

ANNUAL REPORT

1 September 2018 – 31 July 2019



Annual Report

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1. Organization & Management

Welcome Speech of Department's Chair



EPOKA University is a young energized and leader university in Albania and a highly competitive one throughout Western Balkans. The Department of Business Administration (BUS Department) is one of the strongest pillars of the university and actually the biggest one by number of programs and students. As the responsible person of BUS Department, I would like to emphasize that we as a team strongly believe that organizational performance depends closely on leadership behaviors, commitment, and inclusiveness. These all require understanding deeply the nature of humans by nurturing a constructivist and systems perspective, and by developing day by day good skills of emotional intelligence.

At BUS Department, people come first. We do not differentiate if they are academicians, supporting administrative staff or students. For us diversity matters.

Our global perspective for Bachelor, Master, and PhD programs at BUS has been attracting the attention of international academicians and candidates from several countries. We focus on global quality standards implemented in an extremely dynamic environment. Based on this perspective, we inspire our students how to “manage” effectively and efficiently with universal principles and ethical mindset.

In conclusion to this first salutation I would like to summarize the spirit of BUS Department with the words of Henry Ford:

“Coming together is a beginning;

Keeping together is progress;

Working together is success.”

I invite you to experience this exciting atmosphere at BUS Department of EPOKA.

Dr. Xhimi Hysa

Head of Business Administration Department

Epoka University

1.1 Introduction

The Department of Business Administration (BUS Department) aims the development of business knowledge to be applied in the management of business and non-business organizations, big and small, domestic and international (e.g. small family businesses, corporations, cultural associations, nonprofit organizations, social businesses, healthcare organizations, financial institutions, public administration, and others). The students will be able to acquire the necessary skills to operate in Albania and globally due to the systemic and integrated knowledge about organizations. The department's objective is to qualify new future employees and managers with a strong background on business administration by underlying a systems and constructivist perspective.

In the BUS Department, students can choose to study business administration, business informatics, and international marketing and logistics management. These programs offer a high rate of employment opportunities. By studying in BUS, students can work in different departments as easily configured in an organizational chart. For example, taking into account their specialization, they might work in the departments of accounting, marketing, sales, human resources, information systems, operations, R&D, etc.

Detailed information on the courses offered in the semester schedules is included in the academic plan. The list of departmental compulsory and elective courses is provided in detail in the academic programs. In addition, for each course the students can check the content from the information system in order to be aware about the subjects, teaching methods, requisites, ECTS credit system, and workload. Furthermore, students will be supported all the time by the academic advisors, which are professors of the BUS Department. The list of courses offered each semester by our department and academic catalogue correlate together. The objective of this department is to fulfill the need for qualified members in this field, and to prepare skilled people to work in different sectors of the global economy.

1.2 Strategic Plan 2017-2022

1. Mission

The mission of the Department of Business Administration (BUS Department) *is* developing business capabilities through holistic teaching methods by cultivating a sense of intellectualism, togetherness, and inclusive leadership.

The final output is educating early professionals for co-creating value among market actors, in terms of employability, continuous improvement, and business system sustainability.

2. Vision

The Albanian Business Ecosystem is moving toward a new era, which will be accompanied by best business practices and success stories. The vision of BUS Department is to be the most valuable partner for transforming Albanian business cases into best business practices. Our ambition is to have behind all business case histories, our early professionals.

3. Motto

Today knowledge students, tomorrow knowledge workers.

4. Challenges

Due to rapid changes in technology and considering the economic environment nowadays it is clear that BUS Department faces several challenges for the upcoming years. Main challenges include offering an environment in which students can use efficiently their analytic skills and take advantage of the technology development. For this purpose, qualified staff, a central library, student co-working areas, and smart classrooms are provided to achieve the challenging academic and professional objectives. Moreover, the BUS Department must ensure strong relationships and furthermore enhance its network with business professionals, academic institutions, research centers, and other stakeholders. Another challenge that the department will be facing is the diversification of research areas and the establishment of research units/clusters, by being able to ensure agreements and memorandum of cooperation with other institutions in order to carry out research according to business necessities. Finally, considering the growing trend of students in the department, especially the business informatics branch, the department should design the suitable scenarios for recruiting ulterior qualified academicians and providing the necessary learning infrastructure. Since businesses and markets are very dynamic, it is the responsibility of BUS Department to be a vigilant observer of complex dynamic business systems in order to fit the curricula with the upcoming market changes.

4. Sources

There is a rising market demand for programs such as Business Informatics and International Marketing and Logistics Management. Since the first year these programs opened, respectively 2011 and 2012, the students were very promising, and their employability rate has been high after graduating from BUS Department. Currently, the number of Students in BUS Department is 357 students. Considering the enrollment number of students in BUS Department, given also the trending rise, it is estimated that the number of students will increase furthermore. The number of students that will be studying in Business Administration by 2022 is estimated to be 600. Given these sources, the department must be prepared, as stated also in the “Challenges” paragraph, to afford the new wave.

5. Achievements

Since the opening of BUS Department, the network logic was established. Company visits, open forums, Dream Business Competition (this competition aims to select students with excellent results and talented, mainly in the field of business and entrepreneurship) and Brain Ring Competition (this competition aims to select students from high schools with excellent results and talented, mainly in the field of marketing and information technology) were among the milestones of BUS Department. In accordance with the principles of mobility of Bologna Process and Erasmus Program, the BUS Department has established several agreements to offer to the students and the academic and administrative staff the opportunity to learn in a multicultural perspective. Actually, the department has Erasmus Agreements with the University of Applied Sciences Mainz and the Middle East Technical University. Other agreements are also with top universities such as Sapienza University of Rome (Department of Management), University of Salerno, California University of Pennsylvania and others. For the executive education, the department offers a unique joint MBA with EADA Business School (top 24 European business schools and top 31 worldwide according to FT ranking). In terms of research, the BUS Department is the unique in the whole Western Balkans to have established a Research Unit/Cluster for Social Business research in collaboration with the Yunus Social Business Balkans. It is also among the first in the region to have found a master course dedicated to Social Business and Sustainability.

II. PRIORITY AREAS

Theme 1: Provide a high-quality environment for teaching and learning.

In order to succeed in terms of teaching and learning the department must have highly qualified and experienced academic staffs that are looking forward to constantly develop their skills and stayed updated to the last social and technological developments. Furthermore, there should be a systematic collection of graduation theses done at the department in order to create a collection of academic and practical materials that are case-based referring to the Albanian and the regional market (i.e. Western Balkans). Also, students and academic staff should have the possibility to access online data sources of the university from outside the campus. The number of prestigious online sources should be enhanced furthermore to make the department competitive also in the international market, and to provide possibilities for students to access the most updated sources during their study period. In addition, the BUS department must have annual subscriptions with newspapers and business journals, to give the possibility to faculty and students having access in cases, videos and other materials. Finally, the department must focus to provide short online courses on behalf of already established platforms (e.g. edX, Coursera, etc), or create its own digital platform.

Specific goals for theme 1:

Goal 1.1: Increase the efficiency of academic staff and the quality of their publications.

Goal 1.2: To have a better relationship among the triangle: academic staff-students-industry.

Goal 1.3: To build a “thesis directory data”.

Goal 1.4: To build a good infrastructure to make easier the access to sources for both students and lecturers.

Measures in order to reach mentions goals under Theme 1:

Measure 1.1: Arranging flexible working hours for the academic staff and defining goals to be achieved. Design “bonus” payment systems according to the quality of publications and teaching.

Measure 1.2: To create an “industry network directory” (IND) of the department and managed only by the department in full compliance with the regulations of Epoka University.

Measure 1.3: To provide a good thesis guideline, to design a new thesis evaluation system that would be more specific, to take advantage of technology and build an online “Thesis Source Directory” in order to create a handbook of Albanian business cases.

Measure 1.4: Technology infrastructure so that students can study at their places as they were at the university. Recording courses in order to overcome absences (should be done in a controlled manner).

Theme 2: Recruit, educate and graduate a high-quality and diverse undergraduate student body

To recruit good student from high schools there should be cooperation with high schools' representatives, creating competitions, workshops, and other meetings, especially for last year high schools' students. Moreover, the Department must ensure that the quality of the students will be high during the studies and afterward, by respecting the conditions stated in the previous paragraphs.

Specific goals for the Theme 2:

Goal 2.1: Involving students clubs to arrange different competitions in order to get the best high school students.

Measures in order to reach mentions goals under Theme 2:

Measure 2.1: "Brain Ring" Competition powered by the student club Marketing Zone should continue. Further competitions should be arranged, like it was the "Dream Business" in the past years.

Theme 3: Recruit, educate and graduate a high-quality and diverse master student body

The BUS Department is committed to propose and open a Master of Science program in Business Innovation and Informatics in collaboration with the University of Salerno for a double degree diploma. Based on questionnaires distributed by an *ad hoc* team created within the department for this purpose, the demand to open a master in this field was high. Registered students in the bachelor program in of Business Informatics almost doubled the A.Y. 2016-2017, and the number is expected to grow in the near future. Consequently, more and more they will ask for a master to be represented and proud. In addition, given the market conditions, the BUS Department is planning to design also a master in Service Marketing, Advertising, and Branding to be proposed in the near future.

Specific goals for the Theme 3:

Goal 3.1: Opening Master Programs on Business Informatics and Marketing

Goal 3.2: Cooperation with other universities specially to get to know last year students

Measures in order to reach mentions goals under Theme 3:

Measure 3.1: There should be a systematic plan on opening these programs

Measure 3.2: Signing agreements to provide the possibility to enter to the courses for guest students as if they were normal students.

Theme 4: Recruit, educate and graduate a high-quality and diverse PhD student body

PhD studies should be designed according to the need of the market and according to this, registrations must occur. Enrollment procedures for PhD students should be redesigned and the interview of the Scientific Committee must be added as one of the core evaluation criteria. On the other side, because the number of PhD applicants is low the BUS Department should collaborate with other departments to create one or more hybrid interdepartmental doctoral schools or try to change the advertisement techniques and budget for the PhD program promotion.

Specific Goals for Theme 4:

Goal 4.1: Redesigning PhD enrollment procedures

Goal 4.2: Raising the number of well qualified thesis supervisors.

Goal 4.3: Improving budget and advertising.

Goal 4.4: Proposing new PhD routes.

Measures in order to reach mentions goals under Theme 4:

Measure 4.1: Collaboration with other departments.

Measure 4.2: Collaboration with university decision making bodies such as the Faculty Board and the Academic Senate.

Measure 4.3: Negotiations with Secretary General Office for dedicating more funds to PhD advertising.

Measure 4.4: Recruiting more Associate Professors as PhD supervisors, according to the law.

Theme 5: Provide a high-quality environment for research

Good teaching is strongly related with research and consultancy. One of the classical teaching methods business schools are adopting is the case study method and David Kolb's experiential learning. In order to deliver high teaching quality to the students, the academic staff must be committed with research and organizational consulting experience. As mentioned also in previous paragraphs, the research environment (newspapers and journal access: e.g. Harvard Business Review materials, like cases, videos and articles) should be inspirational for scholars. Furthermore, a better balance between teaching load, research and service must be aimed.

Specific goals for Theme 5:

Goal 5.1: To encourage academic staff to participate in trainings and conferences.

Goal 5.2: To negotiate with business journals, organizations, and research centers by having access for data gathering and elaboration.

