

# ANNUAL REPORT

1 September 2019 – 31 July 2020



# **Annual Report**

1 September 2019 – 31 July 2020

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# 1. Organization & Management

## Welcome Speech of Department's Chair



Humans, individually and collectively, face several pressing problems in the coming years. Albania is facing high emigration; the wider global economy faces looming disruptions posed by the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution; societies everywhere still struggle with the questions of how to best meet our unlimited wants and needs with our limited resources, and how to deal with persistent problems of poverty and other social ills.

Business provides a beautiful instrument with which to respond to many of these problems. Businesses are a powerful instrument for creating value. Businesses provide needed goods and services for consumers and pay many of the taxes that fund the provision of public services. Businesses likewise create employment and provide livelihoods for entrepreneurs and their staff.

Businesses also provide a unique avenue through which to address pressing problems of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, poverty, and other social challenges. A problem-solving approach that seeks to develop sustainable business ideas to address challenges in society can channel immense creative energies into innovative, sustainable entrepreneurial ideas to address such problems. For example, entrepreneurs can use their creativity to develop new fields of meaningful work for those displaced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Entrepreneurs can likewise develop sustainable business approaches to address environmental, health, education, and other challenges facing society. As businesses generate value, create employment, and pay taxes, they also fight poverty and attract more businesses and workers to the communities in which they operate.

While businesses can be powerful forces to benefit society, they can also cause great harm to their employees, clients, and environment. Individuals spend much of their waking hours working for or in businesses; management decisions can influence productivity, safety, and the well-being and morale of staff and their families, including children. The instruments of rhetoric, empathic design, and psychology applied in marketing can creatively solve daunting problems or foster exploitive addictions. Businesses can provide positive contributions to their communities or impose unfair costs on others. Thus, learning more about how we can optimize value and well-being within and beyond businesses is essential in improving human life.

The Department of Business Administration, which also houses the Business Informatics and International Marketing and Logistics study programs at Epoka supports students, staff, and the larger ecosystem in optimizing business solutions to create value, solve problems, and improve human well-being.

It is my great privilege to welcome you to our department and invite you to join us in the exciting work at hand.

Faithfully yours,

Timothy Hagen, PhD

## **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
<b>SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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
<b>THIRD YEAR</b>	
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	
<b>THIRD YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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
<b>SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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
<b>THIRD YEAR</b>	
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
<b>THIRD YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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:

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>	
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	Business English
Developing Reading and Writing Skills	Developing Reading and Writing Skills
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>	
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
<b>SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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
<b>THIRD YEAR</b>	



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:

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>	
Academic Reading and Writing	Strategic Management
Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship	Auditing
Elective I	Elective I
Elective II	Elective II
<b>FIRST YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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	
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>	
Research Methods in Business	Thesis
Seminar on Business Administration	
Elective I	
Elective II	
<b>SECOND YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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:

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>	
Research Techniques in Business Administration	Advanced Quantitative Methods for Management Science Research
Elective I	Elective I
Elective II	Elective II
<b>FIRST YEAR ELECTIVE COURSES</b>	
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
<b>WRITING OF DISSERTATION STAGE</b>	
Thesis	

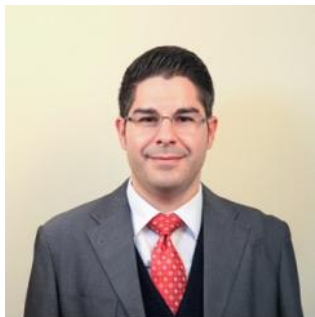
### 3. Resources

#### 3.1 Department Staff

##### Full time Academic Staff



**Dr. Timothy Hagen**  
Head of the Department



**Assist. Prof. Dr. Xhimi Hysa**  
Lecturer



**Prof. Dr. Teoman Duman**  
Lecturer



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç**  
Lecturer



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. David Felsen**

Lecturer



**Dr. Alba Kruja**

Lecturer



**Dr. Esmir Demaj**

Lecturer



**M.Sc. Besjon Zenelaj**

Assistant Lecturer



### **Part time Academic Staff**

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mimoza Manxhari
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mirdaim Axhami
3. Dr. Sonila Zerelli.
4. Dr. Rozana Haxhialushi
5. M. Sc. Florian Tahiri
6. M.Sc Enigerta Halilaj
7. M.Sc. Artan Kadriaj
8. M.Sc. Anuela Ristani

