AGENŢIA ROMÂNĂ DE ASIGURARE A CALITĂŢII ÎN ÎNVĂŢĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR
*Membră în Asociația Europeană pentru Asigurarea Calității în Învățământul Superior – **ENQA***
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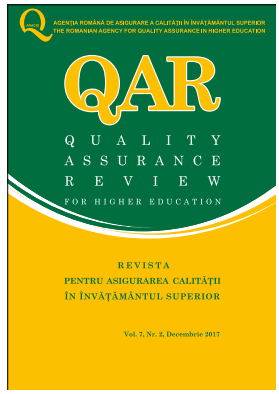

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education

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Raluca Ghenţulescu, Loredana Grigore-Miclea

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2017, pp. 63 – 78

Publicat de: Agenţia Română de Asigurare a Calităţii în Învăţământul Superior - ARACIS
Locul publicării: Bucureşti, România
Tipul publicaţiei: tipărit, online
ISSN: 2066 - 9119, 2069 - 2188 (online)
Adresa: Bd. Mărăşti, nr. 59, Sector 1, Bucureşti, cod poştal 011464
Telefon: +40 21 206 76 00; Fax: +40 21 312 71 35
E-mail: qar@aracis.ro
Pagină electronică: http://www.aracis.ro/en/publicatii/qar-magazine/numarul-curent/

Revista *Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education* este editată din fondurile proprii ale ARACIS şi, în această etapă, contribuie și la sustenabilitatea proiectului „Dezvoltarea şi consolidarea culturii calităţii la nivelul sistemului de învăţământ superior românesc - QUALITAS”, Contract POSDRU/155/1.2/S/141894.

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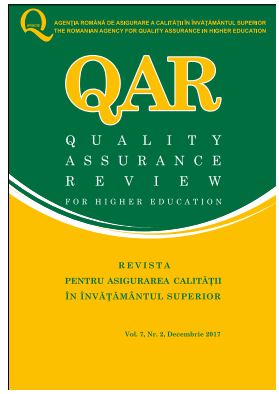

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Published by: The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ARACIS
Place of publication: Bucharest, Romania
Publication type: printed, online
ISSN: 2066 - 9119, 2069 - 2188 (online)
Address: Bd. Mărăşti, no. 59, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania, postal code 011464
Phone: +40 21 206 76 00; Fax: +40 21 312 71 35
E-mail: qar@aracis.ro
Web page: http://www.aracis.ro/en/publications/qar-magazine/current-issue/

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education is edited from ARACIS own funds and, at this stage, also contributes to the sustainability of the project "The development and the consolidation of quality culture at Romanian higher education system – QUALITAS", POSDRU Agreement 155/1.2/S/141894.

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Risk Register Implementation in a Department of Foreign Languages and Communication – Case Study

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Abstract: *The analysis of Risk Register implementation in the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication at the Technical University of Civil Engineering (UTCB), to certify quality assurance by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, implies the application of some indicators, which will result in imposing some modifications in its organizational structure. In this respect, the mission of Quality Management is to get directly involved in various activities and to check the smooth functioning of the Department, the purposes and deadlines of its actions, as well as to make sure that all the activities are properly organized. Quality Assurance implies assessing the Risk Factors, which must be analyzed and isolated, proposing the best solutions and maintaining the Certification of Quality. Such an analysis presents "the potential risk factors" of some activities that might influence further implementations. In the SWOT analysis of Risk Register Implementation at the Department's level it is vital to apply these indicators for Quality Assurance.*

Keywords: *risk assessment, Quality Assurance, implementation, strengths and weaknesses, Risk Register*

1. Introduction. The Arguments and Objectives of the Research

Taking into consideration that Risk Management is a complex process of identifying, analyzing and responding to the potential risks in an institution or department, a scientific approach of this subject, which implies material, financial and human resources, is essential for establishing the objectives that can be reached with a minimum number of losses. In Deloitte and Touche's opinion (cf. Deloitte & Touche, 2003), the internal managerial control, directly associated with Risk

Management, contributes to creating a functional framework in which a public institution can safely reach its goals. Therefore, each academic institution or department has to systematically analyze – at least once a year – the risks related to its specific activities, to appoint people in charge with Risk Management and to implement the Risk Register at the level of each compartment.