Measures in order to reach mentions goals under Theme 5:

Measure 5.1: Making the flextime part of department's culture, by asking at the end of any research process the aimed outcomes.

Measure 5.2: Dedicating a higher budget at departmental level for journal subscriptions.

Measure 5.3: Increasing the number of internal full-time faculty for a better teaching load distribution, by dedicating more time to research and consulting.

Measure 5.4: Making more case study research which will be beneficial also for teaching.

2. Study Programs and Curriculum

2.1 Bachelor in Business Administration

Bachelor Program in Business Administration consists in 180 ECTS including the diploma thesis. The students that have successfully completed a total of 180 ECTS shall be entitled to graduate from the program and shall be conferred the diploma of Bachelor in Business Administration.

A student who has been successful in all courses, summer practices, seminary course and diploma thesis and, through pursuing the academic program, his/her cumulative grade point average is to at least (2.00), without having a FD or FF grade shall be deemed to have met the requirements of graduation by the relevant board decision and be awarded Bachelor Diploma in Business Administration.

The Bachelor in Business Administration provides students with knowledge in management and in business administration, as well as with organizational skills to serve in the public and in private sector. The business administration program is structured around a group of technical courses, which exposes students to the basic tools of quantitative methods, accounting, and economic theory, and a core of management and leadership courses that integrate culture, language, and ethics, to enable future business leaders to meet the challenges of today's global environment. The table below shows the curricula of the Business Administration program throughout three years of bachelor studies.

FIRST YEAR	
Introduction to Economics I	Introduction To Economics II
Introduction to Business	Management and Organization
Introduction to Law	Communication Skills
Essentials of Organizational Behavior	Introduction To Accounting
Math. for Economics and Business I	Math. for Economics and Business II
Core English	Business English
Developing Reading and Writing Skills	Developing Reading and Writing Skills
Introduction to Economics I	Introduction to Economics II
Introduction to Business	Management and Organization
SECOND YEAR	
Microeconomics	Marketing II
Marketing I	Macroeconomics
Business Law	Management Information Systems
Statistics I	Statistics II
Financial Accounting I	Financial Accounting II

Elective I	Elective I
SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Government, Politics and Public Policy in Albania	Public Finance
Research Methods in Social Sciences	Money and Banking
Turkish I	Introduction to Public Administration
German I	Introduction to Political Sociology
Italian I	Turkish II
French I	German II
	Italian II
	French II
	Sales Techniques and Management
THIRD YEAR	
Operations Management	Managerial Accounting
Cost Accounting	Financial Management
Human Resource Management	Operations Research
Fundamentals of Corporate Finance	Graduation Project Final Comprehensive Exam
Elective I	Elective I
Elective II	
THIRD YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
E-Marketing	Capital Markets and Law
Consumer Behavior	International Economics II
Total Quality Management	Monetary Theory and Policy II
International Economics I	Customer Relationship Management
Monetary Theory and Policy I	Strategic Logistic Management
Banking Operations and Service	International Marketing and Management of Multinational Enterprises
Financial Institutions and Markets	Knowledge Management
Innovation and Human Consciousness	Branding and Brand Management
Social Media Marketing	
Marketing Research	
Supply Chain Management	

2.2 Bachelor in Business Informatics

Bachelor in Business Informatics program is comprised of a three year curriculum at EPOKA University. The educational workload for these three years is 180 ECTS. Each semester, students are expected to cover at least 30 ECTS credits.

Bachelor Program in Business Informatics aims at the qualification of new staff with general knowledge, alert to the challenges in finance, and able to work in the banking sector as well as in the administration of local and foreign private companies.

Bachelor Program in Business Informatics consists in 180 ECTS including the diploma thesis. The students that have successfully completed a total of 180 ECTS shall be entitled to graduate from the program and shall be conferred the diploma of Bachelor in Business Informatics. The table below shows the curricula of the Business Informatics program throughout three years of bachelor studies.

FIRST YEAR	
Introduction To Economics I	Introduction To Economics II
Introduction To Business	Math. For Economics and Business II
Introduction to Algorithms and Programming	Introduction To Accounting
Introduction to computer Engineering	C and C ++ Programming
Math. For Economics And Business I	Management and Organization
Core English	Business English
Developing Reading and Writing Skills	Developing Reading and Writing Skills
SECOND YEAR	
Statistics I	Statistics II
Business Law	Management Information Systems
Computer Organization	Database Management Systems

Object Oriented Programming	Web Technologies
Principles of Marketing	Data Structures
Elective BUS	Elective BUS
SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Financial Accounting I	Financial Accounting II
Essentials of Organizational Behavior	Knowledge Management
Total Quality Management	Communication Skills
Supply Chain Management	Macroeconomics
Microeconomics	Turkish II
Turkish I	German II
German I	Italian II
Italian I	French II
French I	Sales Techniques and Management
THIRD YEAR	
Web Programming	Econometrics II
Computer Networks	Operations Research
Fundamentals of Corporate Finance	Operating Systems
Operations Management	Software Engineering
Econometrics I	Graduation Project
Elective BUS	Final Comprehensive Exam
THIRD YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Cost Accounting	
Human Resources Management	
Innovation and Human Consciousness	
Social Media Marketing	
Consumer Behavior	

2.3 Bachelor in International Marketing and Logistics Management

Globalization is the keyword in today's marketplace which is highly competitive. A switch of powers took place in the last decades from businesses towards customers. Marketing is one of the most important business` functions that played a crucial role in this. Marketing is responsible of satisfying unlimited customer needs and wants through many important processes. These processes include production, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods and services that have high quality and affordable prices. Customer retention and attraction of new customers is possible by building strong brands.

International Marketing & Logistics program aims to provide knowledge in the field of marketing and logistics to our students, so they can be well-trained individuals, ready for today`s

high competitive labor market. Through this program; our students can analyze how critical issues such as customer relationship management, international marketing, consumer behavior, and logistics are applied in the marketplace by the companies. In total accordance with the mission and the vision of Epoka University, International Marketing and Logistics Program also aims to provide well-educated individuals to satisfy the companies` needs in marketing and logistic departments. The table below shows the curricula of International Marketing and Logistics Management program throughout three years of bachelor studies:

FIRST YEAR	
Introduction to Economics I	Introduction to Economics II
Introduction to Business	Communication Skills
Introduction to Law	Introduction to Accounting
Essentials of Organizational Behavior	Management and Organization
Math. for Economics and Business I	Math. For Economics and Business II
Core English Developing Reading and Writing Skills	Business English Developing Reading and Writing Skills
SECOND YEAR	
Microeconomics	Marketing II
Marketing I	Macroeconomics
Business Law	Sales Techniques and Management
Statistics I	Statistics II
Financial Accounting I	Financial Accounting II
Elective I	Elective I
SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Government, Politics and Public Policy in Albania	Public Finance
Management Information Systems	Introduction to Public Administration
Government, Politics and Public Policy in Albania	Introduction to Political Sociology
Research Methods in Social Sciences	Turkish II
Turkish I	German II
German I	Italian II
Italian I	French II
French I	Money and Banking
THIRD YEAR	
Operations Management	Operations Research

Fundamentals of Corporate Finance	Strategic Logistic Management
Marketing Research	International Marketing and Management of Multinational Enterprises

Supply Chain Management	Graduation Project Final Comprehensive Exam
Elective I	Elective I
Elective II	
THIRD YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Human Resource Management	Branding and Brand Management
Innovation and Human Consciousness	Capital Markets and Law
Consumer Behavior	International Economics II
Social Media Marketing	Managerial Accounting
Cost Accounting	Monetary Theory and Policy II
Total Quality Management	Customer Relationship Management
International Economics I	
Monetary Theory and Policy I	
Banking Operations and Service	
Financial Institutions and Markets	

2.4 Professional Master in Business Administration

Professional Master in Business Administration consists in 48 ECTS of taken courses and a 12 ECTS Term Project (micro-thesis). The students that have successfully completed a total of 60 ECTS shall be entitled to graduate from the program and shall be conferred the diploma of Master Professional in Business Administration.

A student at the graduation stage who has been successful in all courses, seminary courses and thesis of the study program, and his/her cumulative grade point average is to at least (2.00), without having a FD or FF grade shall be deemed to have met the requirements of graduation by the relevant board decision and be awarded Master Professional in Business Administration Diploma.

Professional Master in Business Administration provides students with knowledge in management and business administration, as well as with organizational skills to serve in the public and in private sector. The program harmonizes contemporary business theory with business practice and problems. The program gains mastery to graduates in the business management field. In the table below is shown the curricula for one year of studies in Professional Master Program:

FIRST YEAR	
Research Methods in Business	Micro Thesis
Seminar on Business Administration	Elective I
Elective I	Elective II
Elective II	Elective III
Research Methods in Business	
FIRST YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
International Accounting and IFRS	Strategy and Management
Advanced Managerial Accounting	Advanced Management Information System
Advanced Organizational Behavior	Financial Statements Analysis for Managerial Staff
New Concepts and Trends in Business Management	Brand Management
Leadership	Social Business and Sustainability
Strategic Marketing	
Advanced Operations Management	

2.5 Master of Science in Business Administration

Master of Science in Business Administration consists in 90 ECTS of taken courses and a 30 ECTS Master Thesis. The students that have successfully completed a total of 120 ECTS shall be entitled to graduate from the program and shall be conferred the diploma of Master of Science in Business Administration.

The mission of the Master of Science in Business Administration program is to prepare and graduate students for careers in academia, business, government and non-profit organizations by providing a broad professional education.

The Business Administration program is structured around a group of technical courses, which exposes students to the basic tools of quantitative methods, accounting, and economic theory, and a core of management and leadership courses that integrate culture, language, and ethics, to enable future business leaders to meet the challenges of today's global environment.

Opportunities:

2.3.1 Appropriate and comfortable spaces for students and academicians.

2.3.2 Recent catalogues and educational programs based on the global trade demand of work
Diversified staff (foreign and Albanian) with long educational experience.

2.3.3 Possibilities for internships during the studies in local and foreign companies. The spaces are supplied with wireless and cabled internet 24 hours a day so that students can use to develop their research.

2.3.4 The possibility of employment for the graduated students is tightly connected with their academic advances, courage, and conditions that will be provided by the university.

2.3.5 The graduated students will have consolidated knowledge on management, economics and human resources

2.3.6 Students will be able to situate organizational work in the company and to find relevant solutions to the continuously appearing challenges.

2.3.7 Through the gained experience, the graduated managers will be among the most preferred staff in the specific disciplines due to their profession ethics, acquired theoretical framework, and applied methodology when employed. The department aims at encouraging and motivating the graduated students to organize and manage their private activities.

Table below shows the curricula of Master of Science program throughout two years of studies:

FIRST YEAR	
Academic Reading and Writing	Strategic Management
Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship	Auditing
Elective I	Elective I
Elective II	Elective II
FIRST YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Business Ethics	Strategic Analyses on Business
Comparative Business Law	Advertisement Management and Creativity
International Business	Development and Growth II
Development and Growth I	Albanian Tax Law
Portfolio Management and Investment Analysis	Bank Management
Financial Analysis	Risk Management and Insurance
World Politics	
Nationalism and Ethnic Studies	
Human Rights and Humanitarian Interventions	
Conflict Resolution & Diplomatic Language	
SECOND YEAR	
Research Methods in Business	Thesis
Seminar on Business Administration	
Elective I	
Elective II	
SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
International Accounting and IFRS	
Advanced Managerial Accounting	
Advanced Organizational Behavior	
New Concepts and Trends in Business Management	
Managerial Economics	
Leadership	
Strategic Marketing	
Advanced Operations Management	

2.6 PhD in Business Administration

Doctorate (PhD) in Business Administration consists in 60 ECTS of taken courses and 120 ECTS dissertation. The students that have successfully completed a total of 180 ECTS shall be entitled to graduate from the program and shall be conferred the diploma of Doctorate (PhD) in Business Administration.

