



COMRAT STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of quality management and educational process

Guidance documents

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS)

**STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE
COMRAT STATE UNIVERSITY
2020-2025**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The world processes globalization inevitably leads to the internationalization of higher education, one of the consequences of which is the internationalization of every university involved in the world educational environment. This in turn leads to the strengthening of international cooperation in education, which ultimately contributes to the further development of the globalization process. The internationalization of education does not mean its unification, which destroys identity and positive national traditions. This implies the mutual enrichment of the content of education, the analysis and use of positive foreign experience and, on this basis, the improvement of the efficiency of education.

In the context of globalization, internationalization is becoming an imperative in almost every area of human activity. In turn, the Internationalization Strategy of Comrat State University (KSU) aims at using the best international experience to improve the quality of educational and research activities, to ensure its authority and competitiveness in the international scientific and educational spaces.

The internationalization strategy of the Comrat State University was developed within the framework of the "ELEVATE" project - "Elevating the internationalization of higher education in the Republic of Moldova" Reference No. 573921-EPP-1-2016-1-MD-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP, with the financial support of the European Commission within the framework of the program Erasmus +. The strategy was adopted by the decision of the Senate of the Comrat State University (minutes №_____ from _____).

The internationalization strategy of the Komrat State University has been developed taking into account all the changes and reforms in the field of higher education, as well as in accordance with and within the framework of documents such as: Code of Education of the Republic of Moldova (Official Monitor, 2014, 319-324, art 634), National Development Strategy Moldova - 2020iet (Official Monitor, 2012, 245-247, art. 791), Education Development Strategy 2014-2020. «Education-2020» (Government Resolution 944 of 14 November 2014) etc.

II. BASIC CONCEPTS AND TERMS

Academic mobility is the movement of students or researchers for a certain academic period (including training or work experience), usually a semester or a school year, to another higher education institution (at home or abroad) for study or research, with compulsory readjustment of completed educational programmes in the form of credits in their university.



Academic recognition - recognition by an educational institution of the document of successful partial or complete completion of the education programme, of the corresponding examinations, of the award of professional qualification, An academic degree, etc., issued by another national or foreign educational institution, which enables the holder of a document to complete or continue his education at the next stage in the educational institution that recognized the document.

Incoming mobility is a host-side mobility.

Outgoing mobility is mobility related to the country of origin from which the student leaves.

ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulating System) is a European transferable and accumulative credit system.

Internationalization of education is the process of integrating various international aspects into the teaching, research and administration of the university (Jane Knight).

Credit mobility - training with accumulation of credits.

Degree Mobility - degree training.

Internationalization in higher education is the process of introducing the international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the university»

III. BRIEF UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTION

The Comrat State University (KSU) is a dynamically developing higher education institution founded in 1991 at the AP of Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova. It consists of four faculties, 12 departments and seven centres that provide training in bachelors and master's levels of study. The official languages of instruction in the KSU are Romanian, Gagauz and Russian. Language courses are also available in English, German, Bulgarian, Greek, French and Turkish.

The KSU has successfully implemented the Bologna Process, facilitating the integration of higher education of the Republic of Moldova into the European Area of Higher Education. Today, the KSU is a full member of the Eurasian University Union.

In 2010 «Center for Continuous Education» was established in Komrat State University within the framework of Tempus 144544-Tempus 1-2008-1-FR JPAES project «Pedevlopment de partenariats avec les entreprises en Moldavie» where the academic staff of the Gagauzia AP continue to improve their skills on a professional basis. The European Union Information Centre (EUIC KSU) was established with



the support of the European Union Mission in the Republic of Moldova, which provides EU programmes and tools on countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the Republic of Moldova, Information on the European Union education system, legislation, business regulations and cultural aspects.

Also «Educational Center of Distance Education» was created within the project TEMPUS 516597-TEMPUS 1-2011-1-FR «Création Réseau Universités Numériques Thématiques en sciences appliquées et sciences économiques en Moldavie». The Centre organizes, coordinates and supervises the e-learning (e-learning) training of the MOODLE platform. KSU is involved in many international projects, including ERASMUS + Capacity Building for Higher Education (CBHE).

Komrat State University owns 3 study halls, sports complex, dormitory. The KSU is equipped with a modern scientific library, with more than 60,000 scientific publications.

