



Advocacy Establishment for Students through Ombudsman Position
TRAINING COURSE
AZERBAIJANI, GEORGIAN, UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES

Joint Didactic Commission : duties, composition and sample activities

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Who am I

- Pierpaolo Vittorini – <http://vittorini.univaq.it>
 - *Research profile*
 - Health Informatics (technology-enhanced learning, artificial intelligence, algorithms for disease and fire outbreaks, devices/apps)
 - Author of more than 90 publications in international and national journals and conferences
 - Project Coordinator of the EU FP7 TERENCE project
 - *Teaching profile*
 - Professor of Health Informatics and Information Systems in bachelors', masters' and PhD degrees
 - *Institutional profile*
 - Coordinator of the Public Health Section of the Department of Life, Health and Environmental Sciences
 - Member of the Joint Didactic Commission of the Department of Life, Health and Environmental Sciences



Outline

- Joint Didactic Commission
 - Regulatory framework
 - Composition
- Sample Activities
 - Annual Report
 - AVA system
 - Structure of the Annual Report
 - Questionnaire for the Perceived Didactic Quality
 - Approval of the Didactic Regulation and the SUA-CdS
 - Teaching Contracts



JOINT DIDACTIC COMMISSION

Regulatory framework and composition

Joint Didactic Commission

- National regulatory framework
 - Law 240/2010, art. 2, p. 2, comma g, institutes in each department a professors-students joint commission, competent to
 - monitor the didactic offering and quality as well as the services offered by professors to students;
 - identify indicators for evaluating the results;
 - formulate opinions on the activation and suppression of courses of study.





Joint Didactic Commission

- Institutional framework
 - Statute of the University of L'Aquila, art. 35, institutes in each department a professors-students joint commission, with the following functions:
 - monitor the didactic offer and quality as well as the services offered by professors to students;
 - identify proper indicators to evaluate the results of the activities mentioned above;
 - express an opinion about the institution, activation or suppression of a course of study;
 - evaluate, verify and survey different aspects of the didactic activity, also throughout the preparation of specific questionnaires to submit to students;
 - verify the outcomes of orientation and tutoring;
 - express opinions about actions to improve the didactic organization, didactic regulation of all courses, and the coherence between the credits assigned to each course wrt the program.



Composition

- It is chaired by a President and is composed of a same number of professors and students
- For instance, in the case of the Joint Didactic Commission of the MeSVA Department
- PROFESSORS
 - Prof.ssa Fernanda Amicarelli (President)
 - Prof. Maurizio Biondi
 - Prof. Guido Macchiarelli
 - Prof.ssa Rita Roncone
 - Prof. Pierpaolo Vittorini
- STUDENTS
 - Marianna Dell’Orso
 - Emanuele Du Marteau
 - Mauro Di Palma
 - Dario Parente
 - Francesco Crispi



An Historical Note on Student Representation

- 1948 – Perugia – 3rd National Congress of Universities – Establishment of the Unione Nazionale Universitaria Rappresentativa Italiana (UNURI), i.e., Italian National University Union of Representation
 - The main aim was to coordinate at a National level all the request coming from students from the local Universities
 - It was also nicknamed as the “little Parliament”, since it reflected the Italian political parties, i.e., UGI (left), Intesa (center) and Fuan (right)
- During the years, the radicalization of the political life lead to the end of UNURI, of the students’ movement and large changes within the students organizations

Duties in a nutshell

- In summary, the Joint Didactic Commission expresses a binding opinion regarding almost all didactic aspects
 - The extremely important point is that it is a binding opinion coming from a collegiate decision in which professors and students are represented in the same number
 - The didactic aspects can be, e.g.,
 - Quality of the didactic
 - Didactic Regulation of the Course of Study
 - Teaching contracts





SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

#1 – Annual Report

#2 – Approval of the Didactic Regulations

#3 – Teaching Contracts



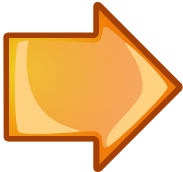
SAMPLE ACTIVITY #1 – Annual Report

- The Annual Report developed by the Joint Didactic Commission is just a piece of the AVA system
 - The AVA system is the set of activities related to law 240/2010 and decree 19/2012, that introduce a system which gives a periodic accreditation of courses of study (and Universities), and their evaluation in terms quality, efficiency and outcomes
 - AVA = Auto-evaluation, periodic eValuation, Accreditation
 - The main objective of the AVA system is called Quality Assurance
 - Phases
 - *Auto-evaluation* : internal procedure finalized to plan and evaluate the didactic quality
 - *Periodic evaluation* : external procedure finalized to evaluates the courses of study
 - *Accreditation* : given the outcomes of the periodic evaluation, a final judgment is the Course of Study can be delivered

Auto-evaluation (actors)

- Auto-evaluation

- Actors

- *Course of Study board* : under the responsibility of a President, defines the didactic objectives and designs the actions needed to reach them, identifies the evaluation methods coherent with the planned didactic objectives, monitors and evaluates the implementation of the actions, also defining the possible corrective actions
- 
 - *Joint Didactic Commission* : writes an annual report about the quality and efficiency of the didactic structures, also proposing actions finalized to improve the didactic quality
 - *Evaluation Unit* : verifies the quality and efficacy of the didactic, evaluate the overall efficacy of the AQ, expresses recommendations to increase the didactic quality

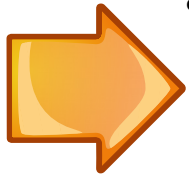


Auto-evaluation (documents)

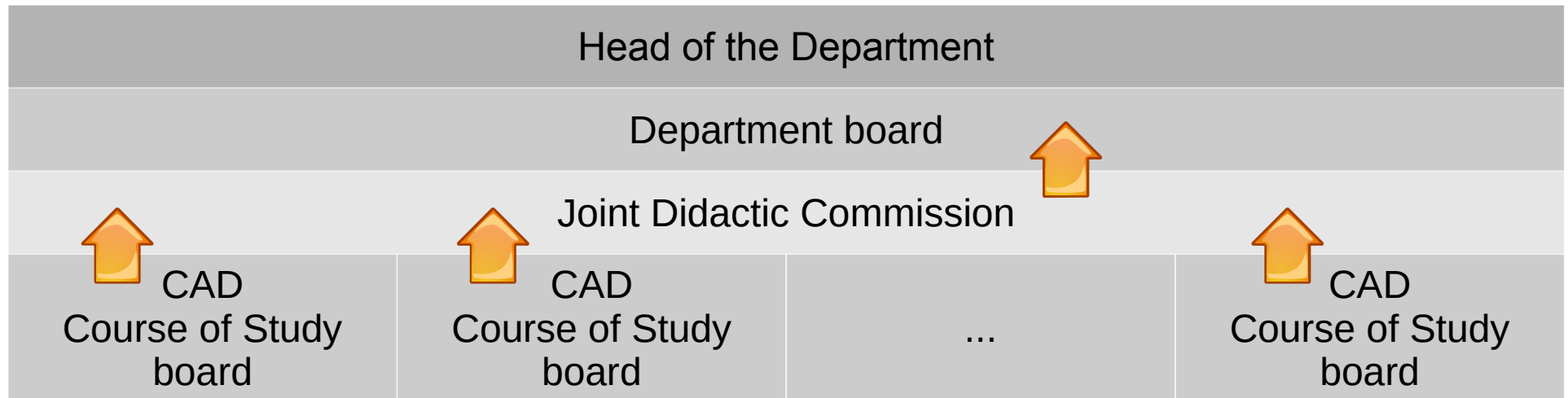
- Auto-evaluation

- Documents

- *SUA-CdS* : written by the Course of Study board, is the document that contains all the information regarding the Course of Study (e.g., professors, didactic objectives, didactic calendar)
 - *Review report* : written by the Course of Study board, is the final act regarding the activities carried out during the academic year to promote the didactic quality and efficacy
 - *Annual report* : written by the Joint Didactic Commission, is the final act containing the proposals for improving the didactic quality and efficacy
 - in connection with the learning outcomes,
 - by taking into account the needs of the economic and productive system,
 - as to sustain the students' employment and personal development needs
 - *Annual report* : written by the Evaluation Unit, is the final act regarding the application of the criteria used to verify the efficiency and economic sustainability of the didactic activities and outcomes