From the very beginning, we should distinguish between a risk and an issue. Whereas, according to Gregory Becker's definition, an issue is "an event that has already occurred" (Becker, 2004:1), a risk is an event that has not occurred yet, but "has the potential to occur" (idem). Risks are of three types:

- known, which is obvious to many people involved in a certain activity and is noticed in the early stages of a project;
- unknown, which is obvious to only a few people involved in a project and is not noticeable during the first part of a project;
- unknowable, which cannot be foreseen by anybody, as it is related to some force majeure events (cf. Becker, 2004).

Since identifying and rating risks may be seen as a subjective process, because some people have a better intuition than others and sense danger earlier, it is important for any structure to have a Quality Management team, led by a Quality Manager, who has the right knowledge and experience in order to identify the risks correctly and to assess them the right level (cf. Băbuț & Moraru, 2002). This is the reason why the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication within UTCB has always appointed or elected a Quality Management team, made up of two or three members, led by a Quality Manager trained in this field.

In any department, there are potential risks, and if some sectors of the academic activity claim they are completely safe, their statement should be doubted. This is the reason why each faculty within the Technical University of Civil Engineering, as well as the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication (DFLC), has a commission of Quality Management. Its role is to check if all the activities in that compartment are performed in compliance with all the legal provisions and internal regulations in force, to see if all the objectives of the Department are fulfilled and all the deadlines are met, to make sure that everything runs smoothly and the risks are minimized.

Quality Assurance is strictly related to identifying the Risk Factors, which must be analyzed in detail and isolated, in order to find the best solutions for approaching them and for maintaining the Certification of Quality to the highest standards.

A SWOT analysis of the Department's activity implies assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each structure and presenting both the opportunities that should be considered and the threats that the structure is going to face – the "potential risk factors" of some actions that might impede further implementations.

As the topic of this article is the implementation of Risk Register in our Department, we shall focus on these potential risk factors, in order to establish their level and to find the right solutions for diminishing their negative impact on our

activity. First of all, we shall dwell on the indicators that we have analyzed when assessing the risk factors in each sector of the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication.

The "L" Risk Indicator means "Low Risk", signifying that there is no need to take measures regarding that sector. "M" refers to a "Moderate Risk", which requires a strategy for reducing the risk level in the near future. "H" stands for "High Risk" and is assigned to those sectors of activity in which severe problems have been noticed and urgent measures must be taken. In our analysis of Risk Register Implementation, we have applied only the first two indicators, because there are no severe problems that must be solved immediately and there is no need to modify the organizational structure of the Department in the near future.

2. Methodology

2.1. Theoretical Concepts

The concept of Risk Management has been taken from the business sector and adopted as one of the main components of the activity performed by institutions and departments in both Europe and South America (cf. Mejia & Rubi, 2006). The methodology for implementing the Internal Control Standard, related to Risk Management, is a unitary framework for approaching Quality Management principles, based on customary practices and legal documents issued by major European and American organizations. In a nutshell, all these aim at analyzing all the potential risk exposures, identifying the significant or strategic risks, which might impede the efficiency or prestige of the institution/ department, defining the degree of tolerance towards some risks, assessing the likelihood of the risk to occur in a certain situation, establishing its potential impact and the strategy to be adopted for correctly managing the risky situation.

According to Webb, the Risk Register is "the most popular method of recording and ordering risks […], specifying all the perceived risks with the outcomes, likelihoods and countering strategies" (Webb, 2003:94). In other words, it contains all the identified risky situations in an organization, their causes, their potential effects and the measures to be taken in order to avoid their negative impact on the smooth functioning of that organization.

