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“Change in Classroom: Promoting Innovative Teaching & Learning to  
Enhance Student Learning Experience in Eastern Partnership Countries”,

PRINTeL

**VANADZOR STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**TEACHING STAFF DEVELOPMENT CENTRE’S (TSDC)**  
**OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR 2019-2021**

VANADZOR – 2018

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## **1. MISSION AND VISION**

**MISSION:** Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center (Continuing Education) of Vanadzor State University is aimed at raising the commitment level of the university teaching staff and the development of their professional, pedagogical and research capacities.

**VISION:** Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Vanadzor State University's Lifelong Learning Center is a leading educational technology and professional development center that will conduct teaching staff qualification enhancement programs through innovative teaching / learning tools and best practices in line with the university's strategic goals, creating a new educational environment equivalent to modern education quality assurance requirements.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

The teaching staff training system in VSU was introduced in 2012 in the Center of Supplementary Education at Vanadzor State Pedagogical Institute. The training of the teaching staff is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the strategic development plan of the University. Since 2012, the "The Educational and Scientific Program for Professional Development of Academic Staff through credit-based system" has been put into effect, according to which the trainings are held in a five-year cycle. The training process of the teaching staff is a continuous multistage process in compliance with credit system, the first phase of which covers the period-of 2012-2017.

In 2015, the Center of Supplementary Education was renamed into Vanadzor State University's Lifelong Learning Center, with an incomparably expanded function. The training of the teaching staff continues to be one of the most important functions of the center.

The peculiarities of VSU teaching staff development program are as follows:

1. Educational, research, academic and methodological sectors, with compulsory and optional components;
2. Workload measurement with ECTS credits;
3. Total workload – 30 credits, and duration – 5 years;
4. Trainee attestation in.

The training program is implemented in the following areas:

1. Education sector:
  - 1.1. English in the academic environment;
  - 1.2. Legal preparation;
  - 1.3. Pedagogical - Psychological Preparation;
  - 1.4. Professional preparation.
2. Research sector:
  - 2.1. Publications;
  - 2.2. Report in conferences.

The program is presented in *Appendix 1*.

In 2017, the results of the first round of the five-year program was summed up, according to which 161 university professors have been trained so far. The credit-based teaching staff training program has greatly contributed to the growth of legal awareness of the teaching staff; to the formation of a practice-sharing experience; to the development of the skills required to use innovative technologies and their effective introduction in the classroom.

At the end of the first phase of the teaching staff training program based on credit system, a number of problems have been identified:

1. Imperfection of needs analysis system;
2. Low level of lecturers' training motivation;
3. Absence of training needs separation for beginner and experienced teaching staff;
4. Insufficient application of innovative educational technologies.

### **3. THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF THE ACTIVITIES FOR STAFF QUALIFICATION IMPROVEMENT COORDINATING UNIT OF LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER (CONTINUING EDUCATION)**

The main functions of the activities for Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center (Continuing Education) are as follows:

1. Plan and organize courses for university lecturers directed to their professional development.
2. Expand the possibilities of applying innovative information technologies in the educational processes.
3. Implement pedagogical consultation.
4. Organize conferences, workshops and seminars for sharing experiences.
5. Promote the dissemination of best teaching practices and the initiatives promoting exchange-programs;
6. Ensure continuous development of the general and professional competences of the Center staff.
7. Publish different articles, manuals, guides, etc. designed to teach and spread contemporary teaching methods.

#### **3.1. Professional Ability Development Courses for University lecturers**

There is a teaching staff training system at the university, and a special attention will be paid to the modernization by introducing and developing new educational and information technologies in the context of the 2019-2021 program. Particularly, the introduction of European universities' experience will be of great importance.

In the first phase, the teaching of new educational and information technologies will be most relevant to those experienced lecturers who have passed the first stage of courses and mastering ICT specific tools can increase their qualifications. In the next phase, beginner lecturers will also be included by having some knowledge and skills at the startup level.

As a new qualitative achievement, it is envisaged to introduce the following courses with 1 credit workload per course corresponding to 10 hours of classroom plus 20 hours of independent study:

1. Active Learning, with special focus on Technology Enhanced Collaborative Learning
2. Active Learning in the Flipped Classroom

3. Active learning & ICT-enhanced teaching: m-learning & gamification
4. Video as a Learning tool for teachers & students: Video Lecturing & promoting Interaction in the Classroom
5. Hybrid/Blended Teaching & Learning.