The University's lecture halls are equipped with modern computer technology, which makes it possible to conduct research activities at both the national and international levels.

The University is located in the immediate vicinity of the city's cultural and historical landmarks. In addition, the University has close links with the ethnohistorical complexes located in the territory of the AP of Gagauzia, which makes it possible to combine the efforts of the KSU and the partners in scientific research in the context of preserving the history, culture and traditions of the ethnic groups, living in an autonomous territory.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND PROBLEMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

At present, the university environment of the Republic of Moldova in general, and in particular at the Comrat State University, is facing important problems that threaten both short-term and long-term development prospects. The most serious threats are: mass migration of the population, negative demographic dynamics, increased international competition in the academic field, especially with regard to the mass distribution of scholarships, financed from public funds for Moldovan students provided by Romania, Bulgaria, the Russian Federation, Turkey, etc.

Romania is the leader among the countries where Moldovan graduates receive higher education, and every year it offers more and more free places in higher education. Thus, 10 years ago there were about 700 of them, while in the academic

year 2019-2020 the neighboring country offered more than 6,000 scholarships for future students from Moldova.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the total number of students enrolled in higher education in the Republic of Moldova decreased by almost 58.4 per cent between 2014 and 2020.

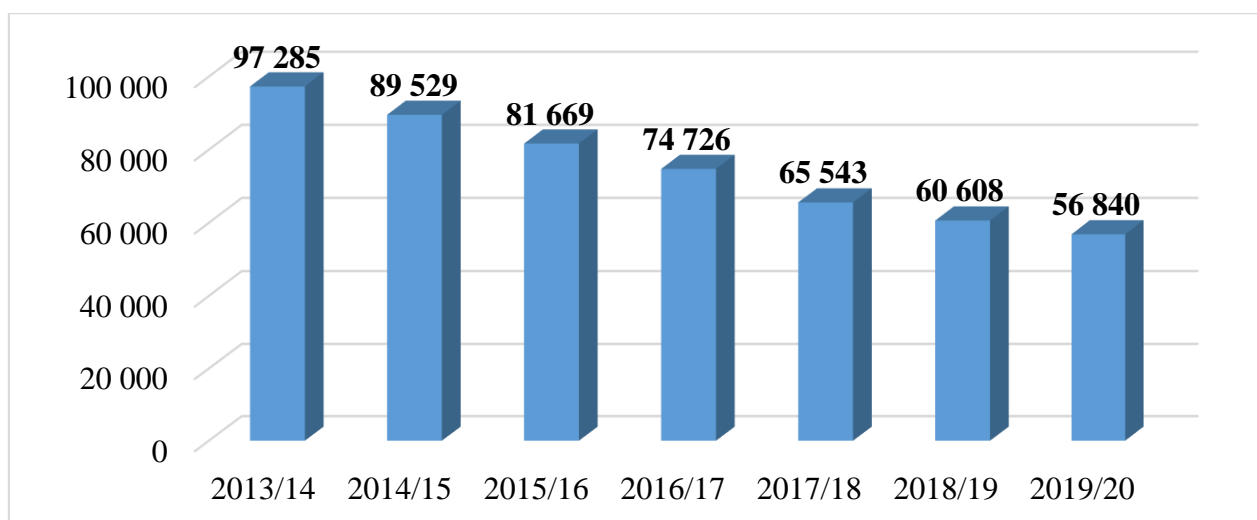


Figure: 1. Dynamics of the number of students in universities of the Republic of Moldova

Source: National Bank of Statistical Data.URL

<https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774>

As a result of the reduction in the number of students, the number of university graduates is also decreasing. Figure 2 demonstrates the reduction of university graduates in the republic in 2019 compared to 2013 by 65.4%. In turn, the number of graduates of higher educational institutions in the 2018-2019 academic year was 51 graduates per 10,000 people, which is 16 people less (23.8%) compared to the 2015-2016 academic year.

