**Republic of Srpska
UNIVERSITY OF BANJA LUKA
University Senate**

No: 02/04-3.1551-6/23
Date: 6th July 2023

Pursuant to Article 54 of the Act on Higher Education ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska", No. 67/20), Article 34 of the Statute of the University of Banja Luka, and following the consideration of the Quality Assurance Strategy, the Senate of the University of Banja Luka, at its 95th session held on 6th July 2023, has adopted the following:

**D E C I S I O N**

**I**

The Quality Assurance Strategy is hereby adopted.

**II**

The Quality Assurance Strategy is an integral part of this Decision.

**III**

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

**EXPLANATION**

At its 95th session held on 6th July 2023, the Senate of the University of Banja Luka, having considered the Quality Assurance Strategy submitted by the Office of the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Student Affairs, Strain Posavljak, PhD, adopted the Decision as stated in the enacting clause of this document.

cc:

1.Rector of the University

2.Vice-Rector for Teaching and Student Affairs

3.a/a

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE SENATE**
 **RECTOR**
 Radoslav Gajanin, PhD

**UNIVERSITY OF BANJA LUKA**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY**

**Banja Luka, 6th July 2023**

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**1. STRATEGIC GUIDELINES**

**1.1. INTRODUCTION**

Quality Assurance Strategy (hereinafter referred to as: Strategy) is, alongside the Quality Policy, the fundamental strategic document for establishing, monitoring and improving the quality system at the University of Banja Luka.

The Strategy pertains to ensuring the quality of study programs, teaching process, scientific research, artistic and professional work, teaching staff, students, international cooperation, the information system, infrastructure and financing.

**1.2. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

The work of the University is based on the following principles:

* Respect for human rights and civil liberties, including the prohibition of all forms of discrimination;
* Maintaining academic freedoms and University autonomy;
* Acknowledgment of the values of national and European traditions;
* Striving for excellence and unity of teaching and scientific research ie. artistic work;
* Alignment with European quality standards in higher education;
* Enhancement of international cooperation through greater participation in international projects and mobility of teaching staff and students;
* Student participation in governance and decision-making;
* Transparency towards the public and citizens.

General strategic principles of the University are detailed in the University of Banja Luka Development Strategy for the period 2017–2025 [1].

**1.3. VISION AND MISSION**

***Vision***The University attains European standards and contributes to overall development of knowledge, while improving the teaching process and fostering economic development through research, science, innovation and internationalization.

***Mission***The University educates internationally competent human resources in all scientific fields, capable of professionally and effectively responding to the demands of the modern economy.

**1.4. QUALITY ASSURANCE OBJECTIVES**

The primary quality assurance objectives are the following:

* Improving the quality of study programs, the teaching process and working conditions;
* Increasing the scope and quality of scientific research and artistic work and the application and commercialization of their results;
* Continuously enhancing the competence of the University;
* Expanding international cooperation and internationalization of the University while promoting the mobility of students, teachers and associates;
* Improving cooperation with domestic strategic partners;
* Continuously advancing quality assurance mechanisms;
* Increasing study efficiency and recognizing students as partners in the higher education process;
* Establishing continuous cooperation with employers and graduates to obtain feedback on the quality of study programs;
* Enhancing contributions to the economic, cultural and academic life of the local and national community;
* Continuous development of the University’s information system;
* Increasing the University’s visibility and publicly publishing quality evaluation results;
* Utilizing modern technologies and optimizing resource use.

**1.5. SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE STRATEGY**

The Strategy applies to documented procedures, activities, processes and resources essential for its sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on those affecting quality. Key processes are designed and established within the quality system, in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The quality system aims to improve the University’s position in global higher education rankings while continuously meeting the needs of all stakeholders, ensuring sustainable growth and development and establishing a reputation as a socially responsible institution.

**1.6. DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND ISSUANCE OF THE STRATEGY**

The Quality Assurance Strategy is developed by the Quality Assurance Committee and is reviewed, adopted and approved for implementation by the University Senate.

The Strategy should be periodically reviewed to ensure its compliance with the current editions of the Standards that formed the basis for its development, as well as its adequacy in relation to the established quality and sustainable development goals, developmental and organizational changes at the University and changes in the surroundings.