The necessity of implementing the Risk Register in an institution or in a department is backed up by the analysis of the way in which the legislation pertaining to Quality Management and the standards of the Internal Control Management System are applied in a certain sector of activity. The flaws in the application of these normative documents, identified by Bravo Mendoza and Sánchez Celis, mainly refer to:

- the failure to meet the need for professional training in the field of Risk Management;
- the omission of some important stages in the process of dealing with the risks identified at the level of a certain institution or department, which may lead to inappropriate solutions;

- the absence of a specific Quality Management structure, which is usually replaced by a randomly organized and insufficiently trained committee for monitoring the risks within the institution;
- the subjective and arbitrary approach of the risky situation, which does not comply with the Quality Management legislation in force in a certain country;
- the absence from each employee's job description of clear specifications concerning individual responsibilities related to Risk Management;
- the incorrect assessment of the risky situations, due to insufficient knowledge of the normative documents in the field of Quality Management;
- the incorrect identification of the cause that generated the risk, which may lead to an inappropriate strategy for solving the problem;
- the failure to implement or update the Risk Register at the level of the whole institution or a certain compartment (cf. Bravo Mendoza & Sánchez Celis, 2009).

The conclusion that the two authors, Bravo Mendoza and Sánchez Celis, have reached after analyzing all these flaws is that, generally speaking, the employees of the institutions in which the internal managerial control has been introduced perceive the responsibilities regarding Risk Management as additional activities to the ones stipulated in their job description and tend either to completely neglect them or to allow them the minimum amount of their time and attention, considering them less important than other responsibilities. This conclusion has made us decide to write this article, in order to raise our colleagues' awareness towards the issue of Risk Management in an academic institution, where the stakes could be even higher than in an ordinary company.

When implementing the Risk Register in an academic department, whose mission differs from that of a company intended to make profit, the main points to be considered are not the financial ones, but the organizational ones, because the main risk is not losing money, but losing students or professors. Therefore, this process should aim at assessing the sources of risk in terms of their potential frequency of occurrence, their consequences on the quality of the study programs offered by the department or university in question and the possibility to adopt the fastest and most effective measures for reducing the identified risks before affecting the teaching process (cf. Lambert et al., 2001).

The outcome of risk analysis should be the determination of those uncertain or threatening situations that may prevent the Department from reaching its strategic objectives, such as providing quality study programs, maintaining or even increasing its number of students, preserving its degree of trust from the authorities in education, maintaining a high level of academic competence, etc. In Sidorenko and Demidenko's words, such an analysis is the right instrument to make the right decisions and "be transparent when making these decisions" (Sidorenko & Demidenko, 2017:20).

2.2. Methods

The main question we asked ourselves when we started to write this article was whether we should analyze the overall picture of the Department or the specific risks in each of its compartments. Finally, we decided to adopt David Hillson's position and to discuss both the individual risks, which could be isolated from the bigger picture, analyzed in detail and given a particular solution, and the general risk of the entire structure – created by "the joint effect of risk events and other sources of uncertainty" (Hillson, 2009:18) – which, in our case, was its affiliation to a superior structure or its dissolution.

Our research implied several stages. Firstly, we read a significant amount of specialized literature related to Risk Management. Secondly, based on Hillson's ideas, we created a questionnaire meant to be addressed to the employees of our Department, with a view to raising their awareness on our common objectives. The five questions have been:

1. What is our main goal? What are our secondary goals? – corresponding to the initiation of the Risk Management process;
2. What could prevent us from achieving these goals? – related to the identification of potential risks;
3. What should we do for achieving our goals? – meant to make them realize the necessity of implementing a strategy for risk reduction;
4. Who should be informed on the progress towards reaching our goals? – an important question for risk communication within the Department and the University;
5. What may change if we reach or fail to reach our goals? – a form of risk review, intended for drawing attention towards the effects of success or failure on the overall image and performance of the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication (DFLC).

Answering these basic five questions is considered essential for an indicative analysis on the implementation of the Risk Register in the Department. Furthermore, these questions could lead to a better training of DFLC's staff regarding Quality Management and to the introduction of some specific responsibilities in the job description of each employee.

After assessing the Risk Indicator of each compartment of DFLC, based on the answers to the five questions, the general performance of this structure and the risky situations that need to be addressed immediately or in the future, we have made a complete table, which represents the Risk Register of the Department and the basis of our article.