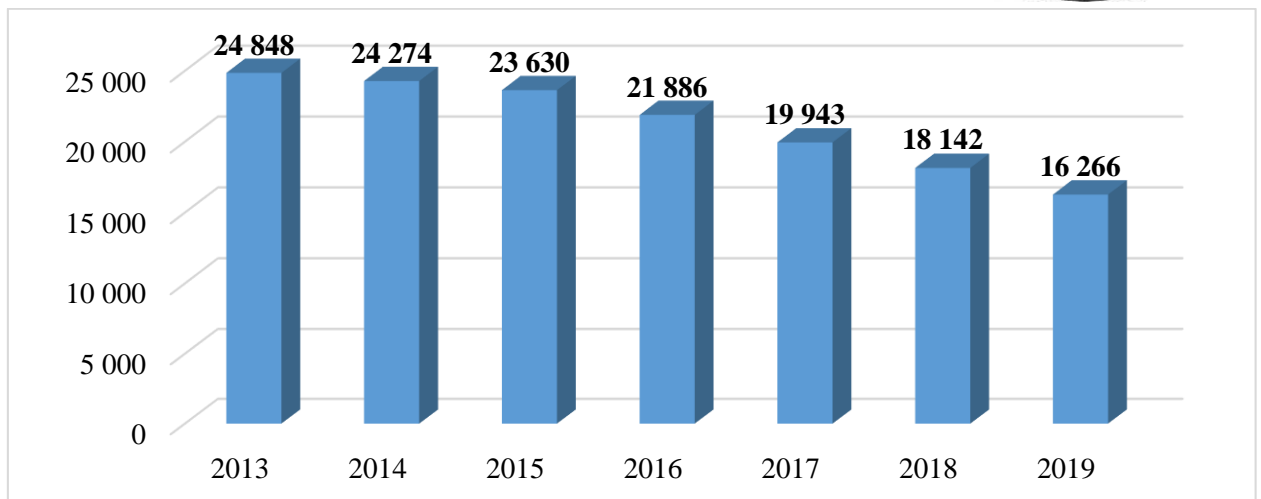


Figure: 2. Dynamics of university graduates in the Republic of Moldova

Source: National Bank of Statistical Data.URL

<https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774>

The negative trend in the number of students has two extremely negative consequences:

1. Number of higher educational establishments in the Republic is decreasing: from 34 in 2013 to 27 in 2019 (20.5%)
2. Higher education institutions of the Republic, seeking to obtain as many students as possible, lower the requirements for admission and lower the average score, which affects the quality of vocational training.

In considering the problems of internationalization of higher education in the Republic of Moldova, attention should be paid to the difficulties encountered in introducing the technology of this process into the national system of higher education. One of these is the lack of a sufficient financial base and the possible economic risk involved in the introduction of these technologies. The sources of financing for internationalization are State and foreign grant programmes aimed at reorganizing education. Nevertheless, the resources available are insufficient to ensure the widespread internationalization of the educational process in higher educational establishments.

V. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF KSU

As the only university in Gagauzia ATO, the KSU is in fact one of the drivers of building an effective strategy for the development of the regional economy. Students who have graduated from higher education in the region are required specialists in local enterprises. In addition, during their studies they have the opportunity to practice in partner organizations of the university. That is, at the time of their graduation, they were practically employed.

The trend in the number of students in the KSU for the period 2010 - 2019 is shown in Figure 3.