Amendments to the Strategy are proposed by the Quality Assurance Committee, while their review and adoption fall under the jurisdiction of the Senate.

Upon adoption of amendments, a new version of the Strategy is issued with a revision mark.

The Vice-Rector for Teaching and Student Affairs is responsible for maintaining the up-to-date version of the Strategy on the University’s website.

**2. EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**2.1. BOLOGNA PROCESS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Strategy set the course for the development of higher education in the 21st century. Through the Bologna Declaration, Europe initiated higher education reform to reduce differences between national higher education systems and to enhance cooperation, exchange and dissemination of knowledge. The Lisbon Strategy recognizes higher education as the driving force behind the development of a knowledge-based economy, characteristic of the most advanced countries in the world.

A crucial role in these processes is assigned to quality assurance, which is an essential condition for the success of reforms. Higher education institutions are required to adopt *a*

*systematic approach to academic standards1 and educational processes.*

According to *the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska* (2020) [2], quality assurance is a process management aspect that involves planning, monitoring implementation and improving key activities to ensure stakeholder confidence that the expected level of quality will be achieved. The same Act defines internal and external quality assurance systems in the Republic of Srpska. Formal recognition and validation of quality are carried out through the *accreditation process*, which verifies whether a study program or institution meet the required quality threshold.

The fact that the Republic of Srpska has joined the Bologna Process and committed to integrating into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) obligates it to follow European initiatives and requirements related to quality assurance. However, even if European demands and practices were disregarded, quality assurance remains unavoidable. It is not merely a European issue—globally, there is an insistence on quality and standards, linking quality assurance to accountability towards students, employers and broader social community.

**2.2. EUROPEAN QUALITY STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In order to address the complex issue of quality assurance, European education Ministers launched the development of guidelines, criteria and procedures for quality assurance in higher education at the Berlin Conference in 2003. This initiative resulted in the document "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area-ESG", adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Bergen in 2005 and most recently revised at the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan in 2015.

The standards are based on general principles and outline the requirements to be met, without prescribing how they should be implemented. The precise procedures and specific requirements are determined by individual institutions, reflecting their autonomy and responsibility.

The European quality assurance standards are structured into three parts:

* Standards for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions;
* Standards for external quality assurance in higher education; and
* Standards for external quality assurance agencies.

This document pertains only to the first part, i.e. the standards for internal quality assurance.

Although different parts of the standards address various aspects of quality, they are unified by common principles, namely:

* Higher education institutions are primarily responsible for their quality and its assurance;
* Quality assurance must accommodate the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programs, and students;

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1 Academic standards relate to the level and scope of the knowledge, skills and competencies that a person that obtains a degree of a higher educational qualification should have.

* Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture;
* Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society.

According to the ESG, "quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept that encompasses all its functions and activities." In line with this, the ESG standards for internal quality assurance include ten key areas:

* Quality assurance policies (for higher education institutions and study programs);
* Design and approval of study programs;
* Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment;
* Student admission, progression, recognition and certification;
* Teaching staff;
* Learning resources and student support;
* Information management;
* Informing the public;
* Continuous monitoring and periodic review of programs; and
* Cyclical external quality evaluation.

**2.3. QUALITY STANDARDS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA AND ACCREDITATION CRITERIA**

In the Republic of Srpska, the field of quality assurance in higher education is comprehensively regulated. In addition to the Act on Higher Education [2] and the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska [3], a whole set of guidelines, regulations, and standards has been adopted for various levels and models of accreditation, as defined by the *Agency for Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska* (AVORS). These normative acts more precisely define procedures related to the initial accreditation of new higher education institutions and/or new study programs, accreditation of study programs and higher education institutions, thematic evaluations and external independent periodic assessments of internal quality assurance systems.

Accreditation of higher education institutions according to the Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Srpska [4] and study programs according to the Standards for Accreditation of First and Second Cycle Study Programs [5] is part of continuous efforts and activities in the reform of higher education in line with the Bologna Process. As defined on the AVORS website, accreditation covers higher education institutions and study programs they implement, including procedures for managing the institution, study program implementation processes, internal quality system of the institution, as well as capacities, resources, potential and flexibility of the institution. The ultimate goal of these processes is the recognition of the higher education system of the Republic of Srpska within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

It is important to always bear in mind that quality assurance in higher education is a delicate task that must not be reduced to mechanical, formalized processes but should be dedicated to building a positive attitude towards quality—a culture of quality, across the entire institution and among every individual, with a constant emphasis on quality improvement.