In 2018, surveys about teaching and learning methods and needs analysis have been conducted among students and lecturers of the University in order to determine the direction of the course. (<https://www.printel.am/uploads/page/pdfs/P3.%20VSU%20Need%20Analysis%20Report.pdf>):

### **Course 1. Active Learning, with special focus on Technology Enhanced Collaborative Learning**

**Course Goals-** The training course intends to train teaching staff in enhancing active student learning with special focus on technology enhanced collaborative learning in the classroom. This helps teachers to replace the traditional teaching mode of dominating lecturing and monologue into dialogue and more student involvement through planning, designing, and delivering the classroom teaching via more contact moments with students.

**Learning outcomes-** On completion of the course, the participant will have reached the following main outcomes:

- what active learning (and activation of students) actually means and why it should be stimulated
- what collaborative learning comprises and why this improves the quality of the learning experience
- how you can actually implement active and collaborative learning
- how technology could help you in achieving an enhanced learning experience

Training materials, articles, and presentations are available at <https://sites.google.com/view/printel-kul/home>

### **Course 2. Active Learning in the Flipped Classroom**

**Course Goals-**The overall aim of the course is to prepare teachers in higher education for designing and developing courses that support active learning with the use of digital tools according to the flipped classroom design approach.

**Learning outcomes-** On completion of the course, the participant should be able to:

- Discuss how active learning and the use of digital tools can support students' learning
- Use digital tools to support active learning during a teaching and learning activity and to prepare course material
- Design teaching and learning activities that takes advantage of digital tools
- Design the outline of a course where digital course material and digital tools for interaction support active learning

Training materials, articles, and presentations are available at <https://old.liu.se/didacticum/printel?l=en>

### **Course 3. Active learning & ICT-enhanced teaching: m-learning & gamification**

**Course Goals-**In this course the participants will discuss how to design gamified class activities and how to make use of mobile devices in class and outside class to activate students learning. Active learning implies interactivity between the tools and resources and the learners, and also interaction between teachers and learners. This educational transformation lays on seeing the teaching and learning processes from a different perspective in which the learner is the centre and ICT is the medium. In education gamification is an educational strategy to motivate students to learn by the application of gaming mechanics or video game design elements in learning environments. The goal can be achieved using digital tools and resources or in a more traditional way, but ICT can help us in the implementation of this innovative teaching strategy. Mobile learning involves the use of mobile technology, either alone or in combination with other information and communication technology (ICT), to enable learning anytime and anywhere. Learning can unfold in a variety of ways: people can use mobile devices to access educational resources, connect with others, or create content, both inside and outside classrooms.

**Learning outcomes-** On completion of the course, the participant will have reached the following main outcomes:

- A map of gamification and mobile learning ideas to adopt in their teaching contexts
- A checklist of designing, guiding and evaluating implications
- A design of a gamified teaching intervention
- A timeline of personal working steps

Additional training materials, as well as contact with the expert group, are available at the University of Barcelona Research Group website: <http://www.ub.edu/realtic/en/>



#### **Course 4. Video as a Learning tool for teachers & students: Video Lecturing & promoting Interaction in the Classroom**

**Course Goals-** This course will address several concrete Teaching & Learning scenarios on how to use video as a learning tool with practical cases, both in class as outside class, and examples of tools that teachers can use to motivate and engage students increasing the quality of their learning process.

There are various ways to effectively use video as a learning tool and with this course teachers will have the opportunity to approach several teaching strategies that align pedagogical aims, learning outcomes with video, inside and outside the classroom. Participants will reflect and discuss the role, different implications and challenges of using video in teaching and learning and will be presented with tools that will contribute for the enhancement of their teaching practices.

**Learning outcomes-** On completion of the course, the participant will have reached the following main outcomes:

- Recognize the importance of using video in teaching and learning
- Understand the significance and added value of video in teaching and learning in different scenarios
- Relate their practices and expectations with the experiences presented
- Recognize different learning scenarios that use video on online learning
- Identify different sets and contexts in their practices where video can be used effectively.

Training materials, articles, and presentations are available at <https://sites.google.com/g.uporto.pt/printel/home/tot-course-programme/presentations>

#### **Course 5. Hybrid/Blended Teaching & Learning**

**Course Goals-**The training course intends to train teaching staff in designing and delivering Hybrid/Blended Teaching and Learning as a new mode of instruction – new methodology. This will introduce the training participants to the Hybrid/Blended T&L concept and approach, framework, required infrastructures through reviewing the Pedagogical perspectives with concrete cases.

