



Structuring cooperation in doctoral research, transferrable skills training, and academic writing instruction in Ukraine's regions/

Структуризація співпраці щодо аспірантських досліджень, навчання універсальних навичок та академічного письма на регіональному рівні України

QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN

Quality assurance systems are to ensure production of project outputs at highest possible quality level, so that the established inter-HEI DocHubs will be recognized in their regions as providers of choice for PhD training: as partners in joint PhD programs, and as providers of transferrable skills and academic writing courses (as transfer credits) for students pursuing PhD studies in non-partner HEI.

High levels of quality will be ensured by incorporating internal and external QA mechanisms for verification of taught course curricula and delivery, and self-evaluation with regular follow-up between project management and staff.

Because sustainability of the DocHubs depends on their reputation, all QA reports from teaching – including student feedback and results (anonymous), instructor notes, improvement recommendations for trainers – will be published on the project website. A formal QA report on transferrable skills, academic writing, and speciality course pilots will be published in yr 2 on the project website. In addition, students engaged in speciality course pilots will be asked to undergo external QA by writing the traditional aspirantura speciality exam.

Academic writing course students will be tested upon course enrollment and after completion. Results of entrance testing of enrolling PhD students aimed at ensuring B2 level proficiency will provide benchmark for evaluating Master's level curricula congruence with international language training standards, and will form the basis for recommendations to relevant HEIs and MinEdu. Academic writing proficiency test results based on internationally recognized benchmarks (C1 level exam) will be used as external QA instruments for academic writing course pilots in each DocHub, and after program launch in y3.

In preparation for launch of joint PhD programs at the end of yr 2, each inter-HEI thematic research group will submit an application to license/pre-accredit their program (WP 3 – 3.4). Materials submitted to the MinEdu will be translated for EU experts to peer-review for both content and form. Recommendations will be submitted to both DocHub program designers, and to the MinEdu for implementation of improvements to program licensing procedures.

Instruments

- Surveys of students, teaching/research staff, supervisors, admin staff in DocHubs on procedures, processes – feedback to Code of Practice
- Collection of data for QA reports on transferrable skills, academic writing and speciality courses by each DocHub.
- Enrollment (B2 prerequisite) and course completion testing (C1 level – goal for 70% of students) for academic writing skills
- External QA for speciality courses – students write relevant aspirantura speciality exam
- Peer review of self-evaluation docs submitted for licensing new joint PhD programs

Procedure of course approval:

- one external peer-review report
- internal review by each university team
- EU expert peer-review

Evaluation of transferrable skills training results

After the initial pilot (involving co-teaching of each course by an EU-PC partner pair), a report on transferrable skills training results will be published on the project website. The report will include student feedback, grade distribution, instructor notes, curriculum content and delivery improvement recommendations for trainers. Data for the QA report will be collected by DocHub admin staff, and analyzed/written up by PC partner teaching staff in consultation with EU partners. Reports will be shared with MinEdu staff in Mth 6 of yr 2. A conference to discuss transferrable skills course content and QA will be held in Dnipropetrovsk in Mth 7 of yr 2 with materials published on the project website.

Evaluation of academic writing skills training results

After the initial pilot, a report on academic writing skills training results will be published on the project website. The report will include student feedback, grade distribution, instructor notes, curriculum content and delivery improvement recommendations for trainers. Data for the QA report will be collected by DocHub admin staff, and analyzed/written up by PC partner teaching staff in consultation with trainers from P1, P9, P10 and from the associate partner Cambridge English. Reports will be shared with MinEdu staff in Mth 11 of yr 2. A workshop to discuss academic writing course content and QA will be held in Kharkiv in Mth 12 of yr 2 with materials published on the project website.

Evaluation of speciality course results

Each subject-area working group will pilot up to 4 subject-specific doctoral courses in yr 2 (WP 3 – 3.3). A self-evaluation report will be written by each lead instructor and published on the project website together with student feedback, grade distribution, co-instructor notes, curriculum content and delivery improvement recommendations. After completing the full offering of subject-specific courses (min. 10 ECTS), students will write the traditional aspirantura speciality exam; results will be analyzed by the subject-area working group teaching staff, and incorporated into future program design. A conference to discuss QA results from the 5 inter-HEI thematic groups will be held in Mykolayiv in Mth 11 of yr 2 with materials published on the project website.

Peer-review of 5 inter-HEI PhD programs & seminar

As part of WP3 – 3.5, each subject-area working group will design an inter-HEI PhD program, and submit it for licensing during yr 2. As part of the licensing process, external experts will evaluate the proposed subject-specific course curricula, and also the transferrable skills and academic writing course offering. This process represents a pre-accreditation exercise, and requires a mandatory review and site visit by MinEdu experts. In the context of this project, additional feedback for each program will be provided because submitted licensing materials will be translated into English and provided to EU partners for review. Received feedback from MinEdu and EU experts will be reviewed during a program seminar at the start of yr 3 in Kyiv (hosted by IHE). Program improvement suggestions will be implemented in yr3 by each DocHub, but the peer-review process will also result in the formulation of recommendations for MESU regarding licencing/accreditation procedures and requirements for the opening of 3rd cycle programs.