Didactic Organization



- The document flow
 - In the Department
 - Starts from the Course of Study board (CAD),
 - Proceeds to the Joint Didactic Commission,
 - Ends with the final approval of the Department board, chaired by the Head of the Department
 - The Evaluation Unit is not part of the Department authorities



Annual Report

- For each Course of Study, as required by the AVA system, the Commission has to answer to questions, related to the following seven points:
 - A) knowledge and abilities to be transmitted to students, by taking into account the needs of the economic and productive system, as required to sustain their employment and personal development
 - B) coherence between the planned didactic activities and the achieved outcomes
 - C) qualification of professors, methods for transmitting knowledge and abilities, didactic material, classrooms, laboratories, equipment, wrt the need for reaching the planned didactic outcomes
 - D) validity of the methods used to assess the knowledge and abilities transmitted to students wrt the planned didactic outcomes
 - E) completeness and efficacy of the review procedure and the corrective actions
 - F) management of the questionnaires for the perceived didactic quality
 - G) availability and correctness of the public information of the SUA-CdS document

A) Knowledge and abilities to be transmitted to students

- In the case of the annual report 2015/2016, for the Course of Study of Medicine and Surgery

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
A1 : Does the SUA-CdS contain or recall the official documents in section A1?	SUA-CdS, section A1	The Commission takes note of the need for including or recalling the official internal documents	The Commission proposes to include or recall the official internal documents in section A1
A2 : Are regional/national/international field studies taken into account? In the affirmative case, with which outcomes?	SUA-CdS, section A1	No additional documents were referenced in the document	The Commission proposes to include in section A1 the available field studies
A3 : Do the stakeholders give useful information about the expected knowledge and abilities in students?	SUA-CdS, section A1	The Commission did not find the results of the meetings with the stakeholders	The Commission proposes to include in section A1 the results of the meetings with the stakeholders
A4 : Are the results of the meetings with the stakeholders updated?	SUA-CdS, section A1	The Commission did not find updated results of the meetings with the stakeholders	The Commission proposes to include in section A1 the results of the meetings with the stakeholders
A5 : Are ongoing meetings with the stakeholders planned?	SUA-CdS, section A1	The Commission notices that section A1 of SUA-CdS does not contains the calendar of the meetings with the stakeholders	The Commission proposes to include in section A1 the calendar of the meetings with the stakeholders

B) Coherence between the planned didactic activities and the achieved outcomes

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
B1 : Are there cases of learning outcomes of single courses not coherent with those of the Course of Study	SUA-CdS – section A4.a Course programs	The Commission confirms the coherence	No actions to be taken
B2 : Are the different working profiles well defined?	SUA-CdS – sections A2.a, A4.b, sections A4.c	The Commission confirms that the working profiles are well defined, as well as the employment possibilities	No actions to be taken
B3 : Are the different work profiles created by the Course of Study coherent with the demand coming from the society?	SUA-CdS – sections A1, A2.a, A2.b	The Commission confirms the coherence of the work profiles with the demand	No actions to be taken
B4 : Are the learning outcomes clearly defined with the Dublin descriptors?	SUA-CdS – sections A4.b, A4.c Course programs	The Commission confirms that the learning outcomes are clearly and completely defined	No actions to be taken

C) Qualification of professors, methods for transmitting knowledge and abilities, ...

- For this part of the annual reporting, the Joint Didactic Commission largely uses the results of the questionnaires compiled by the students regarding the perceived didactic quality
- The process
 - When a student registers to an exam, he/she is required to fill in a questionnaire regarding the perceived didactic quality
 - The collected data is automatically analyzed and made accessible through the internal information system
 - The analyses are distributed – with different levels of aggregation and detail – to the Head of the Department, Joint Didactic Commission, Presidents of Courses of Study, Professors





