



Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research

First Meeting of the Task Force Group for Activity 2

Sustaining Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research

Venue: University of Belgrade, Studentski trg 1, 11000 Belgrade

Date: 2nd March 2016

Invited attendees:

Dr. Nikola Tanić, Assistant Minister for Science
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development

Prof. Viktor Nedović, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation and European Integrations
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbia

Prof. Ivan Svetlik, Rector,
University of Ljubljana

Prof. Damir Boras, Rector,
University of Zagreb

Prof. Dušan Nikolić, Rector,
University of Novi Sad

Prof. Vladimir Bumbaširević, Rector,
University of Belgrade

Prof. Aleksandra Kanjua Mrčela, Head of Doctoral School
University of Ljubljana

Prof. Ivana Čuković-Bagić, Vice Rector for Students, Study Programmes and Quality
Management
University of Zagreb

Prof. Miloš Judaš, Vice Rector for Science, Inter-Institutional Cooperation and International
Relations, University of Zagreb

Prof. Snežana Smederevac, Vice Rector for Science and International Relations
University of Novi Sad

Prof. Biljana Abramović, Vice Rector for Study Programmes and Doctoral Studies
University of Novi Sad

Prof. Živoslav Tešić, Vice Rector for Science, Innovations and Technology Transfer
University of Belgrade

Prof. Ivanka Popović, Vice Rector for international cooperation
University of Belgrade

Prof. Stanislav Pejovnik, President of the Council
Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research

Prof. Ladislav Novak, Coordinator
Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research

Main meeting tasks:

Discussing, drafting and adopting standards for inclusion of external pre-reviewers, external mentors and external committee members in the Pool of International Experts for Doctoral Studies as the first step in the course of establishment of a Circle of Trust in Doctoral Degree.

Meeting background:

Participants of the Zagreb Conference (26-27 October 2015) adopted Executive Summary of the Quality Code of Doctoral Degree emphasising the importance of maintaining and further enhancement of the quality of doctoral degree.

Quality of doctoral degree in brief:

Quality of doctoral degree normally has to live up to the requirements and expectations related to: quality of the research environment, quality of supervision and quality of assessment.

Quality of the research environment

Research degree has to be awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality of supervision

Doctoral education is dependent on active researchers to supervise doctoral candidates and bring them into excellent and inclusive research environments. The role of supervisors is critical in maintaining quality standards when supporting research students' research.

To ensure that supervisors possess the expertise required for their role, higher education providers use criteria for eligibility in appointing supervisors, whose performance in the role is kept under review. Normally it is expected that supervisor is active in publishing scientific papers in peer-refereed academic journal(s) with impact factor.

Quality of Assessment

Assessment process reflects the distinctive nature of for doctoral degree. It involves review process of assessable research outputs and an oral examination. Research degree-awarding bodies safeguard the academic integrity and consistency of doctoral qualification internally and externally.

Although there are some variations between higher education providers, common features of quality of assessment procedures presumes: (a) involvement of competent examiners appointed to the assessment committee who submit separate, independent written reports before the oral examination and a joint report after it; (b) involvement of external reviewers (not being members of the assessment committee) also before the oral examination and (c) separation of the contribution of the candidate from the contribution of other co-authors, except from the supervisor(s);

Positive reports from at least two external prominent reviewers in the respective field and positive reports of majority of members of the assessment committee are the prerequisites for the oral examination. Publishing main result of the doctoral thesis in a peer-review journal(s) with impact factor is normal way for the provision of positive external reviews of the research output leading to doctoral degree.

To ensure transparency it is strongly recommended that at least one member of the assessment committee is from outside the higher education provider and the research degree-awarding body. As the supervisors are substantial co-authors of the doctoral thesis it is also recommended that they do not take part in the assessment process.

Agenda:

Wednesday, 2 March 2016

10:30 – 11:00 Arrival of participants

11:00 – 13:00 Main Session

Chairpersons:

Prof. Vladimir Bumbaširević, Rector, University of Belgrade

Dr. Nikola Tanić, Assistant Minister for Science, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development

11:00 – 11:15 Welcome Addresses

11:15 – 11:30 Opening Addresses

11:30 – 12:30 Discussion

12:30– 13:00 Agreement on the Final Document

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 Departure of the participants