2.3. Data Collection

The data we have collected from the questionnaires and from the Quality Management documents of the Department, as well as from other official documents pertaining to its activity, have enabled us to make a SWOT analysis, with a view

to establishing its strong and weak points and the favorable or risky situations in which it may be involved.

The strengths of the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication can be noticed in the following compartments, which have been assigned the "Low Risk" indicator, due to their constant performance:

a. the Council of DFLC, which, together with the Directorship, is the managing board of the Department and ensures the smooth functioning of all its sectors;
b. the didactic sector, involved in ensuring the educational activity at the highest standards of quality and, at the same time, in organizing interesting extra-curricular activities, such as the traditional Week of Foreign Languages;
c. the Commission of Quality Management, which have implemented all the required Quality Assurance standards and operational procedures and have carried out all its duties (e.g. the internal audit for at least two subjects per academic year, the annual Quality Management report, the strategic plans for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) evaluation of the two cycles of studies – Bachelor Studies and Master Studies);
d. the Specialization of Translation and Interpretation, which, through its two main components, the cycle of Bachelor Studies and the Master program, fills a major need of the Romanian job market– that of well-prepared translators and interpreters in the technical-scientific field;
e. the compartment of national and international relations, which ensures the cooperation between our Department and similar structures at various universities in our country and abroad, and provides the students and teachers with interesting opportunities for the exchange of knowledge with domestic and foreign partners, within specialized programs;
f. the team that organizes and administers the Linguistic Competence Test, which is compulsory for all students from the engineering specializations, in order for them to be allowed to take the graduation exam;
g. the administrative body of DFLC (i.e. the secretaries, the technician), which provides professional support to all the other compartments;
h. the compartment dedicated to the supervision of the teaching process, whose purpose is to make sure that all the courses and seminars are held in the intervals specified in the timetable and in compliance with the curriculum;
i. the compartment for teaching and research staff's promotion, which takes all the necessary measures for informing the Department's personnel on their promotion opportunities and ensures the organization of contests in compliance with all the legal provisions and the internal regulations in force.

All these strengths, which mostly refer to its high standards of educational and managerial quality, make the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication

a respected structure within the Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, which is subordinated to, and, generally speaking, within the Technical University of Civil Engineering in Bucharest.

Our Department has also made itself remarked among the other departments of the University due to the correct implementation of all the Quality Management operational procedures imposed at the academic level, as well as to its internal Management Control System. The objectives that it has managed to fulfill since 2012, when the commission of Quality Management was created in our Department, in order to comply with the provisions of the Order of the Minister of Public Finance no. 1423/30.10.2012, are:

- the implementation of all the principles of Quality Management in the educational process;
- quality assessment of all the activities performed in DFLC;
- the improvement of scientific research management;
- the promotion, development and maintenance of international cooperation relations between DFLC and similar departments within foreign universities;
- the implementation of the procedures and strategies imposed by the internal regulations of DFLC, established by its Guide of Responsibilities, which is revised, completed and updated at the beginning of each academic year, in compliance with the legal provisions in force and with all the decisions made by the Senate of UTCB;
- students' involvement in the decision-making process, as well as in the internal audit, for a better transparency and for adapting the educational and evaluation activities to their needs;
- professional counselling for students, based on the vast experience of DFLC's teaching staff in specialized translations, interpretation and communication in foreign languages.

For a correct analysis of Risk Register implementation in our Department, besides the strengths and opportunities we have referred to so far, we must also mention the weaknesses we have identified. The compartments to which we have assigned an indicator of "Moderate Risk", for drawing attention to the problems they have, with a view to solving them before the risk level increases, are: the Directorship of DFLC, the Scientific Research Center and the compartment for the evaluation of the teaching and research staff's activity.