Questionnaire

- A questionnaire regarding a course is compiled online by a student, right before registering to an exam
 - It should limit the biases connected with the exam outcome (e.g., a student may evaluate better a course that passed with high marks)
 - It should guarantee that a student actually followed the course (a student that did not reach the 75% of frequencies is not allowed to register to the related exam)
- The questionnaire
 - Is made up of 12 questions, each accepting an answer of either
 - 1=Definitively no, 2=More no than yes, 3=More yes than no, 4=Definitively yes
 - For all questions, the higher the answer, the better the perceived quality
 - Investigates three main areas
 - Course (with 4 questions)
 - Didactic activity (with 6 questions)
 - Satisfaction (with 2 questions)

Questionnaire – Course

- Course

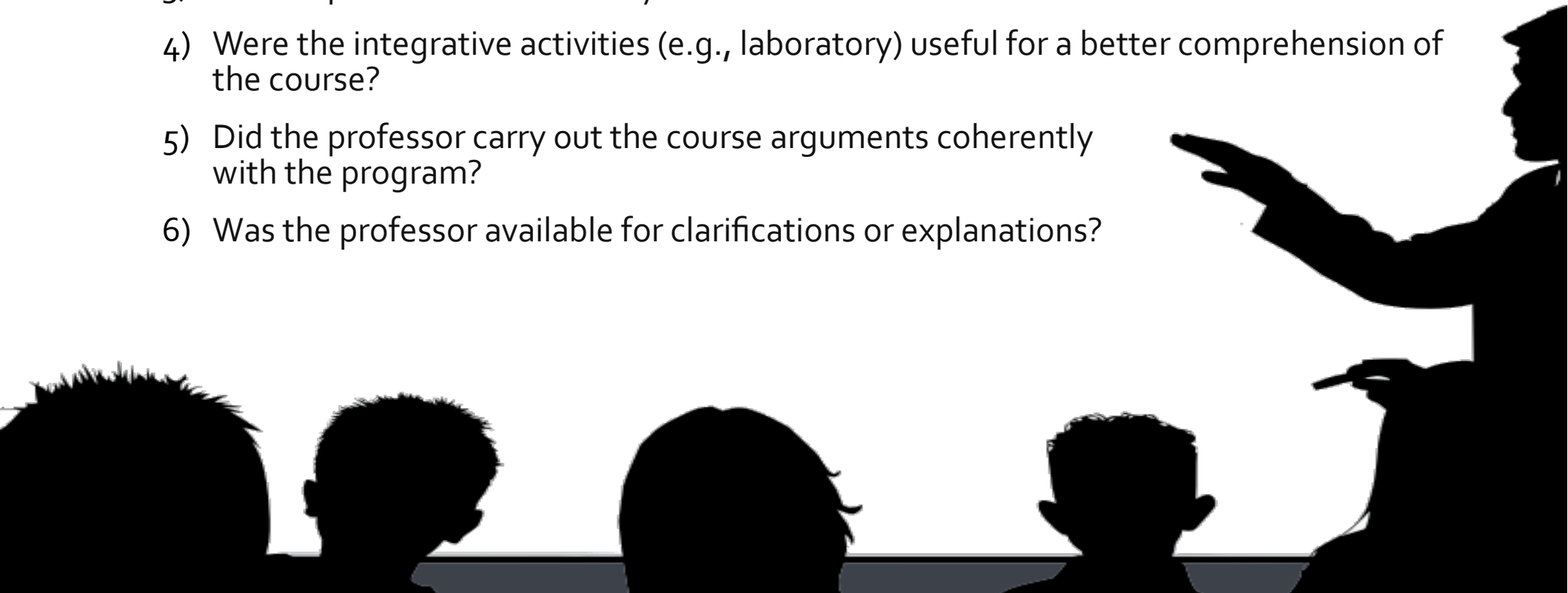
- 1) Is your preliminary knowledge enough to understand the course content?
- 2) Is the study required to pass the exam proportional to the credits assigned to the course?
- 3) Is the learning material appropriate to pass the exam?
- 4) Was the examination method clearly defined by the professor?