**3. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM ENTITIES**

The entities of the quality assurance system are:

* University Management Board;
* University Senate;
* Committee for Quality Assurance and Improvement;
* Scientific-Teaching / Artistic-Scientific-Teaching Councils of Faculties / Academy of Arts;
* Quality Monitoring and Improvement Committee of the Faculties / Academies of Arts;
* Teaching and non-teaching staff;
* Students.

The responsibilities of these entities are defined by the Act on Higher Education [2], Statute of the University of Banja Luka [6], Regulations on the Organization and Work of the Committee for Quality Assurance and Improvement [7], and Regulations on the Organization and Work of the Board for Quality Assurance and Improvement [8].

**4. QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES**

This chapter elaborates on specific quality assurance activities according to individual quality standards. The following basic goals have guided the development of these activities:

* Purposefulness;
* Effectiveness;
* Minimization of burden;
* Creativity.

**Purposefulness** – Only records that demonstrate the level of quality have been selected for maintenance.

**Effectiveness** – Selected quality indicators point to activities that need to be conducted to improve quality.

**Minimization of burden** – This ensures quality assurance with minimal burden on academic staff. As the information system develops, an increasing amount of information will be obtained from it, reducing staff workload. On the other hand, some records do not change frequently but are updated only upon modification.

**Creativity** – Members are given sufficient opportunities to express their own inventiveness in ensuring and improving quality.

**4.1. UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY**

The University is committed to a systematic approach to its own development through the creation of medium-term development strategies for periods of no less than three years. The current University Development Strategy [1] has been adopted to an eight-year period (2017–2025). The development strategy is initiated by the Rector through proposal preparation or by appointing a working group to draft the proposal. The draft strategy is subject to broad internal discussions involving not only academic staff but also representatives of administrative staff and students. In some development matters, the opinions of relevant social institutions, employers, other universities in the country and abroad, as well as alumni representatives are also considered. The Development Strategy is adopted by the Senate and then it is available to the public.

The University and its constituent units should incorporate the guidelines provided by the University Development Strategy into their work programs.

At the end of each year, an analysis is conducted on the implementation of the University’s and its units' annual work programs. The Management Board, at one of its sessions, which should be held no later than the end of February of the current year, analyzes the realization of the previous year's work program. The conclusions of this analysis guide the development of the work program for the upcoming year.

**4.2. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF STUDY PROGRAMS**

The primary goal of the University — establishing and maintaining high academic standards — cannot be imagined without a systematic approach to the quality of study programs. The University has demonstrated such commitment by adopting the Guidelines for the Development and Improvement of Study Programs [9], which, in addition to specific instructions and recommendations for creating study programs, outline the basic principles and standards that programs must meet, as well as the procedure for their development. According to the University’s Work Program for 2023, this guideline needs to be updated to some extent.

When approving new study programs, the University follows the following documents: Regulations on Initial Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs [10] and the Standards for Initial Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs [11], prescribed by the Agency for Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska. Their primary purpose is to improve the quality of higher education, foster a promising environment for the career development of highly educated professionals, and build trust among all stakeholders in the higher education system.

Modifications to existing study programs are regulated by the Act on Higher Education [2].

For an ongoing study program, periodic self-evaluation reports must be prepared, containing critical reviews of the program’s quality and the need for modifications. The content of the self-evaluation reports should follow the Standards for Accreditation of First and Second Cycle Study Programs.

It is essential to establish databases on companies and institutions where students are employed and maintain constant contact with alumni to track and update employment records. This database serves to obtain feedback for verifying learning outcomes for study programs and individual courses. More advanced approaches will certainly include records on unemployed graduates to potentially link their status to learning outcomes or other social trends, positive or negative ones.

**4.3. STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

The examination and assessment policy must ensure that academic standards are maintained at a satisfactory level. Assessment must be conducted professionally and impartially, as assigned grades significantly impact students’ careers and the University’s reputation.