3. Results

3.1. Particularities of the Case Study

It is obvious that the implementation of the Risk Register in the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication is beneficial for certifying Quality Assurance by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, as far as the "Operational Procedures" are concerned, it is certain that the Department's objectives

have been fulfilled in compliance with all the regulations. The organization of the internal structures of DFLC, based on well-established compartments, with their own rights and obligations, has facilitated the analysis of the mechanism according to which the Risk Register indicators are applied. Thus, in the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication, the organizational structure is based on twelve compartments, essential for its functioning:

1. *The Directorship*
2. *The Council of DFLC*
3. *The Quality Management Commission*
4. *The administrative body*
5. *The didactic compartment*
6. *The Specialization of Translation and Interpretation*
7. *The compartment of national and international relations*
8. *The Scientific Research Center*
9. *The compartment for the evaluation of the teaching and research staff's activity*
10. *The team that organizes and administers the Linguistic Competence Test*
11. *The compartment for the supervision of the teaching process*
12. *The compartment for teaching and research staff's promotion*

Since the position of Quality Manager was introduced in the organization chart of DFLC in 2012 and the commission of Quality Management was founded in 2016, the activity of the Department has improved considerably. It is worth emphasizing that no compartment in the DFLC's structure has a "High Risk" indicator and only three out of twelve compartments have a "Moderate risk" indicator. Therefore, we can assume that the *Implementation of Quality Management's Functioning Mechanism* has had a positive impact on the entire activity of the Department. The Quality Assurance principles that DFLC has been constantly improving for five years have led to significant achievements, such as:

- optimizing the internal audit procedures, in the context in which, during the past two years, DFLC had to prepare two sets of materials – one for the cycle of Bachelor Studies and one for the cycle of Master Studies– for the ARACIS evaluation, in order to have both these programs re-accredited;
- elaborating the self-evaluation files of all the members of DFLC's teaching staff, at the end of each academic year;
- constantly improving the curriculum, syllabi and extra-curricular activity plans, in compliance with the updated requirements of the European Union, the principles of university autonomy, the new global tendencies regarding teaching foreign languages and Translation Studies and the students' needs and requests;
- correlating the curricula of the study programs provided by DFLC with the current national and international technological and economic trends.

Quality assessment within the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication is based on several criteria, out of which the student-centered teaching process is the most important. One of the desiderata that most teachers of DFLC aim at is to comply with the healthy principle of "learning by doing", which implies both a practical form of teaching and a closer relationship with the students. The feedback from the students have always been a positive one, all the surveys and questionnaires they have completed throughout time showing that they appreciate the practical orientation of the courses and seminars and the familiar atmosphere during the classes.

Another criterion that DFLC has always tried to meet is a simple organization, with an appropriate number of well-prepared teachers, able to constantly maintain and improve the positive image that the Department has managed to create within the Technical University of Civil Engineering and in the field of Romanian academic education. At the same time, it is important for all the members of DFLC to maintain the Department among the best in UTCB and to obtain from ARACIS the qualification certificate indicating a "high degree of trust". This will lead to an increased level of motivation for reaching the highest standards in teaching and research, as well as for better organizing all the curricular and extra-curricular activities.

In the current economic context, a priority of DFLC, as well as of other academic sectors, is to have an efficient management and to correctly administer the material, financial and informational resources assigned to it by the University and by the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, it is essential for the Department to devise some strategies to attract funds from the public and private sector (e.g. through European programs, sponsorship contracts etc.), in order to improve and diversify its infrastructure, which means better resources for studying and doing research for both the teachers and the students. For example, better sources of information (e.g. free permanent access to the internet and Intranet, digital libraries, access to international databases, inter-library exchange of publications etc.), together with free programs of continuous training will stimulate the teaching staff to constantly improve their knowledge, which, in their turn, they will pass on to their students.

As it is the only department specialized in Philology in a Technical University and the only one that prepares students from two different specializations – Engineering (i.e. the students from seven faculties within UTCB) and Translation Studies (i.e. the students from the Specialization of Translation and Interpretation) – DFLC's teachers have an inter-disciplinary training, being capable of passing on both technical-scientific and linguistic knowledge, as well as practical abilities (e.g. the practical stage at the Specialization of Translation and Interpretation implies solid knowledge in Civil Engineering and Terminology). This is the reason why the quality assessment of their activities should focus on both these directions, since their mission is to offer a coherent set of scientific and linguistic knowledge and

skills, in compliance with the general requests on the job market and the specific competences required by the national and international social, economic and scientific context.