The persons who are eligible for admission to the PhD program should:

- have obtained a Master of Science/Master of Arts, integrated second cycle studies or any other equivalent diploma in the field of the Doctorate (PhD) program or in a close field previously defined in the requirements established by the respective of the Scientific Committee
- have a CGPA of at least 2.70 out of 4.00 or 8 out of 10 from the Master of Science/Master of Arts, integrated second cycle studies or any other equivalent diploma in the field of the Doctorate (PhD) program or in a close field previously defined in the requirements established by the respective Scientific Committee or an equivalent CGPA
- applicants must demonstrate that they have reached the minimum acceptable level of proficiency in use of the English language
- having studied undergraduate degree in English or the equivalent score for the internationally recognized English Language Exams as stipulated in the Directive of the Minister of Education and Science No. 14, dated 28.03.2011 "On the recognition of English language exams for the second and third cycle study programs"

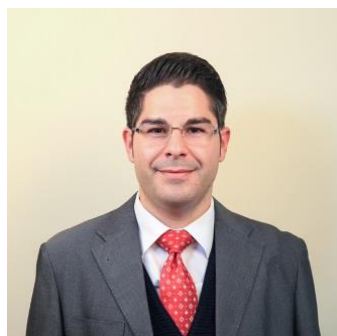
Table below provides the curricula of Doctorate (PhD) in Business Administration studies:

FIRST YEAR	
Research Techniques in Business Administration	Advanced Quantitative Methods for Management Science Research
Elective I	Elective I
Elective II	Elective II
FIRST YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES	
Accounting Theory	Advanced Human Resources Management
Strategic Management	Knowledge Management
Operations Management	Strategic Management Accounting
Entrepreneurship Perspectives	Strategic Brand Management
Game Theory	Systemic Management and Complexity
Finance Theory and Management	Strategic Marketing
WRITING OF DISSERTATION STAGE	
Thesis	

3. Resources

3.1 Department Staff

Full time Academic Staff



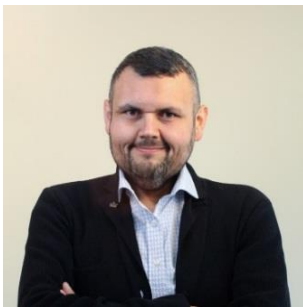
Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa: Dr. Xhimi Hysa is the Head of BUS department and holds a B.A., M. Sc and PhD in Management, awarded from the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy. He is a full-time lecturer at BUS department and teaches courses such as: essentials of organizational behavior, management and organization, strategic management, leadership, social business and sustainability. Research interests of Dr. Xhimi Hysa include group dynamics & behavioral strategy, viable systems approach, service-dominant logic, social business and sustainability and youth leadership.



Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman: Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman was born in 1968 in Turkey. He received his high school diploma (Ankara – 1986) and bachelor's degree (Cukurova (currently Mersin) University – 1992) in Hospitality and Tourism Management. Then, he completed master's education at the University of South Carolina in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration in 1997. He joined Pennsylvania State University's doctoral program in leisure studies and completed the dissertation in 2002.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç completed a PhD in Business Administration at the Afyon Kocatepe University Turkey in 2009, and prior to that was a Research Fellow at the University of Bremen, Germany (through the Erasmus program). Courses he has taught in the past two years are Financial Accounting at undergraduate level, and graduate level International Accounting&IFRS and Auditing. Research interests include Accounting Theory, International Accounting and Auditing.



Dr. Vusal Gambarov



Dr. Alba Kruja



M.Sc. Esmir Demaj



M.Sc. Besjon Zenelaj: Besjon Zenelaj holds a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from Marmara University, and a Master Degree in Marketing and Production Management from Selcuk University. Currently, he is assistant lecturer at Epoka University where he is pursuing his PhD carrier too. In the framework of his PhD, he also attended one semester in Salerno University. His research interests include Brand Management, Consumer Behavior, Social Media Marketing, and Service Dominant Logic.



M. Sc. Sonila Cela: Mrs. Cela is a Researcher at Business Department, Epoka University. She holds a Bachelor degree in General Journalism, Marmara University, Faculty of Communication, Istanbul, and a master degree on Business Administration, Epoka University. Currently she is an ongoing PHD candidate on Business Administration/Marketing at Epoka University.

Part time Academic Staff

Dr. Lindita Gjika

Dr. Sonila Zerelli

M. Sc. Florian Tahiri

Administrative Staff



M.Sc Anida Lazeri



M. Sc. Tekim Peza

3.2 Academic Advisers

Duties and Responsibilities

- To help the students to register the courses during pre-registration, registration and add and drop weeks and approve them at the beginning of each semester.
- To inform and provide new students with the documents containing information about passing the courses of the undergraduate and graduate level, rules and regulations about examinations and about other rules and regulations concerning students.
- To be aware of the changes made in the regulations and inform students about these changes.
- To be aware of the changes in the program curriculum, inform students about these changes and help students selecting their courses based on the curriculum changes.
- To make possible that the students read the content of the Elective Courses or Non-Technical elective courses and to help students in selecting their courses by

ensuring that they do not surpass the maximum 45 ECTS credits limit per semester.

- To provide students with information regarding Student Exchange programs, Study Abroad Opportunities and European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), consulting with the International Relations Office of Epoka University.
- After the advisor has approved the course registration in compliance with points 4 and 5 of the list, s/he prints out the course registration form in three copies, one for the student, one for the advisor her/himself and one for the Registrar's Office. The advisor gives one signed copy of the course registration form to the student whereas s/he keeps the copy for the Registrar's Office. The advisor submits all these forms to the Registrar's Office at the end of the Add and Drop Week. One copy of the course registration form of each student is always stored by the respective advisor.
- To provide students with information regarding Minor and Double Major Programs and also give information about the conditions students must fulfill in order to be part of these programs.
- To provide students with information regarding the conditions to be graduated by the Epoka University (a GPA of at least 2.00 with no failed courses).
- To provide students with information about prerequisite courses as determined by the respective departments.
- To prepare the list of candidates who fulfill all the requirements of graduation at the University and submit the list to the respective Head of Department.
- To inform last-year students who have no more than two failed courses to use their right to take additional exam (Referring to the Article 27 of the Undergraduate Studies Regulation).
- To provide orientation to students regarding their post-graduation career.
- To provide information and to orient students to the respective units of the University about issues related to accommodation, scholarships, health issues and

extra-curricular activities.

PROGRAM	YEAR	ADVISERS
BA BUS	1 st	Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa
BA BUS	2 nd	Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa
BA BUS	3 rd	M. Sc. Esmir Demaj
BA BINF	1 st	Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman
BA BINF	2 nd	Dr. Alba Kruja
BA BINF	3 rd	Dr. Alba Kruja
BA IML	1 st	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj
BA IML	2 nd	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj
BA IML	3 rd	Dr. Vusal Gambarov
PM BUS	All Students	Assoc.Prof.Dr. Mustafa Üç
M.Sc BUS	All students	Assoc.Prof.Dr. Mustafa Üç
PhD BUS	All Students	Assoc.Prof.Dr. Mustafa ÜÇ

3.3 Finance

Income and various financing for BA Business Administration study program during the last five years	
Income from: (in EURO)	2018-19
Tuition and other student fees	204,600
Total	204,600
GRAND TOTAL	204,600

Expenditure for BA Business Administration study program during the last five years			
Expenditures(in EURO)	2018-19		
Public funds:	Salaries	Expendit	Investem
Central authorities			
Local authorities			
Total			
Non-public funds:			
Grants for research and contracts			
Consulting, services			
Tuition and other student fees	112,530	33,506	13,166
Sponsorships			
Training services (continuous education)			
Donations, insurance activities, foundations etc			
Commercial activities			
Total	112,530	33,506	13,166
GRAND TOTAL	112,530	33,506	13,166

Income and various financing for BA Business Informatics study program during the last five years	
Income from: (in EURO)	2018-19
Tuition and other student fees	397,148
Total	397,148
GRAND TOTAL	397,148

Expenditure for BA Business Informatics study program during the last five years			
Expenditures(in EURO)	2018-19		
Public funds:	Salaries	Expendit	Investem
Central authorities			
Local authorities			
Total			
Non-public funds:			
Grants for research and contracts			
Consulting, services			
Tuition and other student fees	218,431	74,533	29,287
Sponsorships			
Training services (continuous education)			
Donations, insurance activities, foundations etc			
Commercial activities			
Total	218,431	74,533	29,287
GRAND TOTAL	218,431	74,533	29,287

Income and various financing for BA International Marketing and Logistics study program during the last five years	
Income from: (in EURO)	2018-19
Tuition and other student fees	184,170
Total	184,170
GRAND TOTAL	184,170

Expenditure for BA International Marketing and Logistics study program during the last five years			
Expenditures(in EURO)	2018-19		
Public funds:	Salaries	Expendit	Investem
Central authorities			
Local authorities			
Total			
Non-public funds:			
Grants for research and contracts			
Consulting, services			
Tuition and other student fees	101,294	29,403	11,554
Sponsorships			
Training services (continuous education)			
Donations, insurance activities, foundations etc			
Commercial activities			
Total	101,294	29,403	11,554
GRAND TOTAL	101,294	29,403	11,554

Income and various financing for MSC Business Administration study program during the last five years	
Income from: (in EURO)	2018-19
Tuition and other student fees	71,425
Total	71,425
GRAND TOTAL	71,425

Expenditure for MSC Business Administration study program during the last five years			
Expenditures(in EURO)	2018-19		
Public funds:	Salaries	Expendit	Investem
Central authorities			
Local authorities			
Total			
Non-public funds:			
Grants for research and contracts			
Consulting, services			
Tuition and other student fees	32,141	15,385	6,046
Sponsorships			
Training services (continuous education)			
Donations, insurance activities, foundations etc			
Commercial activities			
Total	32,141	15,385	6,046
GRAND TOTAL	32,141	15,385	6,046

Income and various financing for PM Business Administration study program during the last five years	
Income from: (in EURO)	2018-19
Tuition and other student fees	24,100
Total	24,100
GRAND TOTAL	24,100

Expenditure for PM Business Administration study program during the last five years			
Expenditures(in EURO)	2018-19		
Public funds:	Salaries	Expendit	Investem
Central authorities			
Local authorities			
Total			
Non-public funds:			
Grants for research and contracts			
Consulting, services			
Tuition and other student fees	10,845	4,445	1,746
Sponsorships			
Training services (continuous education)			
Donations, insurance activities, foundations etc			
Commercial activities			
Total	10,845	4,445	1,746
GRAND TOTAL	10,845	4,445	1,746

3.4 IT Resources, Physical Infrastructure and Library Resources

Information and Communication Technologies Coordinating Office (ICTCO) provides informatics services needed in the University. It plans the informatics infrastructure of the University, provides its security and ensures the continuation of its functions. ICTCO works on the project for effective, legal and extensive usage of the informatics services for students and personnel.