**Learning outcomes** - On completion of the course, the participant should be able to:

- Get an understanding of online learning and communication processes and the differences between presence teaching and online teaching
- Get familiar with the technological infrastructure
- Get familiar with pedagogical concepts for blended teaching

- Discuss the modified roles of the teacher in an online setting and appreciate reflection
- Learn about online collaborative tools to support project based courses
- Create multimedia products such as presentations, videos or e-books under didactic aspects for their own teaching/learning situation

Training materials, articles, and presentations are available at <https://www.printel.am/category/workshops---seminars/tot-course-in-graz>

In 2019 January-February, for the implementation of the process, an equivalent change will be made to the curriculum of the lecturers' training plan and will be submitted to the approval of the university administration.

The trainings are planned to be held in February-March.

We will be able to increase the motivation of the teaching staff and the effectiveness of the training by engaging all stakeholders in organizing the qualification improvement process and providing feedback.

### **3.2. Pedagogical Consultation**

The organization of pedagogical consultation is planned to be carried out in collaboration with the Unit employee, the retraining lecturers and the heads of the chairs. A creative environment will be originated within the framework of pedagogical consultation for the exchange of knowledge, skills and teaching experience. The performance indicators will be the creation of the educational program specification, formulation of educational outcomes, development of pedagogical and psychological skills, exchange of experience, provision of consultations for different infrastructures, etc.

### **3.3. Conferences, workshops and seminars**

At the University the role of conferences, workshops and seminars is highlighted as opportunities for dissemination and sharing best practices, creating platforms for discussion, and expanding cooperation framework. It is envisaged to organize conferences starting from 2020 with certain results. Workshops will be organized every semester at the intra-departmental, regional and university levels in different platforms for discussing university teaching, building and development of learning skills by innovative methods.

To evaluate productive work performed by the participants of conferences, workshops, and organizers mechanisms for raising motivation will be created and implemented.

### **3.4. Networking and dissemination of best practices**

By joining the Virtual Academy of Teaching and Learning (VATL) the teaching staff of the university will be able to collaborate with the trained staff of partner universities, to create international forums, exchange ideas, methods, teaching tools and more.

Collaboration can be purposeful and target.

- according to the courses,
- according to the application of pedagogical or information program method,
- according to organizational practices, etc.

The involvement of new members in networking, as well as the provision of internal and external online collaboration environment is highlighted at the University.

The dissemination of the acquisition will include regional educational structures.

### **3.5. Development Programs**

Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center based on the gained experience, will continue to engage in international programs that are designed to enhance the capacity of the Unit, to develop pedagogical skills of lecturers, and to introduce innovative techniques.

The acquired experience will be used by the Unit in order to increase qualification improvement of the University educational support staff.

The acquired experience will enable to act with new initiatives and projects that can be presented as new projects anticipated by the European Commission-funded or local (regional) management systems.

### **3.6. Publications and Study Materials**

Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center will develop, publish and distribute educational and methodological (printed and electronic) materials to share the experience gained and exchange best practices. They can be:

- Booklets,
- Manuals,
- Professional suggestions,

- Periodicals,
- Materials summarizing the results of conferences, workshops and seminars,
- The results and experience of teaching-related research,
- News related to Armenian and European partner universities, etc.

#### **4. ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES**

The coordination of the staff' qualification improvement activities at the Vanadzor State University is carried out by the Lifelong Learning Center. The Center is administered by the head and coordinated by the Vice Rector for Educational Affairs.

##### **4.1. Structure**

Lifelong Learning Center has three employees: Head of the lifelong learning center, Coordinator of the training activities of the university staff, Coordinator of the language teaching activities. The center's activities are implemented by VSU Lifelong Learning Center's regulation (approved by the Academic Council of VSU on 24.12.2015).

The functions of the Center are as follows:

- raising the qualification of the university staff and their training,
- continuous development of general, subject-specific and research skills of the university staff;
- development and consolidation of language skills and proficiency for different groups based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages;
- organization of retraining, qualification upgrading and requalification courses through effective combination and application of case-studies, internet and telecommunication technologies, on the basis of labor-market requirements;
- increasing employment opportunities for vulnerable social groups through short-term trainings;
- integration into the international community in terms of supplementary and continuing education and employment development.

The Center closely cooperates with the Chairs and University Quality Assurance Center. The lecturer-experts conducting the training courses take part in the activities of Lifelong Learning Center.