Due to its double specialization, the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication must constantly update its curricula, syllabi and methodology, which are periodically checked during the internal audit actions, the meetings of the teachers of a certain foreign language and the evaluation sessions. Moreover, the teaching staff must participate in the seminars, conferences or symposia organized by various faculties or departments in the structure of UTCB, with a view to improving their knowledge in the field of Engineering that they mostly deal with during a certain academic year. This activity is related to the national and international academic programs of lifelong learning, which teachers are supposed to take part in periodically.

Since research is one of the main components of an academic career, DFLC is fully committed to organizing seminars, Round Tables and conferences, to which both teachers and students are invited, in order to present the results of their scientific work and to create some groups of researchers who share similar interests. The annual International Conference organized by our Department, the traditional Round Table during the Week of Foreign Languages, the well-known symposia organized by the Faculty of Mechanical Equipment, in which the teachers and students of DFLC actively participate every year, are just a few examples about our preoccupations related to research. Furthermore, with the help of UTCB's publishing house, Conspress, the results of this research are promptly published, being thus efficiently disseminated among fellow teachers and researchers and, at the same time, made available for the students' use. The teachers from our Department have published books and manuals, many of which already are at the second or third edition, as well as conference volumes and collections of articles.

The University has supported our specific philological research by annually dedicating one or two issues of its Scientific Bulletin to foreign languages and communication. This has been a great opportunity for us to disseminate the results of our studies not only among our colleagues and students, but also among the teachers from the Engineering specializations, many of whom are interested in linguistic topics or simply want to improve their level of foreign languages. Thus, our research has become more transparent and we have had the possibility to receive feedback from people specialized in the fields in which we usually do the translations with our students.

Another positive factor in the development of research within the Department has been the Research Center of Specialized Translation and Inter-Cultural Communication, established in 2011. This Center has encouraged the participation of DFLC's teachers in national and international scientific manifestations, has organized some teams of researchers with similar interests in certain topics and has managed to get a lot of students involved in research activities, on their own or

together with one or several coordinating teachers. The achievements of these joints research programs are usually presented in articles published in the Scientific Bulletin or communicated at the Round Table during the Week of Foreign Languages.

Although they work for a Technical University, many teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication are renowned in the fields of Linguistics and Literature, their books, articles and translations being appreciated by top philologists. This is mainly due to the fact that DFLC, through its managing board and the Quality Management commission, has always checked the professional competence of its staff through periodical inspections, self-evaluation sheets, surveys and questionnaires from the students, thus complying with the principles of Quality Assurance, according to which didactic and scientific competence must be the main criterion for selecting, evaluating and promoting the teaching staff.

The correct implementation of Quality Management in a Department of Foreign Languages and Communication is a compulsory condition for the teaching and research activities to be carried out at the optimal standards. DFLC focuses on meeting the needs and expectations of all the factors implied in the educational process – teachers, students, Master students, representatives of the Ministry of Education or ARACIS evaluators – and makes all the efforts for enhancing the quality of teaching and research and for developing a responsible managerial and institutional culture, with a view to harmonizing its principles with those of European education. Besides, it permanently studies the tendencies at the local, regional and national level, regarding the socio-economic environment, in which our students should smoothly integrate after graduating from our specializations.

3.2. The Effects of Risk Register Implementation in the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication

As far as the policy in the field of Quality Management is concerned, the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication, together with the faculty it belongs to and the entire university, is deeply involved in the constant improvement of managerial standards, at all the levels and relevant positions. The decisive factors' commitment to modern leadership principles, implemented by the System of Quality Management within the University, translates into a permanent dialogue between the Heads of Departments, Deans, Vice-Rectors and the Rector, on the one hand, and the employees, on the other hand, and into peer or third-party evaluation, based on well-established criteria of professional competence.

In the attempt to strike a balance between all the factors involved in the teaching, research and management process, the principles of Quality Policy within DFLC mainly aim at:

- complying with all the legal provisions in force and with all the decisions made, in a hierarchical order, by the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, the Rector, the Management Board and the Senate of the University;

- satisfying the needs of students, teaching staff and leadership structures;
- adapting to the standards and practices of academic education in the European Union;
- constantly improving the performance and efficiency of the System of Quality Management and periodically informing the entire staff on the Quality principles and objectives;
- developing the concept of modern leadership in the specific context of academic education.