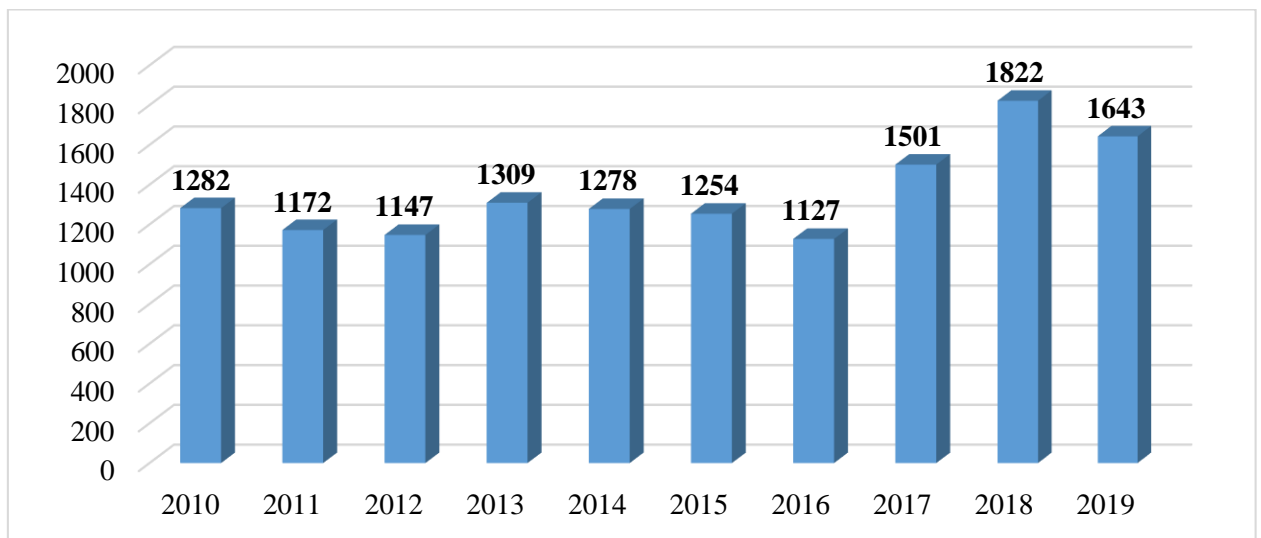


Figure: 3. The total number of KSU students for the period 2010 – 2019

Source: updated based on data from the KSU Human Resources Department within the framework of the ELEVATE project

One of the indicators of the internationalization of a university and, accordingly, a factor in increasing the competitiveness of the university is the number of international students studying at the university. The dynamics of international students at KSU in the period 2010 - 2019 is shown in Figure 4.

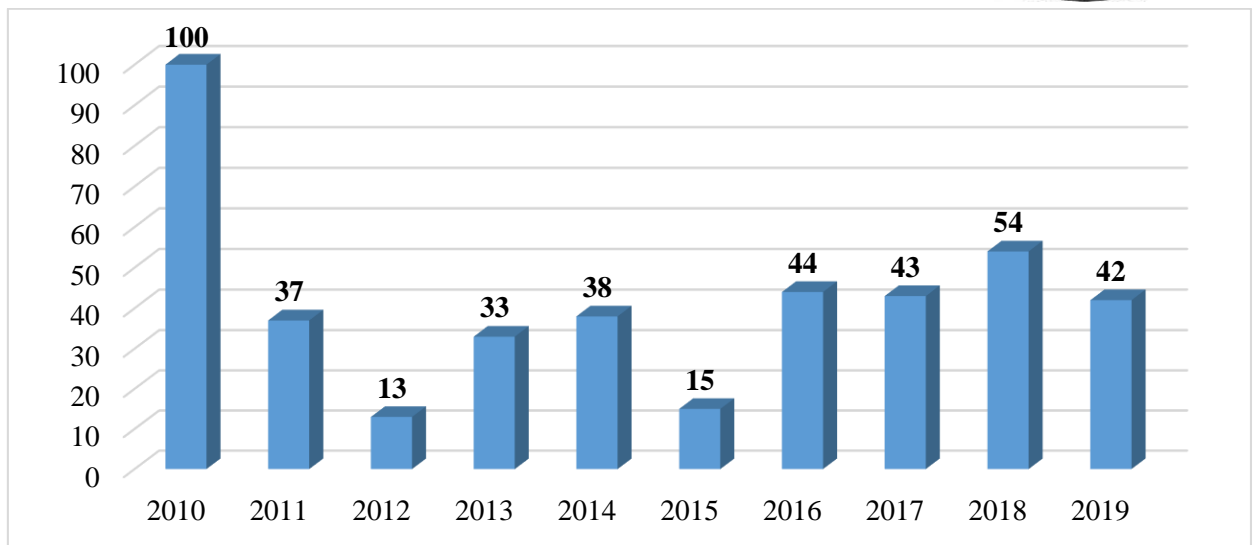


Figure: 4. The total number of foreign students of KSU for the period 2010 – 2019

Source: updated based on data from the KSU Human Resources Department within the framework of the ELEVATE project

Figure 4 shows that the number of international students decreased significantly in the period 2011 - 2015. Since 2016, the average number of international students enrolled has been about 50. On average, for the entire analyzed period, the share of international students in the total number of applicants is just over 3%.

Today, the main component of the process of internationalization of education is academic mobility - the participation of students, academic and administrative staff in exchange programs and various aspects of the university's international activities.

The academic mobility of staff and students of KSU is realized through cooperation programs with partner universities and international scholarship programs such as: Erasmus+, DAAD, MEVLANA etc.

Under the agreements and agreements signed, the University is able to send and receive teachers and students as part of the academic mobility of the students.