### **Administrative Staff**



**M.Sc. Anida Lazeri**

Department Coordinator



**M.Sc. Tekim Peza**

Faculty Administrator

### 3.2 Academic Advisors

#### 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 BINF	1st Year,	Dr. Timothy Hagen
BA BINF	2nd Year	Dr. Esmir Demaj
BA BINF	3rd Year	Dr. Alba Kruja
BA BUS	1st Year	Dr. Xhimi Hysa
BA BUS	2nd Year	Dr. Xhimi Hysa

BA BUS	3rd Year	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj
BA IML	1st Year,	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj
BA IML	2nd Year	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj
BA IML	3rd Year	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj
PM BUS	All Students	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç
M.Sc BUS	1st Year	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç
M.Sc BUS	2nd Year	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç

### 3.3 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 m<sup>2</sup>. The 2017-2018 academic years is being conducted regularly in the premises of two buildings with a total area of 14352 m<sup>2</sup>. 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, 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	Eni Fejzo	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	When a Health Crisis Turns into an Economic Threat: Analyzing the Severity of the Great Lockdown as Compared to the Great Recession
2	Keli Kasharaj	BINF	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Üç	An Overview of the Digitalization of Financial Reporting from IT to AI: A Survey on Digitalization of Accounting Practices in Albania
3	Belinda Myteberi	BINF	Dr. Igli Hakrama	How Process Mining and RPA Help in Optimizing Business Processes
4	Lisbora Likaj	BINF	Dr. Igli Hakrama	Analysis, Design and Implementation of an Orphanage Social Care Management System in Albania (e-ORPHAN)
5	Amela Rahimi	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	Digital Nomadism Lifestyle: Case of Tirana, Albania
6	Xhoana Hajdari	BINF	Dr. Julian Hoxha	A Comparative Study of Software Testing Tools
7	Blirona Keraj		Dr. Igli Hakrama	Analysis, Design and Implementation of Albanian Vaccination Management System, e-Vacc
8	Sindi Kalo	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	Human Capital Investment in Albania
9	Kimberli Troka	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	Business Digitalization as a Competitive Advantage: A Case Study Analysis
10	Sheila Pinari	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	The Impact of ICT on Small and Medium Enterprises: A Case Study
11	Enejda Doko	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	Enterprise Resource Planning in Albanian Enterprises, Efficiency and Challenges: A Case Study
12	Sara Caushaj	BINF	Dr. Esmir Demaj	Women as Leaders: Case of Albania
13	Rei Nuriu	BINF	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj	Social Media Marketing in Travel Agencies: Case of Tirana
14	Panajota Bajaj	BINF	M. Sc. Besjon Zenelaj	Marketing Mix of Luxury Brands
15	Klajbi Subashi	BINF	M. Sc. Esmir Demaj	Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality Industry: Case of Albania
16	Sara Bendaj	BINF	M. Sc. Esmir Demaj	Business Ethics in Albania: Do Companies Comply with It?



<b>17</b>	Ditjona Lila	BUS	Msc. Besjon Zenelaj	Perception Management: An Antidote to the Complexity of Psychological Contrasts
<b>18</b>	Kejsi Sulaj	BUS	Assoc.Prof.Dr Mustafa Üç	Inventory Cost Flow Assumptions and Limitations of Lifo: A Case Study of a Manufacturing Firm in Albania
<b>19</b>	Henri Gega	BUS	Assoc.Prof.Dr Mustafa Üç	Use of Financial Ration on Performance Evaluation: Profitability Analysis of Private Banking Sector in Albania
<b>20</b>	Alba Muceku	IML	M. Sc Besjon Zenelaj	Standardization and Adaption in an International Marketing Strategy: A Case Study of IKEA in China
<b>21</b>	Judoris Merkaj	IML	M. Sc Besjon Zenelaj	How is Altering the Global Consumer Behavior the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic?
<b>22</b>	Zhaklin Bano	IML	M. Sc Besjon Zenelaj	The Communication of Luxury Brands in the Recent Years and During the COVID-19