The criteria of Quality Evaluation, which allows DFLC to check the quality of its academic programs, are numerous, in accordance with the various directions of this Department's activity and with the main goals of tertiary education: professional competence, integration on the job market, leadership skills, meeting the employers' expectations etc. These criteria are:

- explicitly establishing the mission of DFLC within UTCB, together with its objectives and programs through strategies and operational programs;
- efficiently and transparently defining the abilities that an employee of the Department must have in order to get promoted to a higher academic degree or to fill a certain leadership position, in order to avoid any accusations of discrimination or unfair treatment;
- organizing fair competitions and ensuring equal opportunities to the employees, based on the same principles of transparency and lack of discrimination;
- devising curricula and syllabi at the highest levels of quality;
- ensuring the quality of DFLC's teaching staff, as far as their qualification, professional competence, interactive skills, teaching abilities, intellectual culture, initiative and commitment are concerned;
- providing the students with the possibility to freely express their opinions and to give a positive or negative feedback, which will be taken into consideration for improving the curricula and the teacher-student relationship;
- ensuring well-suited infrastructure for learning, doing research or communicating with other students or teachers (e.g. well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, libraries etc.);
- keeping up with the permanent changes on the job market and constantly adapting to the employers' needs;
- maintaining research within the Department at a high level, by organizing national and international scientific manifestations or joint research programs with partner universities;
- developing the mechanisms of Quality Assurance and self-evaluation.

The results of Quality Management implementation in the structure of DFLC, in compliance with the norms imposed by UTCB's Department of Quality Management, are noticeable at the following levels:

- specific training of DFLC's staff in the field of Quality Management;

- harmonizing the Department's activity with the latest modifications of the legal provisions in this domain;
- familiarizing the students with the principles of Quality Management and organizing student-oriented activities, in accordance with these principles.

Regarding the perspectives of Quality Management implementation, DFLC has set the following Quality objectives:

- passing from the concept of student-centered teaching to that of education centered on the results of studying (according to the recommendations of the European Union in this respect) and modifying the curricula and syllabi in compliance with this new approach;
- attracting as many students as possible to research activities, followed by the publication of their articles;
- preparing the students for easily passing the Linguistic Competence Test and encouraging them to sit in for this exam during the first session organized for them;
- relying on the principles of students' continuous assessment, for a more accurate evaluation of their performance throughout the semester or the academic year;
- improving ethical academic management within DFLC;
- enhancing research visibility in the fields chosen by each member of the Department's teaching staff.

Regarding the assignment of risk indicators to each of the twelve compartments, considered to be essential for the smooth functioning of DFLC, we think that, for the moment, the compartment of the Scientific Research Center should get the "M" indicator, which means "Moderate Risk". This compartment is currently trying to reorganize itself, after a period of almost two years during which it was seen as a weak point of the Department, because some issues of the Scientific Bulletin were not published in due time and, consequently, some authors withdrew their articles from publication. Furthermore, the volume of the conference organized by DFLC in 2016 has not been published yet and some authors complained about this delay. Nevertheless, the members of the Scientific Research Center make constant efforts to solve these problems as soon as possible and we hope that an optimal implementation of Quality Management in this compartment may lead to a rapid improvement in this situation.

In our opinion, the Scientific Research Center should channel its efforts in the direction of optimizing the management of scientific research, taking at least some of the following measures:

- appointing a new team to take charge of the publication of the Scientific Bulletin in due time;
- coordinating the editorial activity of the Department;
- mediating the relationship between the staff of DFLC and the representatives of the Conspress Publishing House;

- permanently communicating with the teachers of the Department, in order to find out about their intentions to publish new teaching materials;
- presenting, at the beginning of each academic year, the titles of the works that some members of DFLC are going to publish throughout that year, for a better perspective of each teacher's research interests;
- creating a database with the titles of the works published by the members of DFLC at Conspress and permanently updating it;
- informing the staff of the Department on the stages of the publication process;
- supervising the entire editorial activity by discussing the works during the periodical meetings of DFLC's staff and by making sure that the deadlines for publication are met;
- informing the members of the Department on the new publications that are available, both to the teachers and to the students, at UTCB's libraries and bookshops;
- attracting financial resources for the research infrastructure, from grants, services, donations and sponsorships;
- accessing European funds for research programs.