The Information and Communication Technologies Coordinating Office (ICTCO) provides:

Teaching Services:

- **Turnitin** software helps you to understand and avoid plagiarism and develop your understanding of how to cite sources as part of an academic argument. ICTC office manages the users and train the staff about how to use turnitin.
- **Learning Management System (LMS)** – A service based on Moodle offered for students and instructors in order to access, coordinate and organize course materials online. Students and instructor can login on LMS using the provided official email account.
- **Library Automation System (Koha)** - Koha is an open-source Integrated Library System in use today by hundreds of libraries worldwide. Koha is web based, so there is no software to install on

desktop computers. Users can check the books online and reserve them via web. Its features are more than enough to manage the Epoka Library effectively and efficiently.

- **DSpace** – The institutional repository of Epoka University: DSpace is an open source repository software package typically used for creating open access repositories for scholarly and/or published digital content. The proceedings of the conferences which are organized by Epoka University can be accessed from this repository. Epoka University is the only university who has digital repository in Albania(<http://repositories.webometrics.info/en/Europe/Albania>). We also give services to other international journals to publish their publications (<http://dspace.epoka.edu.al/handle/1/1378>) in our digital repository.

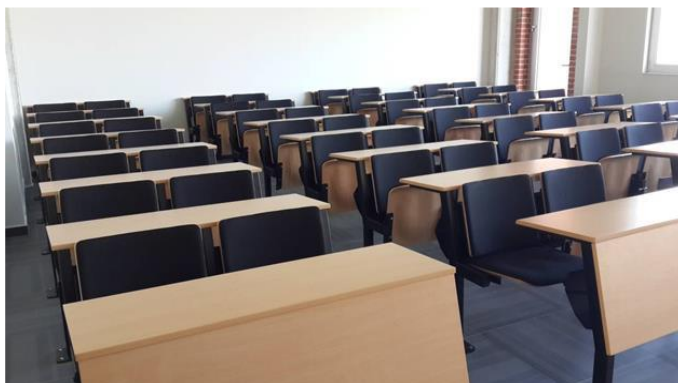
Google Services:

- **Webmail (Google account)** – Epoka University is using Google Apps for Education services and all students and academic and administrative staff are provided with an email address under epoka.edu.al domain which is a Google account. Beside official communication which is done through this email address, this account can be used for authentication to other online systems offered by university.

- **Google Classroom** – A more interactive service offered by Google as part of Google Apps for education in order to access, coordinate and organize course materials on cloud. By using Google Classroom, course materials can be integrated with other Google services where assigned users can collaborate. Students and instructors can access this service using the provided account.

Physical Infrastructure

The campus extends over a total area of 67,000 m². The 2017-2018 academic years is being conducted regularly in the premises of two buildings with a total area of 14352 m². This building has a modern infrastructure and a central heating and cooling system. The classrooms are equipped with video projectors and smart boards that enable the normal conduct of the learning process. On September 2013, the construction of A-Building the “Cultural Social Object of Epoka University” was completed. In addition to classes, there are plenty of recreational facilities for students such as cafeterias, libraries, internet cafés, facilities for the Student Council and student clubs, sports facilities, etc. Below are shown and current picture of the building.



LIBRARY

The Epoka University Library, which is located on the first floor of A-Building in the Rinas Campus, was founded to support the education and research activities of the university by providing and organizing the needed documents. With its 100-seating capacity, our library has 400 square meters area of use. Our University Library is composed of entrance, book and reading hall. In the entrance, there is a check out desk. The periodicals, including the exhibition of new arrivals, are also shelved in this section. The reading hall is equipped for students to study and to do research.



Epoka University is a member of Balkan Libraries Union which was founded on 29 July 2009 with the participation of 10 institutions from 6 Balkan countries. Our library collection is enriched by purchases and donations. The books to buy are chosen in accordance with the needs and requests of the students, administrative and academic staff. Under the Department of Library and Documentation, the library has a total of about 7500 printed books.

Digital Databases

Epoka University has full membership in JSTOR, a shared digital library created in 1995 that includes more than 2,000 academic journals. JSTOR was founded to help libraries and academic publishers transition their activities from print to digital operations, to expand access to scholarly content around the world and to preserve it for future generations. Every member of Epoka staff

can access to JSTOR's collections by going to <http://www.jstor.org/> and searching or browsing for content.

Using the Library

Our library works on the open shelf system enabling you to reach the books directly. The books in the open shelves are topically sorted in the book hall according to LC classification method. To find the book you are looking for, you should follow these steps:

1. Through the catalog search computers in the library; you can search author name, book name, and publisher, topic, or keyword areas.
2. To get the book, you can go to the shelves with the classification and location numbers of the books appearing on the screen as a result of your search.

Example of LC number for the book: "Exchange rates and international finance", Laurence S. Copeland / Financial Times, 2008 HG3821.C782008

The first part of the LC number "**HG**" represents the category of the book by its topic. In the LC system, the first letter **H** stands for **Social Science** class. Each subsequent letter indicates next level of subcategories of the main topic. In the given example **G** stands for **Finance**, **3821** indicates subcategories included between 3810-4000 (Foreign exchange, International finance, International monetary system), **C78** indicates the first letter of authors surname, **2008** indicates book publication year.

Regulations

Students of Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree and Master Students and academic and administrative personnel are the members of the library. They can borrow library materials in accordance with the rules.

Researchers coming from outside the university are not lent books, they are only allowed to use and copy the materials in the library. Readers in this group are requested to fill up the related form Lending Service.

4. Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research

4.1 Undergraduate Students' List of Theses

No.	Student	Program	Supervisor	Thesis
1.	Alisa Doçi	BINF	Dr. Igli Hakrama	An Internet Voting System Proposal for the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Albania
2.	Bleona Duka	BINF	Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa	Towards a Value Proposition of Babysitting Services: The Case of “Babysitting Tirana”
3.	Eda Muka	BINF	M. Sc. Enea Maçellari	Design of a System Preventing Employee Turnover Rate and Implementation of Retention Strategies
4.	Elias Konomi	BINF	Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa	Analysis of a Multi-Level Marketing Company: The Case of “Lyonesse”
5.	Endri Mataj	BINF	M. Sc. Enea Maçellari	Blockchain Technology in Real Estate
6.	Eralda Ruçi	BINF	M. Sc. Enea Maçellari	Employee Scheduling - Design and Implementation of an Online Software
7.	Gersi Gjidia	BINF	Dr. Alba Kruja	Strategic Role of Operations Management in the Business Environment: The case of “Donianna”
8.	Jona Cara	BINF	Dr. Ali Osman Topal	Machine Learning Techniques for Student Final Grade Prediction
9.	Marina Piro	BINF	M. Sc. Enea Maçellari	Design and Application of an Online Chronic Disease Management System
10.	Melisa Beci	BINF	Prof. Dr. Dimitrios Karras	Exponential Growth of Big Data
11.	Nensi Ahmetbeja	BINF	M. Sc. Enea Maçellari	Chatbots Usability and their Implementation for Specific-Purpose Interaction (Case: Epoka University FAQs)
12.	Pulia Letizia Naska	BINF	M. Sc. Enea Maçellari	Development of an Online Itinerary Management System
13.	Redi Kurti	BINF	M.Sc. Esmir Demaj	Blockchain as a Service for the Supply Chain
14.	Sajdi Muda	BINF	Assist. Prof. Dr. Arban Uka	Iris Recognition Under Noise Condition
15.	Sara Makishti	BINF	Dr. Igli Hakrama	Analysis, Design and Implementation of a Digital Library Card System, E-Kartela
16.	Xhovana Gjinaj	BINF	Dr. Igli Hakrama	Analysis, Design and Implementation of a Travel Management System in Albania
17.	Alkeo Taga	IML	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Brand Loyalty: Case Study of Megatek S.A”

18.	Edra Sota	IML	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	The Role of Festivals on Stimulating Sustainable Tourism Development of the Southern Coastal Region: A Case Study of “South Outdoor Festival”
19.	Eni Ahmeti	IML	Dr. Alba Kruja	Supply Chain Management in Construction Operations
20.	Mariola Muçi	IML	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Brand Albania: Understanding Destination Personality of Albania
21.	Paola Jahupi	IML	Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman	Brand Community
22.	Rea Gegaj	IML	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Studying Albania’s Tourism Destination Image: Meta-Analysis of Foreign Media
23.	Sheila Ilia	IML	M.Sc. Esmir Demaj	The Evolution of Social Enterprise in Albania: A Comparative Case Study
24.	Sindi Taçe	IML	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Uç	The Revenue Recognition: A Case Study on Three Party Transactions
25.	Alba Hasimja	BUS	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Uç	Financial Statements Structure and Analysis: Deciphering the Numbers of a Company
26.	Angjeliqi Kostaqi	BUS	Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa	The Importance of Social Media Marketing and its Benefits
27.	Aroilda Albrahimi	BUS	Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman	Marketing of Music Production Studios in Albania: Case of “Muza Academy”
28.	Denis Mehilla	BUS	M.Sc. Esmir Demaj	Lean Manufacturing: Application on a SME
29.	Geri Ruçi	BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	Sharing Economy in Albania: Exploring 5 Questions to Determine the Opportunities and Threats in the Marketplace
30.	Joana Kostaqi	BUS	M.Sc. Esmir Demaj	Comparing the Effectiveness of Online Marketing to Traditional Marketing: A Case Study Analysis
31.	Pranvera Kola	BUS	Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman	Factors of Competition in Global Airline Industry: Sky as a Marketing Field

4.2 Graduate Students' List of Theses

No.	Student	Program	Supervisor	Thesis
1.	Jonald Hoxha	MSc BUS	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç	True and Fair View: Auditors' View in Albania
2.	Marsida Marku	PM BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	Knowledge Cycle from Tacit to Explicit
3.	Adela Laçi	MSc BUS	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç	The Credit Use of Agriculture Sector and Suggestions for the Expansion in Albania
4.	Ambra Aruçi	MSc BUS	Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman	Management of Online Customer Reviews in the Hospitality Industry in Tirana: An analysis of Managers' Perspective
5.	Emanuela Buci	MSc BUS	Prof. Dr. Daniel Porath	The Effect of Information Technology on Stock Market Capitalization and Economic Growth
6.	Hysen Paqarizi	MSc BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Factors Influencing Coffee Shop Visits: Comparative Study Between Kosovo and Albania
7.	Serxho Hoxha	PM BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Evaluation of Distribution Channels of Travel Agencies in Tirana
8.	Daniel Lutfi	PM BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Consumers Trends in Handcrafted Products Market in Albania
9.	Altin Caka	MSc BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Company that Changed Coffee Culture in Albania: Case Study of Mulliri i Vjetër
10.	Albin Kazazi	PM BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Agrotourism as Trending Sector in Albania: Cases of "Mrizi i Zanave" and "Ceren Ismet Shehu" Agroturizmi si Sektor Trendi në Shqipëri: Rastet e "Mrizit të Zanave" dhe "Ceren Ismet Shehu"
11.	Ardit Bardhi	PM BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	Furniture Trade Fairs as a Marketing Tool: Opportunities and Challenges for Albanian Furniture Companies
12.	Blerina Lako	PM BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	Organizational Culture and its Role in Employee's Commitment, Motivation

				and Performance (Evidence from Berat City)
13.	Kledia Lika	MSc BUS	Dr. Vusal Gambarov	The Collaboration of NGO's with Business Companies for the Implementation of Corporate Social

4.3 List of Outgoing Students

No.	Student	Program	Host University	Country	Duration of Stay
1.	Bestjana Manga	BA BUS	University of Applied Sciences	Mainz, Germany	1 semester
2.	Jur Xhemali	MSc BUS	University of Applied Sciences	Mainz, Germany	1 semester
3.	Ylber Allushi	MSc BUS	University of Applied Sciences	Mainz, Germany	1 semester
4.	Besjon Zenelaj	PhD BUS	University of Salerno	Salerno, Italy	1 semester

4.4 Research Areas and Research Groups

Business Administration Department has ensured the direct link of PhD research work of PhD candidates to the departmental Research Areas, which are disclosed as follows:

Research Area 1: Social Business and Sustainability – Interdisciplinary

Team: All academic staff of the department

Research Area 2: Service Marketing & Management – with particular emphasis on Service-Dominant Logic and Viable Systems Approach, as well as hospitality and tourism.