Table 1. Number of outgoing mobility of students of the HLC for the period 2010 - 2019

Year	Number of students who left	Program	Country
2010	1	Language internship	Germany
2014	1	ZAV	Germany
2014	1	ERASMUS Mundus EMBER	Italy
2014	2	TEMPUS-la MANCHE	Bulgaria
2015	1	EMBER ERASMUS Mundus	Lithuania
2015	1	EMBER ERASMUS Mundus	Italy
2016	2	Work and Travel	SUA
2017	2	ERASMUS+	Bulgaria
2018	3	ERASMUS+	Bulgaria
2018	1	ERASMUS+	Romania
2018	1	Local Global	Germany
2018	2	Study Tours to Poland	Poland
2018	1	LEADER проекта SARD	Portugal
2018	3	Erasmus+	Turkey
2018	16	Passing professional practice	Turkey
2019	1	Global U-grad	SUA
2019	2	Ag-Lab	Slovenia

Source: updated based on data from the KSU Human Resources Department within the framework of the ELEVATE project

The number of incoming student mobility is extremely low - 1 student (Spain) in 2014 and 1 student (Turkey) in 2020.

The number of outgoing students' mobility for teaching is shown in Figure 5.

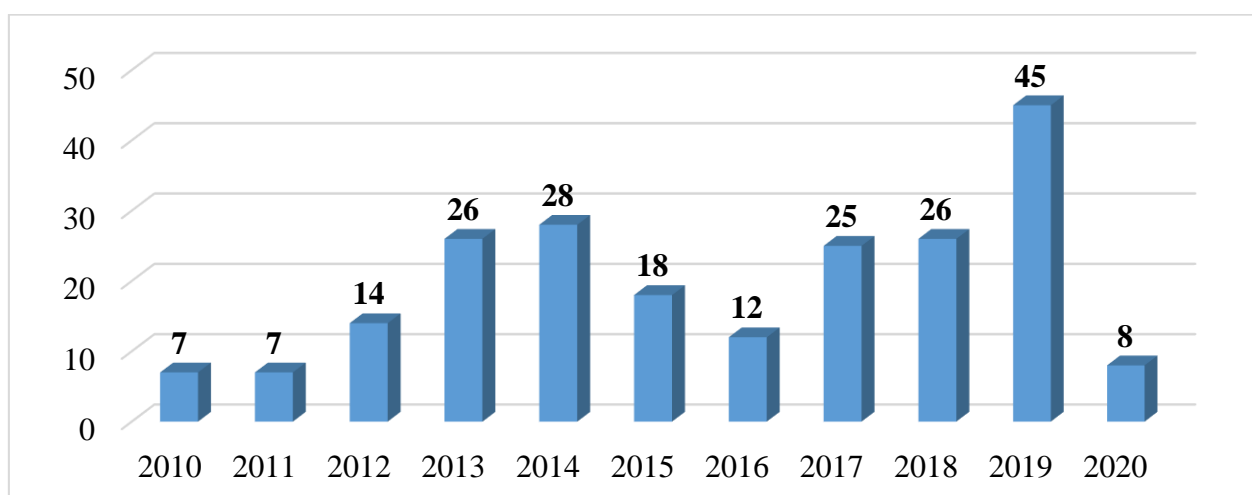


Figure: 5. Outgoing students' mobility for teaching at KSU

Source: updated based on data from the KSU Human Resources Department within the framework of the ELEVATE project

Figure 5 shows that the largest number of outgoing short-term and long-term teaching mobility falls on 2019 - 45 students, and the smallest number for 2010-2011 for 7 mobility.

The incoming mobility of the academic staff is significantly lower. So, in the period 2018 - 2020 there were 15 people.

The experience of expanding the international activities of a regional university testifies to the emergence of a new trend in organizing and ensuring international cooperation. Currently, KSU has signed 66 cooperation agreements with universities in such countries as: Turkey, Ukraine, France, Poland, Sweden, USA, Russian Federation, etc.

VI. SWOT ANALYSIS AND THE KSU INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS

To identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of internationalization of education at KSU, a SWOT analysis was carried out. The purpose of the SWOT analysis is to formulate the main directions of the university's development through the systematization of the available information about the strengths and weaknesses of the university, as well as about the potential opportunities and threats.