A fundamental requirement of European quality standards is that assessment is closely linked to specified learning outcomes, meaning that grades should reflect the extent to which expected knowledge skills, and program objectives have been achieved. Additionally, assessment should fulfill its intended function: diagnostic, formative or summative.

The Study Rules for the First and Second Cycle of Academic Studies [12] regulate a number of issues highlighted in the ESG, such as timely student notification of exam formats, nature, and schedules, rules for forming final grades, mandatory exam transparency, access to results, justification of results, issues related to absences, illness, appeals procedures, committee exams, etc. In this and other documents (e.g., syllabi) prerequisites are defined for taking higher-level courses and criteria for academic progress.

Measures related to academic misconduct during exams are prescribed in the Regulations on Disciplinary Responsibility of Students at the University of Banja Luka [13].

The most important thing is to establish a clear connection between exam tasks and learning outcomes. For each course, the applied assessment methods, the nature and complexity of exam tasks and the criteria for evaluating specific learning outcomes should be clearly outlined in advance.

**4.4. HUMAN RESOURCES**

**4.4.1 Teaching Staff Development Policy**

The quality of the teaching staff at the University of Banja Luka is achieved through regular analysis of available staff and needs, selection through public procedures that affirm scientific, research and pedagogical achievements, as well as the candidate's contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of the community, quality control of teaching and research work, and the creation of conditions for continuous education and advancement.

The procedure for selecting teaching staff is defined by the Regulations on Conditions for Selection to Scientific-Teaching, Artistic-Teaching, Teaching and Associate Titles in the Republic of Srpska [14] and will be subject to continuous improvement to ensure that an open competition results in the objective selection of the most qualified candidates.

The teaching staff development policy is aimed at creating favorable working conditions and an environment attractive to the best academic professionals.

**4.4.2 Overview of Available and Required Teaching Staff**

Based on the Regulations on Standards and Norms for Financing Public Higher Education Institutions [15], Faculties/Academy of Arts compile a statistical overview of available and required staff by study programs and narrow scientific fields (NSF), ensuring that the NSF structure and course distribution within them are appropriate and favorable.

Needs are calculated by study programs, starting from individual courses. Rational solutions should be followed, and common courses in different study programs should be considered.

When multiple teachers conduct a course due to specialization within the subject (e.g., Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Agriculture, etc.), the course content should be divided into specialized areas, introducing a coefficient of participation for each area within the course and then calculating staff needs by area. The total staff requirements for the Faculty are obtained by summing the results across study programs.

**4.4.3 Analysis of Teaching Staff Workload**

The workload of teaching staff needs to be specifically addressed. It may not necessarily align with the availability of teaching staff. A study program may be adequately staffed while individual instructors have an unequal workload. The University must strive to balance the workload of its teachers and associates. Faculties should conduct an analysis of the workload of each teacher and associate.

To anticipate trends and plan the development of teaching staff, it is necessary to monitor the structure by titles, age distribution, forecast promotions, resignations and retirements. Following conducted analyses, an employment plan for interns and teachers at higher ranks is created, with an emphasis on current priority areas.

Based on proposals submitted by Faculties/Academy of Arts, a consolidated teaching staff development plan for the University is defined.

**4.4.4 Quality and Competence of Teaching Staff**

This refers to the essential quality of teachers and associates in teaching, research and other activities within and outside the University.

For the University, the most important aspect is that the teaching staff conducts quality teaching and achieves high-quality research results. However, in addition to these professional qualities, teaching competencies are also essential. These include, among others, quality lesson planning, communication skills, collaboration with colleagues and students, digital competencies, presentation skills, organizational abilities and references beyond the Faculty and University, particularly those that contribute to the University's reputation.

**4.5. QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

The University encourages and supports the management of its members to continuously adapt the scope and structure of space and equipment to the needs of students and study programs. It is implied that each member of the University meets the minimum requirements according to the Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Srpska [4], works toward achieving optimal conditions, and where these are met, aspires to the standards of developed countries.

Faculty management maintains a credible overview of classroom, laboratory, office, administrative and free space. The University will strive to achieve a balanced distribution of these spatial resources across its members.