##### **4.2. Role descriptions**

The functions and responsibilities of the employees of Lifelong Learning Center are defined by the Center's regulations and official passports.

1. The Head of the Center is responsible for providing continuous education services to external and internal stakeholders at the University, also for the

implementation of planning, guidance, coordination and monitoring related to the training of the teaching staff.

2. The coordinator of the training activities of the university staff organizes and plans for the above-mentioned activities for the University's internal stakeholders, carries out an analysis, participates in the creation of teaching materials and the organization organization of consultations, as well as supports the implementation of new teaching methods.
3. Coordinator of the language teaching activities implements the organization and planning for the above-mentioned activities, carries out an analysis and participates in the creation of teaching materials, organization of consultations, supports the introduction of new teaching methods.
4. The lecturer-experts involved in the Center's activities conduct trainings, participate in the dissemination of best practices, carries out research, participates in conferences and seminars.

#### **4.3. Cooperation, communication**

Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center collaborates with all the departments of the University. The Unit seeks to ensure feedback and communication with stakeholders.

In this regard, the collaboration with the Department of Human Resource Management of the University, Electronic Educational Technology Management and Service Department, Media and Publishing Department is special.

- As a result of collaboration with the Department of Human Resource Management, needs identification and analysis as well as presentation of the proposals are carried out to increase the qualification of the teaching staff.
- Electronic Educational Technology Management and Service Department supports the implementation and application of new teaching methods.
- Through Media and Publishing Department, Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center has the ability to disseminate information (trainings, seminars, conferences, research, publications) and to create new collaborative links. For online communication, the university's internal networking system uses the relevant web site (<http://www.vsu.am/artaqinkaper/erazmusplus/printel>), Facebook page of Lifelong Learning Center is (<https://web.facebook.com/groups/266060760551842/>).

#### **4.4. Quality assurance**

Quality assurance activities, which are highlighted among the functions of the Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center, are the followings:

- Creation of performance assessment indicators;
- Evaluation and analysis of periodically-conducted activities;
- Improvement of educational services through the identification of stakeholders' needs;
- Management system improvement of the academic staff quality enhancement activities;

Quality assurance activities are carried out in collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Center through learning environment assessment tools and methods.

#### **4.5. Capacity Building**

A number of activities are envisaged to be undertaken to continually develop the skills and abilities of Lifelong Learning Center staff:

- Clarify the official duties of the Unit staff as much as possible;
- Clearly plan staff development process and expected outcomes;
- Ensure the continuous development of the general and professional competences of the staff;
- Promote staff communication, stakeholder motivation and skill development aimed at maintaining close relations with public;
- Assist staff participation in international and networking workshops, conferences and forums with the aim of promoting experience exchange;
- Stimulate innovative ideas and initiatives;
- Cooperate with Armenian and European universities to carry out the planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement procedures of the teaching staff qualification.

#### **4.6. International relations**

In order to carry out internationalization-related activities, Staff qualification improvement coordinating Unit of Lifelong Learning Center cooperates with the Department of International Cooperation and Relations of the University, which is currently engaged in the Internationalization Strategy of the University (BOOST, ERASMUS +).

Within the frame of ERASMUS + PRINTeL program close cooperation is being planned with the University of Porto, the University of Barcelona, FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences in Graz, Linkopings University and Catholic University of Leuven attaching great importance to the staff professional development.

Within the frame of cooperation it is also envisaged to join the Virtual Academy of Teaching and Learning (VATL).

## Appendix 1

### Structure of Qualification Improvement Program

<b>1. EDUCATIONAL BLOCK</b>	
<b>1.1.</b>	<b>General training</b>
<b>1.1.1</b>	<b>English in the academic environment</b>
<b>1.1.2</b>	<b>Information Technologies</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer literacy (application programs: Word, Excel, Access, Internet Explorer etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of classroom presentations(Power Point etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied software packages (MATLAB, LabVIEW etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of training Case-packages</li> </ul>
<b>1.1.3</b>	<b>Pedagogical -psychological training</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern methods of teaching, learning and evaluation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basics of developing educational programs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedagogical Psychology</li> </ul>
<b>1.1.4</b>	<b>Legal training</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative regulation of employee rights and responsibilities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions of the Law on Education</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studying University's different regulations and the statute of VSU SNCO</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Professional training</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Other forms of qualification improvement (training, internship, summer school, etc.)</b>
<b>2. RESEARCH-METHODICAL STRUCTURE</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Publications</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Reporting at Forums ( at workshop or conference)</b>