SWOT analysis of opportunities for the development of internationalization of education at the university

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Readiness for strategic changes on the part of the university leadership and staff – Experience of university' participation in the implementation of academic mobility projects and of cooperation agreements – Implementation of the academic mobility program of academic staff "Visiting Professor" – University experience in the implementation of international projects – Availability of technical capabilities and experience in distance learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A small proportion of university staff who speak English – Lack of joint educational programs, double-degree education programs, programs taught in English with the involvement of international experts – Low number of international students – Lack of international accreditation of educational programs – Insufficiently developed information system about the



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective cooperation more than 60 agreements with partner universities - Studying at the university of international students from 5 countries - Availability of educational programs that are implemented in English - Availability of international accreditation for the specialty "Law" - The KSU library is multilingual, which is a serious support for foreign students; - Active involvement of students in the process of university management and decision-making. - Social, cultural and sports services provided to students. - Continuous development of interagency and international partnerships. - Increasing recognition of KSU at the national and international levels. 	<p>possibilities of participation in academic mobility programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited financial capabilities of the university in the implementation of academic mobility and international projects - Lack of a system for recording participation in scientific events, publication activity of academic staff abroad - Weak cooperation in the field of research activities with foreign universities - Weak use of social media channels to form the image of the university, especially in English and Romanian - Lack of the Association of foreign graduates who studied at KSU, with the potential to promote the image of the university.
EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	CAPABILITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rapprochement of the Republic of Moldova with the European Union is an obvious mutual willingness to cooperate, including in the field of education - Opportunities provided by international programs - The proximity of the university, Comrat to the border of the European Union, the possibility of cross-border cooperation in the framework of the implementation of joint projects with universities of neighboring countries - Possibility of flexible formation and updating of educational programs - Requirements of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of an established system of adaptation of the content of educational programs of academic mobility in the Republic of Moldova - Globalization of education and increased competition among universities, incl. on the international level - "Demographic hole" and an increase in the outflow of youth - Demotivating graduates of the first cycle of higher education to study in the next cycle of higher education (master's, doctoral studies).



	<p>develop the export of educational services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial availability of educational programs at KSU for foreign citizens – Enhancing the image of the university, its international status through updating the content on the KSU website, active in social networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Outflow of qualified teachers and specialists outside the Republic of Moldova.
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SWOT analysis allows us to identify four priority areas of internationalization of KSU:

PRIORITY 1. Internationalization of curricula

PRIORITY 2. Increase in the number of international students studying at the university

PRIORITY 3. Professional development of faculty

PRIORITY 4. Increasing the university recognition at international level

VII. MISSION, PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

The mission of Comrat State University is to carry out educational and research activities aimed at training specialists with higher education and personnel of higher scientific qualifications who are able to perceive, generate and implement innovative ideas, to be competitive specialists in the labor market.

The implementation of this mission is to train competent, socially responsible and competitive specialists who possess modern technologies, skills in scientific, pedagogical and research activities that meet the global requirements of the labor market.

In addition, the implementation of the mission provides for the formation of a single cultural, educational, intellectual and innovative space of the university, ensuring the quality of continuous education in accordance with world trends and the principles of the Bologna process, active international cooperation and ensuring the academic mobility of students and university staff.



Table 1. Priorities and tasks of internationalization of KSU for the period 2020 -2025

Task	Responsible	Implementation period tasks	Expected Result
PRIORITY 1.			
Internationalization of curricula			
1.1. Creation of new curricula and the consolidation of existing ones to the curricula of international universities to ensure international academic mobility, ECTS recognition and the development of joint degree study programs.	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	Created and / or improved at least 4 curricula
1.2. Development and approval of a procedure for the implementation of dual study programs and general study programs, adjusted in accordance with the current procedures.	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	Developed and approved procedures for the implementation of dual study programs
1.3. Creation and promotion of double degree study programs with international universities	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	On the basis of cooperation agreements with international universities, 3 double degree study programs to be elaborated
1.4. Improvement of the English-language version of educational and program documentation and the creation of video content in disciplines taught in English	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	10 educational programs translated into Romanian and English and posted on the university website
1.5 Creation of international online study programs	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	At least 1 international online study programme curriculum has been created