The University seeks to provide quality laboratory equipment not only for teaching purpose but also for research activities of teaching staff and master's and doctoral students. Teaching staff should follow developments in their field and strive to secure modern research equipment through participation in international and domestic projects, cooperation with businesses, etc.

**4.6. INFORMATION SYSTEM**

A modern university, required to continuously improve its operations, must have daily available information on the status of its resources and activities. Such a university cannot be built without the support of advanced information and communication technologies.

The University has established an Integrated Information System (FIS) covering all its essential processes: planning and implementation of teaching, scheduling and exam registration, monitoring and recording of scientific research work of teachers and associates, student records management, business functions, library services, student surveys, document management, international cooperation, public representation, printing of student-related reports (enrollment statistics, student success, exam pass rates, etc.), diploma issuance, and diploma supplements.

The Integrated Information System has a high level of data security and is integrated with the University web portal. Annually, feedback from all users is collected, reviewed and used for FIS improvements. The University continuously engages in strengthening the University Computing Center’s staff and upgrading hardware infrastructure.

Faculty management is required to ensure consistent and complete application of all implemented parts of the information system.

**4.7. PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

The University's website, in addition to basic information about the University, current legal regulations, study programs, research, cooperation, students, quality, news, etc., provides links to the websites of its members.

Each member independently creates its website but must adhere to agreed standards regarding technology, content and appearance. Faculties/Academy of Arts must provide essential information about study programs, such as the name, objectives, outcomes, curriculum and program content, also in English.

The website must not contain unsubstantiated promotional content.

Faculties and the Academy of Arts should create an annual presentation of significant results, such as student interest, enrollment numbers, graduation rates, top-performing students, employment rates of graduates, successful careers, notable research and new publications.

Communication with the public should not be limited to online presentations only. The University and its members organize other forms of public representation, such as media statements, participation in radio and TV programs, and inviting representatives from government, institutions, businesses, and media to university scientific and other events.

Promotional materials include student guides, employer guides (information packages), and other University brochures. Open days and high school promotions are organized. Research potential and results are presented.

Members develop an annual public communication activity plan and maintain records of public presentations.

**4.8. QUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Strengthening international cooperation has a reciprocal effect to the quality of all University elements and processes: study programs, students, teaching staff, research work, financing, etc. Student and staff mobility and participation in international projects have gained special significance in recent years. The University has created an Internationalization Strategy [16], outlining strategic internationalization goals and measures for their implementation.

The University constantly enhances international cooperation through bilateral agreements with foreign and domestic universities and membership in international networks and associations. Participation in international projects is also visible on the University’s web portal.

The University is a full member of the European University Association (EUA) and the Consortium of Higher Education Institutions of China and Central and Eastern European Countries (CCHEIC).

Overview of the indicators of the intensity of international cooperation by members is monitored on an annual basis.

In order to more effectively prepare and implement: projects, conclude bilateral agreements, and facilitate the mobility of students and staff, the University has adopted the following documents: Instructions on the Method and Implementation of Projects at the University of Banja Luka [17], Rules for the Application and Implementation of ERASMUS+ Projects at the University of Banja Luka [18], Rules for the Application and Implementation of CEEPUS III Networks [19], Regulations on the Procedure for Concluding Agreements on Academic, Business-Technical, and Professional Cooperation [20] and Regulations on International Exchange of Students and Staff [21].

Members are required to provide data on projects and contracts specified in the database. Additionally, for projects managed at the member level, they are obliged to maintain their own records of activities and results that are not stored in the database. This particularly applies to descriptions of research subjects, project goals and results, as well as data on participants.

The University has created a list of subjects that can be taught in English in order to provide potential international students with easier access to important information related to mobility.

Some elements of international cooperation relevant to other quality elements, particularly the quality of study programs and the quality of teachers are covered in other chapters.

The Office of the Vice-Rector for International Cooperation provides expert and logistical support for the University's international activities. Annual work programs and reports on the implementation of work programs related to international cooperation activities are published on the University’s web portal.