Questionnaire – Didactic activity

- Didactic activity
 - 1) Did the professor respect the assigned hours?
 - 2) Did the professor motivate your interest into the course content?
 - 3) Did the professor teach clearly?
 - 4) Were the integrative activities (e.g., laboratory) useful for a better comprehension of the course?
 - 5) Did the professor carry out the course arguments coherently with the program?
 - 6) Was the professor available for clarifications or explanations?



Questionnaire – Satisfaction

- Interest and satisfaction
 - 1) Were you interested in the course contents?
 - 2) In summary, were you satisfied by the course?



Types of analyses

- For each question
 - Absolute and relative frequencies
 - For each answer
 - By transforming each answer into a dichotomous variable
 - Negative = Definitively no + More no than yes
 - Positive = More yes than no + Definitively yes
 - Average rating



Absolute and relative frequencies, average rating

- For instance, for the academic year 2015/16, for the Course of Study of Medicine and Surgery

Question	N.	Absolute frequencies				Relative frequencies				Average rating
		Definitivel y no	More no than yes	More yes than no	Definitivel y yes	Definitivel y no	More no than yes	More yes than no	Definitivel y yes	
...										
11. In summary, were you satisfied by the course?	6297	164	499	3099	2535	2.60%	7.92%	49.21%	40.26%	3.27 / 4
...										
		Negative		Positive		Negative		Positive		
11. In summary, were you satisfied by the course?	6297	663		5634		10,52%		89,47%		1.89 / 2

C) Qualification of professors, methods for transmitting knowledge and abilities, ... (2)

- In the case of the annual report for the Course of Study of Medicine and Surgery

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
C1 : Are professors qualified to reach the planned learning outcomes?	1- Qualification elements (e.g., courses covered by contracts, coherence of SSD and professor background) 2- Results of the perceived didactic quality	1- The Commission did not find critical objective elements 2- The results regarding question #12 of the questionnaire regarding the perceived didactic quality, i.e., general satisfaction, are positive in circa the 90% of the cases, in detail: a) More yes than no – 49.3% b) Definitively yes – 40.2%	No actions to be taken
...			

C) Qualification of professors, methods for transmitting knowledge and abilities, ... (3)

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
...			
C2 : Are the teaching methodologies adequate to reach the planned level of knowledge for the students?	Results of the perceived didactic quality – questions #2 (workload proportional to the credits), #7 (clarity), #8 (integrative activities), #10 (professor availability)	<p>The Commission considers the results adequate, given the following analyses:</p> <p><i>Question #2</i> a) More yes than no – 46.6% b) Definitively yes – 34.0%</p> <p><i>Question #7</i> a) More yes than no – 44.2% b) Definitively yes – 45.5%</p> <p><i>Question #8</i> a) More yes than no – 42.8% b) Definitively yes – 43.4%</p> <p><i>Question #10</i> a) More yes than no – 43.7% b) Definitively yes – 47.9%</p>	No actions to be taken
...			


C) Qualification of professors, methods for transmitting knowledge and abilities, ... (4)

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
...			
C3 : Is the learning material adequate to reach the planned level of knowledge for the students?	Results of the perceived didactic quality – question #3 (learning material)	The Commission considers the material adequate, given the following results: a) More yes than no – 45.6% b) Definitively yes – 40.2%	No actions to be taken
C4 : Are classrooms and laboratories adequate to reach the planned level of knowledge for the students?	SUA-CdS – section B4	The Commission considers the classrooms and laboratories adequate	No actions to be taken




D) Validity of the methods used to assess the knowledge and abilities transmitted to students

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
D1 : Are the evaluation methods respected and adequate to differentiate the different levels of acquired knowledge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Results of the perceived didactic quality – question #4 (examination methods)- SUA-CdS – sections B1.b, A4.b	The Commission considers the methods adequate: a) More yes than no – 34.4% b) Definitely yes – 55.2%	No actions to be taken




E) Completeness and efficacy of the review procedure and corrective actions

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
E1 : Is the Course of Study board compiling a complete review report? Did the Course of Study board take into account the proposal coming from the joint didactic commission?	1- SUA-CdS – section D4 2- Guidelines for QA	The Commission confirms that the review report coming from the Course of Study board is complete and all proposals were taken into account	No actions to be taken
E2 : Did the course study board applied the corrective actions written in the review report?	1- SUA-CdS – section D4 2- Guidelines for QA	The Commission confirms that the Course of Study board applied the corrective actions written in the review report	No actions to be taken