1.6 Increase in the number of specialties taught in English	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	Approved at least 4 curricula taught in English
1.7. Development of a marketing strategy to promote educational services of the university in the markets of near and far abroad	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	A marketing strategy for promoting educational services at KSU developed and approved
PRIORITY 2.			
Increase in the number of international students studying at the university			
2.1. Due to linguistic proximity and on the basis of cooperation agreements with the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Ukraine, attracting international students	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	Increase number of international students by 20-25 people annually
2.2. Increasing the number of agreements with international universities for the purpose of student exchange	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	At least 10 agreements on cooperation concluded with international universities
2.3. Creation of an online students admission system for I and II cycles of studies	Vice-Rector for International Relations, Quality Management Department	2020 – 2025	An online students admission system for international students created
2.4. Promoting the development of intercultural communication and supporting initiatives aimed at developing international cooperation through: - organization of cultural and educational events with the participation of national and international students; - increasing the motivation of employees and students to	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	Organization of 2-3 cultural, educational and sports events per year with the participation of Belarusian and international students. Annual 10% increase in the participation of academic staff and



participate in international events; - involvement of a larger number of employees and students in international activities; - creation of clubs of interest (sports, creative, language, etc.)			students in academic mobility programs
2.5. Questioning of international students at the beginning and at the end of the mobility (study) in order to improve the educational process of KSU	Career Development Center of KSU, departments	2020 – 2025	Feedback from international students, which will improve the educational process, focusing on the expectations of students
2.6. Improving the adaptation process of international students by attracting staff and students of KSU for: providing information related to the university and local authorities, excursions around the university and the city, providing a hostel, etc.	University staff, students	2020 – 2025	Successful adaptation of international students will increase the chances of their desire to stay in the region to study in the second cycle - master's degree
2.7. Improving the Tuition Fee System for International Students	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	A loyal level of tuition fees will increase the attractiveness of the university for foreign students
2.8. Organization of international summer schools	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	Organized and hold 3 international summer schools
PRIORITY 3. Professional development of the academic staff			
3.1. Increasing the number of academic staff through the "Visiting Professor" mobility system, including online	Vice-rector for academic affairs, HR department, dean's offices, departments	2020 – 2025	4-5 international academic staff annually attracted at different faculties of KSU.



			This practice will allow the university to gain experience of cooperation with the best foreign specialists
3.2 Organization of information seminars for staff and students of the university on the possibilities of international mobility	Vice-rector for research and international relations	2020 – 2025	Annually organized 1 seminar on mobility opportunities for students and staff of the university
3.3. Encouraging employees to learn and teach in foreign languages	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	An increase of 30% in the number of subjects taught in foreign language
3.4. Encouraging employees to jointly conduct scientific research	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	An increase of at least 30% in the number of joint scientific research
3.5. Encouraging the participation of employees in international conferences, symposia, seminars and other events.	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	Increase by 20% of employees' participation at international events
3.6. Organization of international scientific conferences and seminars, including online	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2020 – 2025	One international event per year, each faculty
3.7. Encouraging the number of scientific publications in a foreign language in top-rated journals with a high impact factor, incl. in publications included in the SCOPUS abstract databases, Web of Science.	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	20% increase in the number of publications in rating journals
3.8. Encouraging an increase in the number of joint publications with international university scientists.	Administration of the university	2020 – 2025	An increase of 20% in the number of joint publications



PRIORITY 4. Increasing the university recognition at international level			
4.1. Creation of information video products about university and educational programs for international applicants	Administration of the university	2022- 2025	Created information video products about the university in translation into Romanian, English and other languages.
4.2. Creation of the English and Romanian versions of the university web page	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2022- 2025	The university website works in three languages
4.3. Creation and promotion of university pages in famous social networks in English	Administration of the university, deans, departments	2022- 2025	The university is present and active on social networks
4.4. Positioning of the university in the search engines Google, Yahoo, etc.	Information Systems Department	2022- 2025	The university is positioned in well-known search engines in several languages

CONCLUSION

The process of internationalization of the university undoubtedly affects the main components of the quality of education: the quality of the educational program, the quality of the educational process and the quality of the graduate. The most significant contributors to quality improvement are the components of internationalization such as leadership leadership, teaching mobility, and student mobility. The implementation of this strategy will ensure an increase in the quality of education and the competitiveness of the KSU diploma in the global and national scientific and educational space; will give an opportunity to strengthen the influence of the university in the country and abroad, mobilize internal and attract additional external intellectual and financial resources.