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ORGANIZATION OF THE CREDIT-MODULE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE

The organization of study process according to Bologna educational system in Slovak University of Agriculture is reviewed in this article.

Key words: *education, Bologna system, credit-module system, Slovak University of Agriculture*

INTRODUCTION. European integration process has an influence on all sphere of life in Ukraine, in particularly on reforming of educational system in universities. The quality of high education according to Bologna system is a basis of forming common European space of high education. Bologna System of Education was started in Ukraine in 2005. Now it requires substantial reforms in Ukrainian system of high education.

This study is written by results of training course which was carried by The National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic for the Support of Mobility of Students, PhD Students, University Teachers and Researches. The training course was carried into practice at the Department of Marketing of Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra. This University provides education in accordance with the Bologna strategy on the basis of scientific knowledge in the area of agriculture and related sciences. As the only agricultural university in Slovakia SUA has an exclusive position within the Slovak universities and nation-wide field of activity.

The main **aim of the study** is to catch out and adopt the best pedagogical practices on organization of educational process in accordance with Bologna System of Education.

RESULTS. The Slovak University of Agriculture (SUA) in Nitra is a top educational and scientific institution whose main aim is to provide students with a university education, drawing on scientific knowledge in agriculture and neighbouring areas, as well as on creative scientific research. Due to the fact that it is the only university of its kind in Slovakia, it has acquired a unique, national status. Its aim is to offer such education, research and advisory services which would create conditions for the development of agriculture and its neighbouring areas, the development of Slovak rural areas and their linking to the development of the international community. Meeting these aims contribute to the educational, scientific, technical, and economic growth of society. This is done in harmony with the world scientific and cultural trends. Following national and generally human traditions, the SUA is a significant part of the Slovak Republic's academic and research institutions

network. At present, the SUA offers a university education in the following levels of degree programs:

- 1st - Bachelor's / award "Bc"
- 2nd - Engineer's (Master's) / award "Ing"
- 3rd - Doctoral / award "PhD"

In addition to the above-mentioned degree programs, the SUA creates conditions for a life-long education (specialized study, retraining courses, etc.) that allows its participants to complement their knowledge in particular area. The educational process at the SUA in Nitra is carried out in 26 study areas (29 study specializations) of the Engineer's study, in 18 study areas (4 study specializations) of the Bachelor's study, and in 14 study areas of the Doctoral study. All study or research areas are accredited, offering opportunity to study in full-time or part-time forms. Some kinds of study are carried out in the form of a distance study.

SUA provides two forms of study: full-time study program and external study program. In both forms of study the University uses the following methods of teaching:

- Face to face;
- Distant;
- Combined.

SUA provides an educational process on the basis of credit estimation of subjects according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS is the credit system for higher education used in the European Higher Education Area, involving all countries engaged in the Bologna Process. Among other objectives, the Bologna Process aims at the establishment of a system of credits as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility.

60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, whereby one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work.

Credits are allocated to entire qualifications or study programmes as well as to their educational components (such as modules, course units, dissertation work, work placements and laboratory work).

If a student graduates from a Bc. study program, he has to get 180 credits. In the case of graduation from a Master study program, a student has to get 120 credits.

The higher education institution may decide from the start to standardize the size of educational components, giving each one the same credit value or multiples of it, and thus predefine the number of credits to be allocated per component. In this case, the course units are often called 'modules'. A module is a course unit in a system in which each course unit carries the same number of credits or a multiple thereof [4].

In SUA the academic year starts on the 1st of September every year and finishes on the 31st of August. The academic year is divided into two semesters. Each semester continues during 14 weeks.

At the beginning of the academic year the chief lecturer makes a study program of the subject, noticing the quantity of hours, credits and modules, recommended literature.

The teaching staff defines appropriate and feasible learning outcomes and describes the learning activities, on the basis of the standard size of the components. The estimated workload must be consistent with the number of credits allocated to that component.

It is recommended that in either case components should not be too small, to avoid fragmentation of a programme. It is also advised not to make components too large, as that may inhibit interdisciplinary studies and restrict the choices available within study programmes. Very large components are problematic for mobile students at all levels – institutional, national or international.

Whatever the method for credit allocation, the main element determining the number of credits is the estimated workload needed to achieve the expected learning outcomes. The number of contact hours alone must not be used as a basis to allocate credits, since contact hours are only one element of students' workload. Proper credit allocation should be part of the internal and external quality assurance for higher education institutions.

In estimating students' workload, University consider the total time needed by students in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Typically the estimated workload will result from the sum of:

- the contact hours for the educational component (number of contact hours per week x number of weeks)
- the time spent in individual or group work required to complete the educational component successfully (i.e. preparation beforehand and finalizing of notes after attendance at a lecture, seminar or laboratory work; collection and selection of relevant material; required revision, study of that material; writing of papers/projects/dissertation; practical work, e.g. in a laboratory)
- the time required to prepare for and undergo the assessment procedure (e.g. exams)
- the time required for obligatory placement

In the modern university, teaching is just one of several important functions, the others being research, service to business and technology (e.g., through faculty consulting activities), and service to the community and society at large. In industry, quality is relatively easy to assess. In education, even if a definition of quality can be formulated and agreed upon, devising a meaningful assessment process is a monumental task.

Assessing knowledge is relatively straightforward, but methods for assessing skills are complex and time-consuming to administer and valid means of assessing values do not exist.

On the purpose of assessment of teaching quality the dean's office of SUA usually collect anonymously opinions of students concerning teaching quality. It is used a questionnaire, which helps to estimate teaching quality.

The students' individual curriculum holds the information about the volume and estimation forms of every academic subjects. The student's individual curriculum is formed by students or by collaboration with tutor.