**4.9. QUALITY OF ENROLLED STUDENTS**

The University of Banja Luka must strive to attract the most talented students, as this would achieve an essential prerequisite for prestige and the education of top-tier professionals. Quality is a more important criterion than mass enrollment and represents the University's commitment. Given the specifics of the Faculties/Academy of Arts and study programs, each Faculty/Academy of Arts should develop its own approach and strategy for achieving the desired quality. Enrollment of new students is based on an entrance exam, with the success threshold in that exam adopted as a condition for enrollment in study programs, together with the success in secondary school.

The University can raise the quality standards for enrollment without losing potential students, but only if it ensures that the offer of study disciplines is aligned with demand, maintaining high level of academic standards, both in terms of content and the level of knowledge, skills, and competencies required.

Raising the entry criteria must be accompanied by improving the quality of teaching and studying conditions, offering appealing extracurricular activities, and increasing the value of the diplomas awarded to students. Through its work and achieved results, the University must constantly confirm the knowledge it offers at a high academic level, while also ensuring that it involves high entry-level knowledge and talents.

The University can demonstrate its full attention to the quality of incoming students by keeping detailed records on:

* Data about the secondary schools from which students come;
* General academic achievements at those schools;
* Achievements in the specific field related to their studies;
* Awards and other accomplishments that demonstrate the candidate's talent.

Thorough student records allow for analysis from various perspectives, such as:

* Profiles of student interest from different schools in specific Faculties/Academy of Arts;
* Profiles of student interest from specific schools or cities in various study programs or faculties;
* Comparison of success in secondary school and success in the entrance exam, etc.

A highly responsible approach to this issue will also include monitoring the progress of enrolled students during their studies and linking their success in university studies with their success in secondary school. After a series of consecutive analyses, public results can be published, and visits and promotions can be organized for schools from which students with the best results come.

**4.10. QUALITY OF THE TEACHING PROCESS**

**4.10.1. Coverage by Teaching Textbooks**

For each subject, a primary textbook must be available, which fully "covers" the content of the course. The author of the textbook does not have to be a university teacher.

In addition to the primary textbook, students may be suggested additional teaching materials. Students can also be referred to textbooks in foreign languages.

For conducting practical classes, exercises, field teaching, etc., appropriate practical workrooms and instructions should be provided. Teaching materials may be available in printed or electronic form.

Faculties must conduct an annual review of the availability of teaching materials.

**4.10.2. Quality of Teaching Textbooks**

The mechanism for ensuring the quality of new textbooks is embedded in the University's Regulations on Publishing Activities at the University of Banja Luka [22], through obtaining the opinions of reviewers. Quality improvement can be achieved by striving for more objective and detailed reviews. Therefore, the selection of reviewers deserves special attention.

In addition, this Regulation stipulates that, in addition to the review process, the minimum quality standards for teaching materials include an assessment of the following elements: content, structure, style and scope.

Textbooks whose quality has been questioned must undergo a re-review. For an impartial review, an external expert with a verified academic reputation in the given field should be engaged. Furthermore, to confirm and improve the quality, the University will periodically have certain units of teaching materials evaluated by experts without disclosing their names.

**4.10.3. Student Surveys on the Quality of the Teaching Process**

Faculties/Academy of Arts must assess the quality of the teaching process by obtaining students' opinions on the quality of teaching in individual subjects. To obtain a unified view of the quality of teaching at the University, a minimum set of common questions regarding the most important characteristics of teaching in each study program has been defined.

All key aspects of the survey process, such as survey areas, goals and principles, methods and criteria, as well as other aspects, are more precisely defined in the Regulations on Student Surveys on the Quality of the Teaching Process [23].

**4.10.4. Implementation of Teaching in the Academic Year**

Teaching should be conducted according to a pre-established schedule. Any changes in the schedule, spatial or temporal, should be announced in a timely manner on the bulletin board and the Faculty website, alongside the original teaching schedule. There should also be announcements about block teaching by visiting professors. Starting from the academic year 2022/23, the University applies unified forms related to the creation of plans and schedules for lectures and exercises, as well as record forms for the execution of classes.

During the academic year, it is useful to conduct control over the implementation of teaching using random sampling or in its entirety.