Team: Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman, Dr. Vusal Gambarov, Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa, PhD (c). Besjon Zenelaj, PhD (c). Sonila Cela

Research Area 3: Entrepreneurship and Small-Medium Enterprises – with particular emphasis on entrepreneurial orientation, accounting and strategy.

Team: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç, Dr. Alba Kruja

Research Area 4: Management & Leadership – with particular emphasis on group cohesiveness and conformity, behavioral change, dynamic capabilities, and organizational culture.

Team: Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa, PhD (c). Irma Gjana, PhD (c). Esmir Demaj

The above research areas are focused on the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2017-2022 (DCM No. 710, dated 01.12.2017). Based on this strategy and on the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation, the research areas of Business Administration Department fit with the national research priority area “Social Sciences and Albanology Sciences”. Concretely, priority research topics of BUS Department related with sub-categories of social sciences are the Viable Systems Approach, Service-Dominant Logic, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Business Dynamics Governance, Healthcare Management, etc. Coherently, the PhD research work is in full compliance with the provisions of new Higher Education Law, No. 80/2015 dated 22.07.2015. Furthermore, besides the high correlation between research areas (priorities) of BUS Department and PhD studies carried out in the department, and beside the coherence with the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2017-2022 (DCM No. 710, dated 01.12.2017) and the new Higher Education Law, No. 80/2015 dated 22.07.2015, there is also significant coherence with EPOKA University Framework Strategy 2018-2022 and BUS Department Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

4.5 List of Publications

Journal publications:

Kruja, A.D., Hysa, X., Duman, T. & Tafaj, A. (2019). Adoption of Software as a Service (SaaS) In Small and Medium-Sized Hotels in Tirana. *Enlightening Tourism. A Pathmaking Journal*, 9(2), 137-168.

Article link: <https://www.uhu.es/publicaciones/ojs/index.php/et>

About this journal: <http://www.uhu.es/publicaciones/ojs/index.php/et/about>

About the index: <https://www2.scopus.com/sourceid/21100886429>

Perano, M., Hysa, X., Durmishi, D., & Della Piana, B. (2019). Vertical and Shared Leadership as Predictors of Team Effectiveness: Insights from Healthcare Sector in a Developing Country. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 14(8), 52-69. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v14n8p52>

Kruja, A.D. (2020). Enterprise Investments, Innovation and Performance: Evidence from Albania. *International Journal of Innovation in the Digital Economy*, 11(1).

Book Chapters:

Duman, T. (2019). Attributes of Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Service in a Process-Based Model. *The Routledge Handbook of Halal Hospitality and Islamic Tourism*. Hall C. M. and Prajag, G. (eds), 53-69, Routledge, London.

Book chapter link: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315150604-3>

About the book: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315150604>

Hysa, X., Gambarov, V., Zenelaj, B. (2019). The University in a retail context: an illustration of value co-creation through the Social Business Model Canvas. In G. Granata, A. Moretta, & T. Tsiakis (Eds.), *Predicting Trends and Building Strategies for Consumer Engagement in Retail Environments*. Hershey, USA: IGI Global.

<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-7856-7.ch013>

Barile, S., Hysa, X., Calabrese, M., & Riolli, L. (2019). Group dynamics and systems thinking: interdisciplinary roots, metaphors and applications. In S. Barile, R. Espejo, I. Perko, & M. Saviano (Eds.), *Cybernetics and*

Systems: Social and Business Decisions, (pp. 109-114). London: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429486982>

Kruja, A.D., Berberi, E. (2020). Tourism and Handicraft Industry: Opportunities and Challenges of Operating in the Albanian Market. In I. Chirino-Klevans (Ed.), Cases on Global Leadership in the Contemporary Economy, Ch.7. IGI Global.

Kruja, A.D., Hysi, K. (2020). Influence of Practice Management Software on Dental Services: A Case Study Approach. In B. Nogalski, A. A. Szpitter, A. Jablonski (Eds.), Networked Business Models in the Circular Economy. IGI Global, 241-267

Kruja, A.D., Shkrepa, L. (2020). Information Systems and the Performance of the Hospitality Enterprises in Tirana. In N.V. Lopes, R. Baguma (Eds.), Developing Knowledge Societies for Distinct Country Contexts. IGI Global.

Conference Papers:

Zenelaj, B., Hysa, X., Calabrese, M., Fedele, M. (2019). Empowering the linkage between Brand Management and S-D logic through the S-D orientation. In E. Gummesson, C. Mele, & F. Polese (Eds.), 5th Naples Forum on Service. System Theory and Service Science: Integrating Three Perspectives in a New Service Agenda. Ischia, Italy, June 4-7, 2019.

Hysa, E., Kruja, A.D. (2019). Advancing effective institutional models towards cohesive teaching, learning, research and writing development: Epoka University Case. 10th Conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing. Chalmers University. Gotenbourg, Sweeden. July 1-2, 2019.

Demaj, E. (2019). The learning organization understanding in disruptive times and its impact on organizational performance: the apparel industry case, presented at 3rd International Scientific Conference on Economics and Management EMAN 2019, Ljubljana, Slovenia, March 28, 2019.

Demaj, E., Manjani, V. (2019). Information asymmetry and its implications in online purchasing behavior: A country case study, presented at 3rd International Scientific Conference on Economics and Management EMAN 2019, Ljubljana, Slovenia, March 28, 2019.

Demaj, E., Bica, M. (2019). Psychological contract and managers' psychological impact on employees: A comparative case study, presented at Second International Conference on Applied Statistics and Econometrics, Tirana, Albania, May 02-03, 2019.

Marketing Management Association (MMA) Spring Conference 27-29 March, 2019 Chicago, Illinois, USA.

<http://www.mmaglobal.org/conferences/spring-conference/>

<http://www.mmaglobal.org/publications/Proceedings/2019-MMA-Spring-Conference-Proceedings.pdf>

Çela, S. Gambarov, V. (2019) "Defining Brand Identity of Albania based on Kapferer's Identity Prism International Conference "When you tire of marketing you tire of life" Academy of Marketing, Regent's University London UK, 2-4 July 2019.

4.6 Participation of Academic Staff in Academic Events

Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Visit at UNICAS

By the end of November 2018, professors Mustafa Uc and Xhimi Hysa have been committed in an Erasmus+ teaching staff mobility at University of Cassino and Southern Lazio. Besides teaching to bachelor and master students, the academic visit was accompanied with other cultural and business activities. One day was reserved for visiting the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) manufacturing plant which is in Cassino city and one of the most vanguard production plants in Europe. The manufacturing plant was dedicated only to the production of Alfa Romeo cars (models Giulia and Stelvio). Another day, both professors and colleagues from UNICAS, visited la Banca Popolare del Cassinate, which is the leading bank in that territory. Further, a cultural visit was planned for the Abbey of Montecassino, an important historical place and the first house of the Benedictine Order. Professors Hysa and Uc had also the occasion of spending one day in Rome for teaching at Sapienza University as being invited by colleagues there. During the visit at UNICAS, big efforts were spent to design in collaboration

with Prof. Porzio (Pro-Rector of International Relations) a Double Degree in Business between UNICAS and EPOKA.



Mr. Esmir Demaj visited the University of Salerno from in the framework of the Erasmus+ KA107 Mobility Programme



Mr. Esmir Demaj, from the Department of Business Administration visited the University of Salerno from 01/04/2019 to 05/04/2019 in the framework of the Erasmus+ KA107 Mobility Programme. The University of Salerno (Università degli Studi di Salerno, UNISA) is a university located in Salerno. It is organized in ten faculties and has more than 34 000 students. UNISA has a large and student friendly campus located in a very quiet and green area. The library of

UNISA offers students over 400,000 volumes and constitutes one of the major collections of books in Italy.

During this period Mr. Demaj was hosted by SIMAS Research Center (Sistemi per L’Innovazione e Management Sanitario / Health Innovation and Management Systems), where he was introduced with the research portfolio and projects implemented, and other activities performed by the center. Mr. Demaj exchanged thoughts and experiences with the staff of SIMAS, and possible future collaboration opportunities between SIMAS and Epoka University were discussed. Mr. Demaj visited the International Relations Erasmus Office and was introduced by the office staff with their practices in offering services to the incoming and outgoing students and staff in the framework of various mobility programmes. Furthermore, Mr. Demaj attended Prof. Sergio Barille’s lectures, one of the main contributors and promoters of the Viable Systems Approach (VSA) in the field of management thought.

Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman participated in the Marketing Management Association (MMA) Spring Conference 27-29 March, 2019 Chicago, Illinois, USA



Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman participated the marketing management conference organized by Marketing Management Association in Chicago, United States of America during 27-29 March 2019 (<http://www.mmaglobal.org/conferences/spring-conference/>). The conference is an academic platform which brings together numerous academics from all around the world. Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman participated the conference with his doctoral student, Mr. Okay Ozbal from International Burch University and a colleague, Dr. Omer Topaloglu from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Prof Duman’s team presented a research in the conference with the title “Modelling Peer-to-Peer Digital Brand Equity (P2P-DBE) from the Service Provider and Consumer Perspectives” and recognized with “Donald Shawver Branding, Strategy and Research Best Paper Award”. The research on Peer-to-Peer Digital Branding models the dual operational structure of such brands and analyzes the perceptions of both service providers and users that construct brand equity of these sharing economy brands. In the conference, the research team presented data from America and Pakistan and identified the roles of peer review and rating mechanisms on trust and brand equity building in these countries.

Dr. Gambarov Visited University of Salerno

Dr. Vusal GAMBAROV has been at the University of Salerno in the framework of the Erasmus+ KA107



Programme. Dr. Gambarov was hosted by SIMAS Research Center (Sistemi per L’Innovazione e Management Sanitario / Health Innovation and Management Systems), which is led by Prof. Francesco Polese. He was introduced with the research portfolio and projects implemented, and other activities performed by the center. Dr. Gambarov

exchanged thoughts and experiences with the staff of SIMAS, ongoing scientific contributions and possible future collaboration opportunities between teams were discussed. Dr. Gambarov gave lectures on Brand Management, provided workshops and scientific discussions with team members – Dr. Sarno and Dr. Carubbo. Furthermore Dr. Gambarov attended lectures hosted by Prof. Sergio Barille, one of the main contributors and promoters of the Viable Systems Approach (VSA) in the field of management thought. Dr. Gambarov also visited the International Relations Erasmus Office and was introduced by the office staff with their practices.

