19%
    I am not sure – 35.7 %

11. What is your English level? *only for non-native speakers
    Answers' options: From 1 to 5 (from low to high)

    Level 1 – 28.6 %
    Level 2 – 38.1 %

Level 3 – 21.4 %
Level 4 – 9.5 %
Level 5 – 2.4 %

12. If your employer offers you a free English course, how will you take it?
As an obligation – 2.4 %
As an opportunity – 95.2 %
I don't care – 4.8 %

13. If your employer offers you free seminars on topics related to your work, how will you take it?
As an obligation – 2.4 %
As an opportunity – 97.6 %
I don't care – 0 %

14. If your employer offers you a possibility for mobility (in EUt+ partners), how will you take it?
As an obligation – 7.1 %
As an opportunity – 90.5 %
I don't care – 4.8 %

15. Please, leave your proposals in free text, what will be stimulation for your work?..................
The most common recurring answers include: language courses; seminars; project management courses; providing opportunities for participation in scientific and social projects.

Based on the study, several aspects leading to administrative staff demotivation could be identified, some of which are interrelated. Employees are not completely satisfied with the level of their salaries and working conditions. And perhaps this dissatisfaction is related to the fact that the majority of respondents have a high level of education and, accordingly, their expectations are for a higher level of pay. In this context could be proposed two mechanisms:

1. The available, already appointed administrative staff to be involved in additional activities with separate funding such as participation in scientific, research, applied, social projects. Also, additional activities and responsibilities of specific persons corresponding to their education may be assigned for remuneration, thus optimizing the staff and not hiring new persons.

2. When appointing new members of the non-academic staff, it is necessary to specify the job descriptions by specifying the type and level of education necessary and sufficient for the respective position. Thus, people will feel that their pay is adequate to the knowledge and abilities, will feel satisfied and motivated to work.

At the same time the staff's level of English language is not sufficiently adequate for participating in R&D projects, project management, etc. The results from the survey show high interest toward the free English courses and people consider them as an opportunity. So the staff makes an adequate self-assessment and realizes the need to increase their foreign language skills. Supporting mechanisms which could be applied to overcome the language barrier especially during the working process with foreign students and also with foreign lecturers includes:

3. English language courses for free organized locally for the relevant administrative staff from Bulgaria, Spain, Romania, Greece, France, Latvia and Germany. Different type of courses could be planned: intensive, support, specialized in some terminology. The partnership between universities could be very useful for speaking courses during which the native-speaking staff from TU Dublin communicate with others. To be stimulating, these courses have to be performed during the working time.

4. Other foreign language courses (Bulgarian, Spanish, Romanian, Greek, French, Latvian or German) for free organized by interests of the participants. During the working time the courses could be performed for TU Dublin but for other partners they could be organized during the free time of the administrative staff.

The professional development and career opportunities are also very important for the administrative staff stimulating and now the respondents are not absolutely sure if there are available these kinds of possibilities. But they also evaluated that additional professional seminars and mobility are opportunity not obligation if they are provided by the employer. The proposed mechanisms here include:

5. Seminars and courses for special skills like: communication skills; e-government application in university's administration; presentation skills; document management; EU policies in higher education, etc. Courses could be organized by external organizations as at local level by each partners as for all partners together in on-line meetings. Some of the seminars could be based on the sharing of good practices between the partners. One of the partners will present an area of administration in which he has extensive experience, and round tables will be organized for discussions.

6. Mobility programs between partners for integration, internationalization, and knowledge sharing will be organized under the EUt+ project or through Erasmus+ agreements. A prerequisite for the participation of an employee in mobility will be the completion of English language training and certification at a level set by the partners.

The last support mechanism that can be proposed based on the survey of attitudes among administrative staff is:

7. The implementation of team building programs at the local level among partners with the participation of academic and non-academic staff together for emotional and personal socialization, combined with professional knowledge of personalities and activities.

Conclusion

The identified wide structure of e-administration among all partners shows the key role of administrative staff who are involved in very different processes such as educational, scientific, document managements, student services, social services, etc. The integration and implementation of common strategy for the development of the European technological university depends on the fluent, organized and optimized administration. During this task implementation local surveys among non-academic staff of partners were performed and the specific points were discussed by the working team. Based on the results obtained and on known best EU practices, seven different supporting mechanisms for the relevant staff are proposed in the report. In this report only some types of mechanisms are discussed and further research for the funding mechanisms could be realized.