**4.11. QUALITY OF RESEARCH WORK**The University of Banja Luka continuously works on creating conditions, encouraging, monitoring and evaluating scientific, artistic, and professional work, as well as integrating the results of that work into the teaching process. The University involves students in research projects and strives to provide adequate support in the second and third cycle study programs to train researchers, conduct research and achieve relevant results.
Every teacher and associate should, within their competence, design, prepare and implement scientific, artistic, or professional projects at the national and international levels. Projects should be aligned with the strategic goals of scientific and technological development in the Republic of Srpska, the strategic goals of the University of Banja Luka, the general goals of higher education and the needs of society and the labor market.
In order for a teacher to deliver quality instruction in a particular subject, they must have notable research results in that field, through which they confirm their values and competencies and make their own contribution to the development of the scientific field.
The primary mechanism for encouraging research is the conditions for the minimum volume of scientific research results necessary for selection and promotion in teaching and associate positions, as defined by the Act on Higher Education [2] and the Regulations on the Conditions for Selection into Scientific-Teaching, Artistic-Teaching, Teaching, and Associate Titles in the Republic of Srpska [14].
The University also provides other ways to stimulate scientific, research and artistic work. A Fund for the encouragement and promotion of scientific, research and artistic work at the University of Banja Luka has been established, from which teachers and associates who have achieved significant results through publishing scientific papers in indexed scientific journals or coordinating or participating in international research projects are awarded annually. The management of the funds from this Fund is regulated by the Regulations on the Fund for the Encouragement and Promotion of Scientific Research at the University of Banja Luka [24].
Each Faculty/Academy of Arts prepares an overview of the most notable scientific papers, projects, innovations/patents, organized scientific-professional events, new publications, textbooks and monographs and registered doctoral dissertations from the previous year, which are entered into the unified database of the Research Information System (FIS).
The University prepares annual publishing activity plans and has adopted the Regulations on Publishing Activities at the University of Banja Luka [22], which defines general conditions, methods of publishing publications, standards and quality control mechanisms for publications within the publishing activities.
By adopting the Decision on Adopting the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Scientific Knowledge, the University has supported new opportunities for the dissemination of knowledge through the paradigm of open access via internet.
In order to provide greater support for scientific research work, the University has also adopted the following documents: Regulations on the Procedure for Legal Protection of Intellectual Property at the University of Banja Luka [25], Regulations on Measures for Increasing the Visibility and Presence of the University of Banja Luka and its Members on the Internet [26], and Regulations on the Procedure for Determining Non-Academic Behavior in Written Works [27].
The University will work on promoting all international scientific conferences organized by its individual members. Special attention will be given to the conference “Students Approaching Science - STES,” organized by the Student Parliament.
The task of the University in the upcoming period is to improve the visibility of scientific research work.

The Office of the Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and Development provides expert and logistical support for the scientific research activities of the University. Annual work programs for the office are published on the University’s website.

**4.12. QUALITY OF FINANCING**As a public institution, the University is primarily funded from the budget, and to a lesser extent from its own income, generated through research projects, professional, and other services provided to the community. Public finances guarantee the preservation of the University’s autonomy, maintenance of academic standards, equal access to higher education and serving the public interest. Additionally, the University must take full responsibility for the rational spending of allocated funds, respond better to the needs of society and produce greater results.
The University is informed about the structure of the Republic's budget, the participation of the university grant in the total budget, monitors its relationship with other public consumers and the real sector, and influences the government to achieve a proportionate and fair ratio.
The University conducts control and establishes quality in finance in accordance with the Regulations on Internal Controls and Internal Control Procedures [28], while public procurement at the University is carried out according to the Regulations on the Procedure for Public Procurement of Goods, Services and Works at the University of Banja Luka [29] and the Regulations on the Procedure for Direct Procurement Agreement at the University of Banja Luka [30].
The University monitors the structure of its own budget, ensures that growth indices are “positive,” seeks new sources of funding and encourages Faculties to achieve faster growth in project revenue compared to other indices. The expenditure and use of the university's own budget are regulated by the Regulations on the Criteria for the Use of Own Income at the University of Banja Luka [31].

**4.13. MONITORING AND IMPROVING QUALITY**The University and its members prepare annual reports on quality indicators and thus monitor and improve quality. The basis for this is found in the existing Procedure for Monitoring and Improving Quality [32], which, according to the University’s Work Program for 2023, is to be innovated.

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CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE
 RECTOR
 Radoslav Gajanin, PhD