Dr. Kruja was part of Staff Mobility for Teaching at University of Salerno, Italy

In the framework of the Erasmus+ KA107 Programme, Dr. Alba Kruja, lecturer at the department of Business Administration, was part of the Staff Mobility for Teaching at the University of Salerno, in Italy, for a period of one week (22-26 April 2019). During her visit, Dr. Kruja was hosted by SIMAS Research Center (Health Innovation and Management Systems), which provides



support services concerning: R&S innovative technologies and good management practices for socio-economic development of EU territorial actors; Technology transfer, management and dissemination of innovation, in all industrial sectors; Scientific initiatives carried out in the framework of universities and/or with other public and private research centers; Research projects and programs of national and international interest. Dr. Kruja was introduced with the activities performed by the center, projects implemented and collaboration opportunities in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship were discussed. During her mobility period, Dr. Kruja organized a workshop and lectures on the topic of “Business Model Design” with students.

Dr. Xhimi Hysa participated in the Naples Forum on Service



Dr. Hysa participated in the world’s most well-known forum regarding service management and marketing, that is the Naples Forum on Service. During the Forum, Dr. Hysa had several meetings for exchanging scientific ideas with eminent professors such as Sergio Barile, Francesco Polese, Roderick Brodie, and Steve Vargo. The Forum activities started

with a doctoral workshop, where one of the co-authors, Mr. Besjon Zenelaj, a PhD student of Prof. Francesco Polese, had the chance to participate and to enrich his knowledge for better performing his PhD thesis. Mr. Zenelaj was also the co-author who co-presented the work in the conference. There were several comments and an immense positive feedback from the participants. The forum was concluded with a gala’ dinner and the distribution of several awards among scholars.

Mr. Besjon Zenelaj Attended One Semester Mobility Activity



Mr. Besjon Zenelaj, assistant lecturer at the Department of Business Administration of Epoka University attended one semester mobility activity for the March 01 – June 14, 2019 period, under the bilateral agreement between Epoka University and University of Salerno in the framework of Erasmus+ KA107 program of European Commission.

During this mobility period Mr. Zenelaj worked closely with his thesis supervisor Prof. Eng. Francesco Polese on the PhD dissertation. The dissertation topic of his Phd is ‘Brand Management from the Perspective of Service Dominant Logic: How brand is co-created and co-evaluated’. S-D Logic is a new, inclusive, and contemporary approach in Marketing which has been widely accepted in the international arena and has elaborated by many scholars from different Marketing schools (ex: Evert Gummesson from Stockholm University and other Nordic Marketing School scholars) which made significant enrichments/improvements to this emerging view. Moreover, Mr. Zenelaj collaborated closely with academic staff and the team of S.I.Ma.S. (Sistemi per l’Innovazione e Management Sanitario – Innovation Systems and Healthcare Management) which is a research Center at Salerno University and whose Director is Prof. Eng. Francesco Polese.

During the mobility period, he participated in Naples Forum on Service held in Ischia, Naples on 4-7 June; which is an academic event focused on Service Science and is held every two years in Naples. Service Science is built on three main pillars that are S-D Logic, Service science, management, and engineering (SSME), and Viable Systems Approach (VsA). S-D Logic has been brought by the elaboration of Steven Vargo from Hawaii University and Robert Lusch from University of Arizona in 2004. Service science, management, and engineering (SSME) on the other hand is a program which has been introduced by International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) in 2008. Viable Systems Approach on the other hand is an Italian Made approach introduced by two Italian scholars Gaetano Golinelli and Sergio Barile from Sapienza University of Rome. Besides the presentation of his work at the forum, Mr. Zenelaj attended the Doctoral Workshop organized in the framework of the Forum aiming to foster the collaboration among PhD candidates.

Lastly, Mr. Zenelaj engaged in teaching activities at University of Salerno in the course Marketing Management, and during this mobility period he participated as visiting student at the course Service Management hosted by Prof. Sergio Barile at Salerno University. Professor Barile is a Full Professor of Management at Sapienza University of Rome, and one of the main authors of reference for the studies on viable systems approach (VsA) in its various forms

Mrs. Sonila Cela attended the AM2019 Marketing Conference at Regent's University London

Our PhD Candidate Mrs. Sonila Cela attended the AM2019 Marketing Conference “When you tire of marketing you tire of life” at Regent’s University London on first week of July. She represented Epoka University and Albania in this conference which is the 52nd Marketing Conference. The paper presented in the first day of the conference “Defining the Brand Identity of Albania based on Kapferers identity Prism” a stakeholders perspective, was written by Sonila in collaboration with Dr. Vusal Gambarov’. Apart from presenting the paper, Mrs Cela presented also the PhD methodology in a section where all presenters were doctoral students from well-known universities in UK and elsewhere. The section named doctoral conference was divided in different tracks.



Each track of the conference had 3-4 presenters and three well known marketing professors which commented and gave suggestions on the PhD work and also on the presented papers. Mrs. Sonila Cela was awarded by

Marketing Trust which provided the participation in the conference including conference fee and two days of accommodation. Academy of Marketing is a nonprofit organization which aims to encourage and promote academic research in marketing. The overall objective of the Academy of Marketing is to further marketing education and research. Among Marketing Trust, other contributors of this conference were, Oxford University Press, Edward Edgar Publishing, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, Sage Publishing, Graw Hill, University of Birmingham, Birmingham Business Schools, Chartered Institute of Marketing, Interpretive Simulations, (Learning by Doing) Strata Simulations. This conference was a good opportunity for Mrs.Cela, who managed to get in touch with well-known researchers and professors in the field of marketing.

Dr. Xhimi Hysa Participated in an Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility



Dr. Xhimi Hysa participated in an Erasmus+ teaching mobility. During the stay, Dr. Hysa, at the same time co-initiator and coordinator of the project on behalf of BUS Department and Epoka University, had a very productive collaboration at the research center of SIMAS, managed by Prof. Francesco Polese. Dr. Hysa

participated as a panel member in oral examinations in the courses of Prof. Polese. Additionally, it was arranged with the International Office of the University of Salerno to add another outgoing student mobility quota in order to benefit students of BUS department. Further conversations were held also with regards to a double degree program at PhD level.

Mr. Esmir Demaj attended the 3 rd International Scientific Conference on Economics and Management - EMAN 2019 held in Ljubljana



Mr. Esmir Demaj from the Department of Business Administration attended the 3 rd International Scientific Conference on Economics and Management - EMAN 2019 held in Ljubljana, Slovenia on March 28, 2019. EMAN conference aims to establish and expand international contacts and co-operation across regions and countries. The main purpose of the conference is to provide scientists an encouraging and stimulating environment in which they may present results of their research to the scientific community and general public. Mr. Demaj attended the conference and presented the results of the research titled “Information Asymmetry and Its Implications in Online Purchasing Behavior: A Country Case Study” conducted together with Mrs. Vilma Manjani and discussed possible suggestions with the session leaders to improve the research result

4.7 Projects

Epoka Model part of WeReLaTe Project



On July 1-2 Chalmers University in Gothenburg, Sweden, organized the 10th Conference of the EATAW 2019 and the pre-conference workshop “Advancing effective institutional models towards cohesive teaching, learning, research and writing development”. On this occasion, Dr. Alba Kruja lecturer of Business Administration

Department and Board Member at Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance in collaboration with Assoc. Prof. Eglantina Hysa, Head of Economics Department and at the same time, national and international expert on accreditation of HEIs presented their research paper on the model of Epoka University focused on integration of Teaching- Research-Writing-Learning (TRWL). The study in the format of a technical report, which explored the model of TRWL at Epoka from the experts’ viewpoint, was evaluated as one of the best models among other EU models. This was their very first contribution to the COST project "We ReLaTe", which seems to be a promising drive to the next inputs in this essential project allied with macro and micro levels of higher education system.

Joint MBA with EADA Business School

Professional Master in Business Administration (**EPOKA University**)

Executive Master in Management (**EADA Business School**)

Epoka University and EADA Business School offer in Tirana and Barcelona an **Executive Education** for the Albania, based on the tradition and the internationally certified quality of EADA Business School, accredited by the best international institutions (EQUIS, AMBA, CFA) and recognized and ranked by prestigious international surveys and reports (Financial Times, The Economist).

The program covers the needs of current executives working in various areas, leading their teams to identify and face the challenges to be encountered, as well as take advantage of the national, regional and global opportunities.

Founded in 1957, EADA was one of the first Spanish institutions to provide training programmes that specifically targeted the business world. For over 50 years EADA has been in the frontline of manager training and in-company training programs for the business community. Over 120,000 participants from over 40 countries have entrusted their training to EADA, which in itself goes to show that EADA is one of Europe's most innovative and prestigious business schools (<http://www.eada.edu/en>)



Double Degree with Hochschule Mainz – School of Business

Based on the cooperation agreement between Epoka University and Hochschule Mainz, Business Administration students will be able to

spend one year at HMBS with the goal of completing both the Master degree of Master of Science and the degree of a Master of Arts in International Business (MA.IB) at HMBS. The second year of studies in Germany for the selected students will be financed by the Erasmus+ Program. Upon successful completion of the Program in Germany the student will be awarded the diploma “MA in International Business” from the University of Applied Sciences in Mainz, Germany.



5. Support, Resources & Representation

5.1 List of Students' Internships

Student		BUS Department	Company
Kejsi	Kurani	Business Administration	Iceberg Communication
Ad	Starova	Business Administration	Deloitte Albania & Kosova
Alba	Muceku	International Marketing and Logistics	Vatra Design Consultancy
Arjel	Keci	Business Informatics	Abissnet
Aroilda	Albrahimi	Business Administration	Marketing and Distribution
Bleona	Duka	Business Informatics	Balfin Group
Blirona	Keraj	Business Informatics	Facilization
Eda	Muka	Business Informatics	Raiffeisen Bank
Endri	Mataj	Business Informatics	Infosoft Systems
Klementina	Idrizi	Business Informatics	Vodafone Albania
Pulia Letizia	Naska	Business Informatics	Raiffeisen Bank
Sajdi	Muda	Business Informatics	Facilization

5.2 Participation in Academic Events

Orientation Session for Freshman Students of BUS



At the beginning of the new academic year 2018-2019, the Department of Business Administration organized an orientation session for freshman students enrolled in the programs of Business Administration, Business Informatics and International Marketing and Logistics Management. During this session, Head of Department, Dr. Xhimi Hysa introduced to the students all the lecturers of the Department of Business Administration, research and teaching assistants and the department's coordinator. Apart from the presentation and advices given by department members, the students also had the opportunity to meet two ALUMNI of BUS who shared their successful story in the marketplace after finishing their studies at Epoka and how Epoka helped them in finding a proper job through career fair and other opportunities.

IML and BUS Students Met the Representative of KU Leuven University in Belgium

IML and BUS students of EPOKA University met Ms. Erisa Bajaziti, representative of KU Leuven University in Belgium. As a guest speaker in Dr. Xhimi Hysa's Essentials of Organizational Behavior course for BUS and IML students, Ms. Erisa Bajaziti shared about her work with a number of university education. Furthermore, she addressed the topic of internationalization and cultural diversity in the university context.

Ms. Bajaziti is working as Policy Adviser in International Marketing, Communication and PR at Faculty of Economics and Business at KU Leuven University.