F) Management of the questionnaires for the perceived didactic quality

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
F1 : Is it possible to increase the participation of students in the process of surveying the perceived didactic quality?	Previous results	The Commission considers the adopted surveying method adequate, also considering that during the academic year 2015/2016, 6297 questionnaires were collected	No actions to be taken
F2 : Are there still unresolved problems from the previous years?	Previous reports	The Commission does not highlight previous related problems	No actions to be taken



G) Availability and correctness of the public information of the SUA-CdS document

Question	Reference	Analyses	Proposals
G1 : Are the information contained in the web page of the Course of Study complete and updated?	Course of Study web page	The Commission found the information on the Course of Study web page complete and updated	No actions to be taken
F2 : Are the course programs available online complete and updated?	Course of Study web page	The Commission found the course programs complete and updated	No actions to be taken



Conclusions about the Annual Report

- The Annual Report is the key activity of the Joint Didactic Commission
- It is structured as required by the AVA system
- It mostly relies on the results of the perceived didactic quality
 - The questionnaire is a fundamental tool to support the work of the Joint Didactic Commission



SAMPLE ACTIVITY #2 – Approval of documents

- The Didactic Regulation
 - Is the document that contains all the rules and information of a Course of Study
 - Is made up of a list of articles (e.g., 21 for the Didactic Regulation of the Course of Study of Medicine and Surgery), among the many
 - The list of courses, with their names, year and semester, number of credits (e.g., Health Informatics, 1st year, 1st semester, 3 CFU)
 - Didactic calendar (e.g., start/end dates for courses/exams)
 - Propedeuticities (e.g., a student cannot follow the course of “Anatomy 2” without having passed the exam of “Anatomy 1”)
 - Correspondence between credits and hours of teaching (e.g., 1 CFU = 12.5 hours of teaching)



Documents

- The SUA-CdS
 - We already introduced it in connection with the Annual Report, and is the document that contains all the information regarding a Course of Study (e.g., professors, didactic objectives, didactic calendar)
 - Contains similar information of the Didactic Regulation, e.g.,
 - It contains the list of courses, with names, etc.
 - It contains the list of professors which are not included in the Didactic Regulation




Role of the Joint Didactic Commission

- The Joint Didactic Commission is required to give a binding opinion about the Didactic Regulation and SUA-CdS
 - As proposed by the Course of Study board
 - Before the final approval by the Department board
- Therefore
 - It is
 - The monitoring activity of what is instructed from the Course of Study board,
 - A supporting authority for the Department board
 - It is fundamental to note that the students have the possibility to give a binding opinion about documents that regulates all the activities of the professors and of the students during their entire formative process

SAMPLE ACTIVITY #3 – Teaching Contracts

- For each course, the Course of Study board must assign a professor to each course
 - Obviously, professors with a fixed position are chosen preferentially
 - When no internal solution is available, the Course of Study board requires to hire an external professor





SAMPLE ACTIVITY #3 – Teaching Contracts

- For each course, the Course of Study board must assign a professor to each course
 - Obviously, professors with a fixed position are chosen preferentially
 - When no internal solution is available, the Course of Study board may require to hire an external professor
- The Joint Didactic Commission is again required to give a binding opinion on the assignments
 - In general, given its duties of monitoring the didactic quality, and in the specific case
 - Annual Report
 - Point C: Qualification of professors
 - Question C1 : Are professors qualified to reach the planned learning outcomes?
 - Reference for question C1 : Qualification elements (e.g., number of courses covered by contracts, coherence of SSD and professor background)

Conclusions

- The short course focused on the Joint Didactic Commission
 - In terms of
 - The National and Institutional Regulatory frameworks that define its duties
 - Its composition
 - By also showing three sample activities
 - The Annual Report
 - The AVA system
 - The perceived didactic quality
 - Approval of the Didactic Regulation and of the SUA-CdS
 - Teaching Contracts





Thank you very much for your attention