#### 4.2 Graduate Students' List of Theses

No.	Student	Program	Supervisor	Thesis
1	Aili Eri Chen	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	What is the Relationship between Motivation Factors and Employee Performance at Infsoft Systems in Albania?
2	Klevi Pasho	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Timothy Hagen	The Role of Social Marketing in Protecting Children's Right and the Fight Against Child Trafficking in Albania
3	Tea Rada	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Timothy Hagen	Using Applied Neuromarketing and Behavioral Economics to Better Understand Consumer Decision-Making in Albania
4	Egla Gega	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Timothy Hagen	Social Media Influence on Consumer Purchasing Behavior of Millennials, Case of Albania
5	Nada Godelli	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Xhimi Hysa	Motives of Business Operating in Tirana to Engage in Creative Accounting
6	Arilda Isaku	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Timothy Hagen	E- Business in Tirana, a Dual Perspective on its Adoption
7	Jona Petrela	M.Sc BUS	Prof. Dr. David Felsen	Employee Perception on the Effectiveness of Performance Evaluation in a Financial Organization in Albania
8	Vilma Çekani	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Xhimi Hysa	Exploring the Role of Game Advertising in Raising Brand Awareness
9	Sindiola Koka	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	Airbnb, The Future Of Networked Hospitality Businesses, Case Of Tirana
10	Jonida Ismaili	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Timothy Hagen	The Role of Social Marketing in the Real Estate Industry in Albania: Consumer and Real Estate Agencies Perceptions.
11	Suag Selimi	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	The Impact of Proactiveness, Innovation, Opportunity-Drivenness and Value Creation on Consumer Perceptions of Entrepreneurial Marketing in Tirana Supermarket

12	Elda Gurabardhi	M.Sc BUS	Assoc. Prof. Dr.Mustafa Üç	Exploring the Place of Albanian Accounting System between Anglo-Saxon and Continental Europe Mainstreams
13	Xhoel Kushta	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	Factors Creating Workplace Toxicity in the Public Healthcare Sector in Albania
14	Ashley Bekteshi	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	Assessing the Role of Social Media on Hotel's Performance Operating in Tirana
15	Nensi Hazizaj	M.Sc BUS	Dr.Xhimi Hysa	The Impact of Complexity on Social Capital and Shared Mental Models as Facilitators of Knowledge Management Practices
16	Irisi Alimuçaj	M.Sc BUS	Dr. Alba Kruja	The Influence of Reward System on Employee Performance at Helius System
17	Eduart Duda	PM BUS	Dr. Timothy Hagen	Business Intelligence in Albania - Casual Use or Core Function
18	Esmir Demaj	PhD	Dr. Teoman Duman	Top Management and Organizational Ambidexterity Paradox: A Qualitative Study on Dynamic Managerial Capabilities

#### 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.	Vilma Çekani	MSc BUS	University of Salerno	Salerno, Italy	1 semester
5.	Besjon Zenelaj	PhD BUS	University of Salerno	Salerno, Italy	1 semester

6.	Esjana Mema	MSc BUS	University of Salerno	Salerno Italy	1 semester
7.	Xhesika Leka	BA 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, Assist. Prof. Dr.Xhimi Hysa, PhD (c). Besjon Zenelaj,

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

**Mr. Esmir Demaj participated at the Cost Action ‘CA18236 - Multi-disciplinary innovation for social change’ held in Brussels.**



Esmir Demaj of Business Administration Department represented Albania and Epoka University as a Management Committee member at the first Management Committee meeting of Cost Action ‘CA18236 - Multi-disciplinary innovation for social change’ held in Brussels, Belgium between October 02-04, 2019. This meeting was the official start of this project where the MC members took important decisions to be implemented during the next 4 years of the project, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by each country. The Agenda of the meeting was full of important issues to be discussed. The first part of the meeting was dedicated to a presentation of COST, the COST frame, rules and procedures that will follow the project for all its 4-year duration. Then each representative of each country introduced him/herself and expressed his/her interest in participating in the designated Working Groups (WG) of the Action. The second part of the meeting was chaired by the newly elected Action Chair. After a brief presentation of the Action’s objectives, the chair reviewed the management structure of the Action as well as the MoU deliverables. The work and budget plan (WBP) for the 1st Grant Period (01/11/2019-31/04/2020) was discussed and pre-approved. Respective tasks were shared among Working Groups until the next MC meeting to be held tentatively in mid-January, 2020 in Serbia.

#### **Participation in the Social Business Academia Conference in Berlin, Germany**





Social Business provides a unique opportunity to work for social good in a sustainable manner. The two-day Social Business Academia Conference (SBAC 2019) in Berlin, Germany was organized by the Yunus Centre of Prof. Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Timothy Hagen, Acting Head of the Department of Business Administration and Head of the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability (YCSBS) at Epoka University, participated in SBAC 2019 to network with other actors in the field and share the vision and work of the YCSBS.

The Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability at Epoka University in Tirana, Albania, was launched in 2018 under the leadership and vision of Dr. Xhimi Hysa, who was at the time Head of the Department of Business Administration. The YCSBS is advancing its mission of building social business awareness to address pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges through interdisciplinary research, knowledge-sharing, and mentoring services.

To date, the primary work of the YCSBS has been to bring together actors in the social business ecosystem in Albania and raise awareness among students about the philosophy and potential of social business.

Currently the YCSBS is working to launch a business incubator at Epoka University and is working to involve students and researchers in further mapping the social business ecosystem and identifying predictors and barriers to the success of social businesses in Albania.

At SBAC 2019, the YCSBS and Department of Business Administration representative, Dr. Hagen, networked with other researchers in the fields of microfinance, social business and social enterprise research, and business incubation to explore collaborative research opportunities and find ways to partner with other universities who can share expertise in launching and sustaining business incubators.

At SBAC 2019, Dr. Hagen on behalf of the YCSBS and the Department of Business Administration, also shared avenues of future collaboration, including partnering with other stakeholders to explore how we might develop new social business initiatives in Albania. One such example would be to explore how we could develop the Via Egnatia from Durres and Apollonia in Albania through Ohrid and Bitola in North Macedonia and Thessaloniki in Greece to Istanbul in Turkey as a “Path of Peace” to foster sustainable business, sustainable peace, environmental protection, and creative, human-centered responses to the opportunities and challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Other research themes could include conducting impact assessments on public-private partnerships through the lens of social business and social enterprise theory and explore how outreach to existing businesses may encourage new engagement with concepts of social business.

SBAC 2019 proved to be a valuable venue for connecting with other actors and lay the groundwork for future collaboration to nurture responsible entrepreneurship for positive social impact.

### **Seminar at Sapienza University of Rome**



On November 25-27, 2019, Dr. Xhimi Hysa visited Sapienza University of Rome for holding seminars with PhD, after an invitation from Prof. Sergio Barile, Director of Management Department at Sapienza. The seminars were aimed to enrich the knowledge of PhD students in

relation to research methods. Concretely, the seminars were focused on innovative research methods to be applied in the field of Management. One example is the application of GroupDynamics Software® for measuring group cohesiveness and consonance among team members. Another example is how to perform a semi-experimental design. A further one is how to substitute survey questions with the projection of pictures in order to reduce response bias (Picture Apperception Value Test or the PAVT procedure).

### **UK-Albania Tech Hub Training Session**



On December 14, 2019, Dr. Alba Kruja lecturer at the department of Business Administration held a training session on “Albanian (&WB) Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Challenges opportunities & perspectives” to start-ups within the framework of UK-Albania Tech Hub program.

The hub aims to facilitate bilateral tech partnerships between Albania and the UK. It focuses on tech start-ups that have the potential to contribute to growth in the UK by sharing innovation, skills and business opportunities between the two countries.

UK Albania Tech Hub -Session with Dr. Alba Kruja "Albanian Entrepreneurial Ecosystem" — at Mrizi i Zanave Agroturizëm.

### **Epoka Representatives Participate in EU for Innovation Masterclass 1**





Representatives from Epoka University participated in the opening session of the EU for Innovation Masterclass on 24 and 25 February 2020. Assoc. Prof. Eglantina Hysa, Head of the Department of Economics, Dr. Alba Kruja, Lecturer in the Department of Business Administration and Coordinator of the Business Informatics Program, and Dr. Timothy Hagen, Acting Head of the Department of Business Administration, represented Epoka University in the event. The EU for Innovation Masterclass on the Entrepreneurial University seeks to support universities in Albania in enhancing their entrepreneurial approach and their support for entrepreneurs and startups.

The class was provided by the EU for Innovation program in Albania. Two of the trainers, Arjan Goudsblom and Erik Boer, come from the Amsterdam Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE), and shared insights and experience from their work with ACE and the case study of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The third trainer, Maciej Markowski, is an expert in the HEInnovate online instrument for facilitating assessments of innovation support in universities and fostering improvements in such support.