Members of BUS Department visited “Hotel Boutique Kotoni”

On November 9, 2018, members of the Department of Business Administration visited “Hotel Boutique Kotoni” which is a family owned hotel hosted in a historic building of rationalist Italian style, with high ceilings and wide interiors. Build in 1938, the building hosted the minister of foreign affairs for more than 40 years during the communist period. Returned to the Kotoni family in 1991, the building was firstly renovated in the 1992 as a business center, before being totally



renovated a second time from 2010/2011 and transformed into the present deluxe boutique hotel. After familiarizing themselves with the history of the business, participants met the owner of the hotel who was very welcoming and open to suggestions on how to improve service and quality. Afterwards, all the members of the Department gathered together in a socializing lunch. Department of Business Administration looks forward to other events like this that help in developing emotional intelligence and building relationships.

Western Balkans Fund Project Applications

In the framework of this year's Western Balkans Fund call for project applications, Epoka University managed to submit ONE project as a project leader as well as joining TWO other projects as project partner.

Dr. Alba Kruja of the Business Administration Department is representing Epoka University as a partner in a project submitted by the Career and Entrepreneurship Office of “Mother Theresa” University in Macedonia dealing with enhancing student startup communities in innovation and entrepreneurship.



Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman of the Business Administration Department



coordinated the project application titled ‘Creating Awareness on Digital Tourism Marketing in Western Balkans’ in which Epoka University is the project leader.

Open Forum by Innovators Club

“Innovators Club” organized the first Open Forum on December, 18th with the guest Xhulio Mitre, director of the IkubINFO academy. The main focus of this forum was Trio Talks, a new startup

that aims to improve and empower innovative education, where Xhulio is a co-founder. Trio Talks



started its activity few weeks ago with their first event “Empowering Innovative Education”. However, having known his academic and professional background, the discussion was expanded into other areas such as digital media

and marketing, blog and ikubINFO academy. During this discussion, Xhulio encouraged the audience to participate and tried to inspire the students by sharing his own experience.

Company Visit at Nela Group



Business Administration Department in collaboration with Dean of Students organized in the framework of Introduction to Business course a visit at “Nela Group”. The group currently owns 6 bakeries 2 flour factories. Nela Group delivers products in all districts of Albania and beyond its borders in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro.

The students visited one of the bakeries where they received information on the process of production, and customer service. After the visit in one of the bakeries they visited the main factory of Nela Group in Yzberisht. They took a tour in the facility and had the chance to observe the production process. Moreover, they received some information on business environment, human resource policies, and operational activities of Nela Group.

Guest Lecture in Organizational Behavior Course

On January 24, 2019, Mr. Franklin Metushi joined the course Organizational Behavior of Dr. Xhimi Hysa to share his community services experience with the freshman students. Franklin, a master student in the Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Tirana, encouraged students to be active citizens, prevent community problems, and empower the local community by



accessing different social services. Mr. Metushi has been part of several activities, seminars and trainings organized by Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, UN WOMEN Fund for

Gender Equality, US Department of State, etc. Dr. Xhimi Hysa and Department of Business Administration are thankful to Mr. Franklin Metushi for joining students of BUS/IML and having a productive conversation.

Marketing in Each of Us

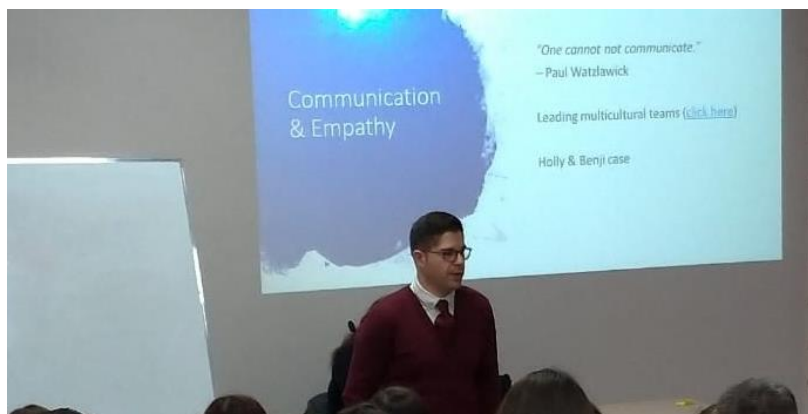
Our alumni, Ms. Yllza Canaj paid a visit to Epoka University for an interesting talk. Being a Frontend team leader at Moreone Technologies, Ms. Canaj shared her professional story with 2nd year Business Informatics students within Principles of Marketing course. Even though, currently doing a job in programming, which is quite far from marketing area, her story is very inspiring for

any individual who wants to apply principles of marketing discipline in daily and professional life. Furthermore, she shared the quote of the professor of the course Dr. Vusal Gambarov: “Marketing is not a profession, but attitude”.



Ms.Canaj holds a Bachelor degree in Business Informatics and a Master of Science degree in Business Administration, both from Epoka University. We wish the best of luck to our ALUMNI and we encourage them to stay connected and share their successful professional stories with our current students.

Dr. Hysa & Mr. Veliu on Emotional Intelligence and Leadership: an event of AIESEC Albania



AIESEC Albania, a branch of the biggest worldwide students' association, organized on February 01, 2019, a special event on "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership". They invited as speakers Dr. Xhimi Hysa and Mr. Abdullah Veliu. The

workshop stimulated high participation and interaction among students and other professionals. Dr. Hysa is currently leading the Department of Business Administration at Epoka University and has several years of teaching, research, and consulting experience in the area of Leadership & Group Dynamics. Mr. Abdullah Veliu is the Project Coordinator of gjirafa.com and a certified Coach for Emotional Intelligence, serving as a consultant for supporting change close to Six Seconds - The Emotional Intelligence Network.

Open Lecture with Mr. Dritan Mezini, CEO of duapune.com



The Department of Business Administration in the context of Human Resource Management Course of Mr. Florian Tahiri on January 31, 2019, organized the Open Lecture with Mr. Dritan Mezini, CEO of duapune.com, which is a very popular recruitment platform that enables its users to provide and obtain jobs in Albania and beyond. Mr. Mezini informed students about Human Resource Activities like Recruitment and Selection processes. He shared with Epoka Students how to be prepared for a Job Interview, CV and Cover Letter tips for successful job applications. Mr. Mezini provided insights about challenges of the Albanian labor market too.

Open Lecture with Founder and CEO of ‘BioJu’ Supermarket



The Department of Business Administration in the context of Introduction to Business Course of Mr. Florian Tahiri on January 25, 2019, organized an Open Lecture with Mr. Juri Kadiu, a young entrepreneur, founder and CEO of ‘BioJu’ Supermarket which is the first certified BIO products supermarket in Albania. Mr. Kadiu talked to the students about how he

came up with the idea to establish a bio products supermarket, the challenges he has faced. He also gave some advises to Epoka University students regarding entrepreneurship and encouraged them to be future entrepreneurs. Mr. Kadiu also launched a Case Study competition for Epoka Students in the framework of Marketing Mix strategies.

Bringing Creativity into 21st Century Classrooms

Colleagues of Business Administration Department on March 20, 2019, participated in an open forum on the topic of "Bringing Creativity into 21st Century Classrooms" organized by Epoka University Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance. Dr. Peterson, professor of marketing

and sustainable business practices at the University of Wyoming, USA, discussed on the said topic. During his lecture, Dr. Peterson delivered to the audience different learning



styles such as visual, logical, verbal, social. The focus of Dr. Peterson's discussion was on the ways and samples of creativity during course assignments for students like using sound and music as their learning style. At the end of the discussion, professors of Epoka University shared their experiences on the learning styles that they suggest to the students and their course assignment that they give to the students to foster their creativity. Epoka's professors thanked Dr. Peterson for sharing his knowledge and experience with them.

Study Visit to Hilton Garden Inn Tirana Hotel

On March 25, 2019, students from Business Department had a visit to Hilton Garden Inn Tirana. On behalf of the hotel, Group Conference & Events Manager, Mrs. Silvana Sula hosted the group and presented to the students and academic staff the Hilton Brand. Firstly, she led a facility tour in the hotel and showed students all the premises starting from the dining hall, different rooms and convention and meeting rooms. During the tours she showed to the students the service culture and quality standards applied in the hotel.



Dr. Vusal Gambarov and the group asked a number of questions regarding Hilton brand name, history of presence in Albania, challenges of running a well-known brand in Albanian business environment. Question for different products like “Sunday Brunch” which Mrs. Sula mentioned that with that product Hilton Garden inn is trying to bring a new culture in Albania. This study visit set a good example of learning for students in the topic of services marketing as part of marketing course Mrs. Sula presented interesting facts about Hilton Brand operation philosophy including the service culture, human resources recruitment and development policies, etc. At the end of the visit, Dr. Gambarov and students thanked Mrs. Sula for the kind welcoming and presentation. Group from Epoka University took a picture in the Hotel Entrance and the visit was ended with very good impressions for the new international Brand which has entered in the Albanian Market

To brand, or Not to brand!

In the framework of presenting the students with real cases, on March 27, 2019, Dr. Erdis Cela professor of communication and advertising joined the course Branding and Brand Management of Dr. Vusal Gambarov. Dr. Cela shared with the students his valuable experience of rebranding one of the biggest companies operating in Albania. He introduced students with the challenges and difficulties of rebranding process, mentioning that difficulty is not at finding the proper color or symbol, but changing the management philosophy. Because branding is successful when also the values and mission of the organization are in line with branding identity. Mr. Cela also speaking about his experience showed that he had studied journalism in Marmara University, and after some

years in this field he followed his career as a successful marketer. This way he encouraged students to explore and to take new challenges. By sharing his experience class learned a lot regarding to all of the steps of corporate rebranding process and some helpful tips to use in the future. Mr. Cela is now head of communication sciences department in another private university in Albania. Dr.



Vusal Gambarov and Department of Business Administration are thankful to Dr. Erlis Cela for joining students and having a productive conversation.

Successful Graduates Meet Our Students

Business Administration Department invited its successful graduates to share their experiences, opportunities and challenges of business sector with our students. Three successful graduates from Epoka BUS joined BUS Department, on 29th of March, which held a forum to the BUS department students. Enigerta Halilaj who had received her Bachelor Degree at Epoka University in 2013 and also her Master Degree in the Field of Business Administration has achieved great success in her career. She shared with the first year students the opportunities offered to her as a graduate from Epoka. Immediately after graduation she started working for Deloitte Albania, one of the big four accounting and auditing companies in the World. Nowadays she is engaged in providing accounting and tax consulting services for 6 different companies, both foreign and domestic companies operating in different fields of the economy. Mrs. Enigerta told to the students that apart of difficulties in finding a job, nowadays students due to the technological developments are aware of the skills and requirements needed by employers and what remains to them is just to develop themselves and be ready for the Albanian Market. Another successful Graduate, Xhojana Bardollari, who is the General Manager of Study Care shared with the students her feelings and doubts she faced after graduation. Saying that firstly she didn't know what to do, and after discussing with one of Epoka professors she could define the career she would like to do. Managing successfully the company, she gave to the students also the opportunity of having internship and employment. Klaudio Imeraj, an Entrepreneur who is graduated from IML shared

with the students his experiences in creating his companies. He advised them to be positive and follow their dreams. Klaudio is the co-founder of Share Albania, an application built for promoting Albania which has won the first place in Startup Live Tirana together with another student from Epoka BUS department. Dr. Xhimi Hysa and the Department of Business Administration are thankful to our graduates for joining students and giving meaningful insights from the business sector.