Another compartment to which the "M" indicator has been assigned is the Directorship of DFLC. The "Moderate Risk" in this case is considered to be the lack of constant communication between the Director and the members of various compartments, due to which some problems may arise, such as the delay in fulfilling some tasks or the failure to perform some compulsory activities (e.g. providing documents, participating in the monthly meetings of the Department, devising curricula, etc.). However, these are not major issues and can be easily solved by a correct implementation of Quality principles, focused on basic communication strategies, such as:

- informing all the members of DFLC in due time, through various means (e.g. e-mail, phone, written notes on the board etc.) about the organization of meetings and other activities;
- consulting the staff whenever important decisions have to be made (e.g. changing the curriculum, devising the organizational chart, introducing a new Master program etc.);
- having more face-to-face interactions with the members of the Department, rather than communicating via e-mail, in order to defuse potential workplace conflicts.

The third sector of DFLC's activity to which we have assigned a "Moderate Risk" indicator is the compartment for the evaluation of the teaching and research staff. The risk in this case is related to the fact that the teaching and research activity of some staff members is unbalanced, although they have to meet the same criteria. For example, each teacher in DFLC has to write at least three scientific articles per academic year, out of which one has to be published in the Scientific Bulletin of

UTCB, this activity being allocated a certain number of points on the evaluation or self-evaluation sheets. Nevertheless, this criterion is met only by some of the teachers and the compartment in charge with evaluating them has not taken any measures for solving this problem. Furthermore, the promotion opportunities are not announced with at least six months in advance, for all the eligible candidates to have time to prepare their files. Therefore, it is essential to apply the Quality principles for a fair treatment and a correct evaluation of all the teachers.

Through a rigorous and constant approach of the issues related to each compartment of an institution, one may get efficient control over the planned activities and significant reduction of the risk factors. This is the reason why the key word for describing Risk Management should always be "systematic". As Javier Mirabal pointed out in his study, we should focus not only on limiting the consequences of some events, but also on addressing their causes, so that similar situations would not repeat in the future. The best choice is a proactive management style, which implies conceiving and implementing some measures for identifying the potential risks before they start producing negative consequences on the objectives established, for example, by the Strategic Plan, the Operational Procedures or even the Managerial Plan of a certain compartment (cf. Mirabal, 2004).

All the conclusions of our research are based on a thorough study of the activity of all the twelve main compartments of our Department. The outcome of this study is contained in a synoptic table, in which all the Risk Indicators mentioned in this article are justified and all the measures that have to be taken in order to improve the situation of some sectors are detailed. The table contains information on the Department's Quality objectives, the description of the risk factors and the Risk indicators assigned to each compartment, the circumstances that may lead to risk occurrences and the strategy adopted for minimizing or eliminating the risks, the internal control instruments and the potential secondary risks.

4. Conclusions

By doing research on the chosen topic and through a minute analysis of the presented case study, we have intended to emphasize the importance of the existence in a Department of Foreign Languages and Communication of a Quality Management structure, represented by a Manager and a Deputy Manager, as well as to justify the certification of Quality Assurance in this sector of activity. The mission of the Quality Management Commission is to take interest in various activities and in the way they are carried out, to check if all the deadlines are met and all the objectives are fulfilled and to investigate if all the activities in the Department are correctly organized. Quality Assurance is strictly related to identifying the Risk Factors, which must be analyzed and isolated, for optimally solving the problems and for maintaining the Quality Certification. In any department, there may be risks and our analysis has presented the "potential risk factors" of some activities that may prevent further implementations. This is the reason why the objectives of Quality

Management, which we constantly aim at improving in our Department, must comply with the international standards in the field and harmonize with them.

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