Challenges of Hiring Sales People

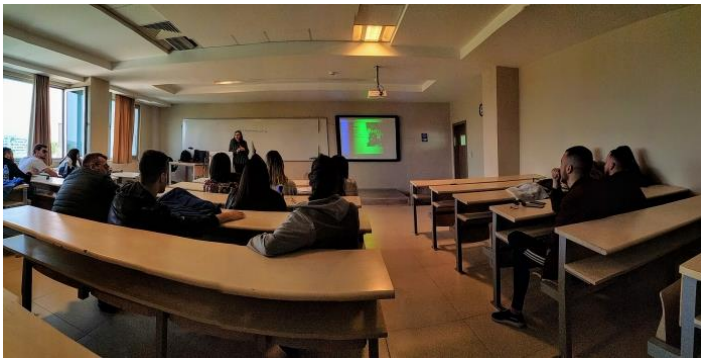


On April 03, 2019, Ornela Malja joined the course Sales Techniques and Management of Dr. Vusal Gambarov. Ms. Malja, who is graduated from Epoka University in 2017 in IML program, has

followed her career in marketing and currently is the Marketing Director of MBM Company. Ms. Malja shared with the students their experience during sales team recruitment process. This

happened when the company enlarged the sales organization and the recruitment process turned into a learning process for them as well. Our guest explained all the steps the company went through to choose the right people starting from the interviews to the selection and training. This was a great opportunity for the students to hear what they have learned in the lecture from a person who actually was part of this process as a recruiter. Students were interested and active during the whole discussion by asking questions about the topic and the organization overall. Dr. Vusal Gambarov and Department of Business Administration are thankful to Mrs. Ornella Malja for joining students of BUS/IML and having a productive conversation.

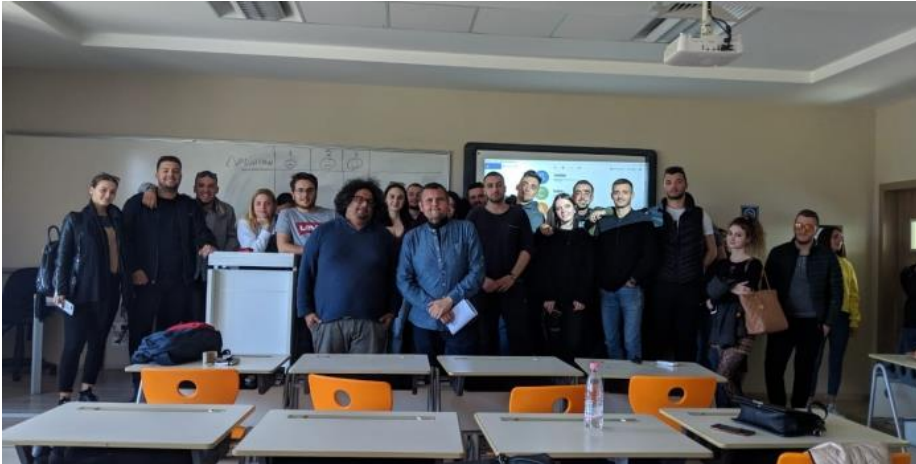
Guest Speaker in Sales Techniques and Management Course



In the framework of presenting the students with real cases, on April 24, 2019, Epoka University alumni Morena Sheta joined the course of Sales Techniques and Management of Dr. Vusal Gambarov. Morena is an entrepreneur that owns a company called

NewBllok dealing with real estate sector. Ms.Sheta introduced to the students the sales techniques her company uses in the selling activity. By sharing her experience, she motivated students for sales career. Students were excited about career development in this field and enjoyed the presentation and interactive discussion delivered by Ms. Sheta. Business Administration department and professor of the course are thankful to Ms. Sheta for the value brought and wishes to our alumni the best of success in her career.

Workshop for Business Administration Students



Managing Partner at Social Development Investment Elias Mazloun was invited as guest trainer within the context of Sales Management and Brand Management courses

at Epoka University. He organized very innovative workshop for the students of 2nd and 3rd years. Students divided in groups competed with each other and tested themselves as potential entrepreneurs. Overall workshop experience was liked a lot by students. Mr. Mazloun mentioned that ideas with a potential to attract investors will be supported in the ecosystem by him and their partners. Business Administration department, students of BUS and IML programs and lecturer of the courses Dr. Vusal Gambarov are very grateful for this joyful experience brought by Mr. Mazloun. We hope for more students to have this precious experience with him in the future.

360 ° Advertising Agency: Life in an Advertising Agency from Creatives to Communication



Marketing Zone in Collaboration with Business Administration on May 22nd at the University's conference hall organized the The activity nameed: 360 ° Advertising Agency: Life in an advertising agency from creatives to communication. In this event the special guest was Ms. Odeta Male, Chief Operating Officer at Landmark Communication one of the most successful advertising agencies in Albania. The meaning behind the name was about the presentation. Ms. Odeta went through an explanation of all the aspects a marketing agency covers and also all the departments Landmark Communications has. Most importantly, she shared her 10 years work experience as a professional in the agency and also previous work experiences related to marketing. Students from different departments form Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences attended but mostly students of marketing from first , second and third year. Ms. Odeta asked very interesting questions to the audience and also received some back. The presentation and conversation lasted about one hour and a half and it was very beneficial and informing for the participants. In the end the guest offered the interested students to contact her or the office of Landmark communications in order to get information about internship and employment opportunities.

Brain Ring 2019 Competition



Marketing Zone and Business Administration department organized the Brain Ring 2019 competition on May 23, 2019 at the premises of Epoka University Campus. The event was

organized in two rounds. Semifinal was organized in two parallel sessions where 8 teams with 6 members compete for two places from each session. The schools participated in the Semifinal are Besnik Sykja, Ernest Koliqi, Faik Konica, Mehmet Akif, Myslym Keta, Qemal Stafa, Sami Frasheri dhe Sarina. Upon the semifinal a coffee break was offered, and Certificates and small gifts were delivered to the participants. After the semi finals there were 4 high schools teams from `Besnik Sykja` high school, `Ernest Koliqi`, high school, `Faik Konica` high school, and `Mehmet Akif College` in the final phase were challenged with a lot of tricky questions which were asked by the Marketing Chief himself Prof. Vusal. At the end Faik Konica scored the highest points and therefore won. Every participant was gifted a few scholar items from Epoka and also a certification of participation. The winners got a coupon of 7000 leke value to buy scholar items.

Furthermore, the winning team members will be awarded 20% scholarship for the programs Business Informatics, International Marketing and Logistics Management, and Business Administration in case they decide to pursue their studies at Epoka University.

In each round which lasted 60 minutes respectively. the students were asked to give answers that incorporated their Business, and Marketing related topics knowledge with the critical thinking. This competition was organized by the students of International Marketing and Logistics Management students, members of the Marketing Club . In this contexts, special credits go to Andrea Kaçi, Alkeo Taga, Laura Nulis, Marjola Muçi, Marli Reka, Rea Dedaj, Sirja Strazimiri, Sindi Taçe, Teadora Sulku, Xhesika Peço and Zhaklin Bano. It was one of those competitions that even the people who weren't actually participating got involved and learnt something new. At the end of the day this is what these kind of activities aim to achieve.

Glam House & Paramedical Skin Revision Introduction at EPOKA

On May 31,2019 one of the most successful health and beauty clinics operating in Albania was



invited at Epoka University by the Department of Business Administration and Marketing Zone. The aim of this event was to introduce the Nr.1 Paramedical Skin Revision Company in the world: DMK Skin Clinic and their Game of Thrones

facial. A Cosmopolitan article reviews the facial as the mother of skin treatments but what does it

consist on? DMK treatment uses the most effective formulations made from a highly refined combination of botanical and pharmaceutical grade ingredients. Game of Thrones mask contains living enzymes that stimulate our own natural enzymes to speed up cellular processes within the skin. Mrs. Denisa Dedej, the administrator of Glam House who is also a Business Administration / IML alumni presented the company and touched some points of the role of marketing courses and especially marketing activities, in doing business. She made sure to put emphasis on most important elements of the facial treatment. Interest from the participating students on the topic generated some individual talks with the doctor assisting in the event, but also group discussions from which both parties benefited from. At the end of the presentation, a competition among students was organized and to the winner, Edra Sota, (IML 3rd Year) the facial was performed for free by offering a pleasant experience. Each of the participants had the opportunity to see and hear every step of the process being explained by the expert. At the end of the procedure, the effect on the skin was noticeable. To all students attending the event a Gift Voucher was distributed and further assistance on any problem they could deal with.

Study Visit and Trip to Durres



On the 5 th of June Marketing Zone Club in collaboration with the Business Administration Department organized a study visit and trip to Durres city for third year Marketing students. The purpose of the trip was to visit the municipality of Durres and talk to a representative about the

current situation of tourism there and Durres as a brand or destination marketing. Also in this context the students talked to local business owners in order to understand how they approached the market during different seasons of the year and what sort of strategies they followed to promote tourism. Students left Epoka campus at around 1:30 PM and arrived at Durres by 2:15 PM. Mr. Florian Tahiri, deputy mayor of Durres, welcomed the students in the municipality's council meeting room. A one hour long discussion was held and the matters that were discussed included improvements the municipality has made over the years, what they have done in order to increase the number of tourists visiting Durres, what were some of the impressions foreign tourists have had on the city, what are some events the municipality organizes regarding Durres brand recognition and also how the municipality collaborates and communicates with local businesses to improve the quality of services they offer. A lot of beneficial information was exchanged, and also interesting questions were answered by the deputy. The conversation engaged all of the people present, including Professor Vusal Gambarov and Sonila Cela who also helped to moderate the conversation in the aspects related to marketing. After the fruitful discussion Mr. Tahiri invited the students to his office, from where a very beautiful part of Durres center could be seen. Also, students took a picture outside of the municipality to have it as a memory. Later on they visited "Gelateria Cela" a very successful local business located very near the center. Cela produces and sells ice cream and desserts. Very delicious products, which keep the place busy not only during summer but all year long. The students got the chance to talk to the owner of the place, who kindly agreed to share the history of Cela and how it became so successful. When asked of the strategy Cela follows he simply answered that "a good job, speaks for itself". By that he meant that no structured planned strategy was followed, it was just the word of mouth that made Cela so famous. Everyone who tried the products spread the word of how good they are therefore curiosity made people go to Cela. At the end of the visit the students thanked the deputy and Cela's owner for their time and left Durres to come back to the campus. A day well spent we might say!

5.3 Student Best Success Stories

Our Master Student Started an Internship at UN Women

Nensi Hazizaj, currently Master student at Epoka University in the programme MSc. in Business Administration, has started an internship at UN Women in Tirana in the Operations Department.



She applied as soon as she found out that UN Women had opened an internship position through their official website. After a couple of weeks, after application she was interviewed through Skype with the Head of Operations and two members of her team, during which time they discussed & negotiated expectations and requirements of the position. Her application supported by three letters of recommendation resulted successful and she is currently working in the position of Operations Support Intern. The internships in this

organization will last for three months in a position where she will be assisting and engaging with many different organizational tasks and duties.

5.4 Office Holders

The department would like to thank the following for their valuable contribution to teaching, administration and management over the past year:

- Academic staff
- Administrative staff
- Students
- CPAO
- Finance Office
- Rectors Office
- Events' Organizers and Participants
- All other units of Epoka University

5.5 Acknowledgements

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