The Masterclass on the Entrepreneurial University builds on concepts and stages of incubation support developed by ACE and the University of Amsterdam: Explore and Inspire; Pursue and Educate; and Launch and Grow. The goal of the Masterclass is to develop University Entrepreneurship action plans for each participant university.

Epoka University welcomes this collaboration to build a better future for our students, for Albania, and for the wider international community.

### **Mentoring “EUvsVirus” Pan-European Hackathon**



The European Commission, led by the European Innovation Council and in close collaboration with the EU member states, hosted a pan-European hackathon to connect civil society, innovators, partners and investors across Europe in order to develop innovative solutions for coronavirus-related challenges. The event organised between April 24th to 26th, involved over 380 volunteers, 2,400 mentors and over 800 partners, brought together people of 141 different nationalities, as well as different areas of expertise and backgrounds.

Dr. Alba Kruja, Academic Coordinator of Business Informatics Program represented Albania and Epoka University on supporting the hackathon as a skill mentor, mentoring teams on business continuity domain.

Over 20,900 participants across the EU and beyond joined the hackathon, and over 2,150 solutions were submitted in areas including health and life (898), business continuity (381), remote working and education (270), social and political cohesion (452), digital finance (75) and other challenges (83).

Event website: <https://euvsvirus.org/>

## Mentoring “Hack the Crisis Albania”



From 3rd of April until April 5th, for 48-hours 30 teams and 75 individuals developed prototype-able ideas, which could help solve the crisis and help deal with the aftermath related to the themes of: saving lives; saving communities and saving businesses- - - - .

Dr. Alba Kruja, Academic Coordinator of Business Informatics Program represented Epoka University on supporting the hackathon and mentoring teams on business model value proposition.

This online hackathon to hack the crisis [caused by Coronavirus] we are currently experiencing, both locally and globally, an event part of the international ”Hack the Crisis” movement, was organized by EU for Innovation project, in partnership with Crazytown/Finland & Coolab/Albania.

Event website: <https://coolab.al/hackthecrisis/>

## How to Help Albanian Businesses with New Affordable Digital Solutions?



Albanian businesses need to adapt and take their businesses online in both business-to-consumer and business-to-business. However, various obstacles still exist. During 25-27 May, 15 teams, participated in the Hackathon organized by EU for Innovation project, looking for solutions that are actionable, impactful and insightful to the following challenges:

Challenge 1: How to help businesses to better understand and make use of e-commerce/ omnichannel solutions?

Challenge 2: How to improve HR workflows, processes and transparency with affordable digital solutions?

Challenge 3: How to make use of real-time data and technologies for better decision-making and cooperation?

Dr. Alba Kruja, Academic Coordinator of Business Informatics Program represented Epoka University on supporting the hackathon and mentoring the participating teams on (1) Business Model Design; (2) Process Management; (3) Workflow.

Event website: <https://hackathon.al/>

### Platform Proposal for Collaborative Economy in Albania



Invited in Edinburg University, both Dr. Alba Kruja and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eglantina Hysa, had the opportunity to engage in many scientific meetings and activities. During 23-25 October, the two academicians participated at “Ethnographies of Collaborative Economi(es) Conference” supported by the COST Action “From Sharing to Caring: Examining the Socio-Technical

Aspects of the Collaborative Economy”. They presented their upcoming research work to be published as a book



chapter, which has in focus the deep understanding of the collaborative economy in Albania and the supportive platforms of it. The analysis will count on investigation of the Quadruple Helix Model and a broader inclusion of countries in regional level.

## 4.7 Projects

### Accelerator English for Startups



The UK Albania Tech Hub is supporting promising startups from Albania in networking and meeting potential investors in London. As part of the preparation, Dr. Timothy Hagen, a member of the Department of Business Administration and the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability at Epoka University, supported startups in refining their “Accelerator English” on 16 November 2019.

The workshop was designed to assist startups in building and practicing Business English for use in the entrepreneurial ecosystem and in pitching.

### Start-Up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley



How would you like the opportunity to go to Silicon Valley with your startup idea? Geldi Belba, an International Marketing and Logistics graduate from Epoka University (2015) who is now a Manager at TechSpace, shared an exciting new program to take the best tech startup entrepreneurs in Albania on a visit to Silicon Valley, titled Start-Up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley.

Students, alumni, and other interested individuals may apply to the Start-Up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley through the TechSpace website. The Start-Up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley is offered by TechSpace in partnership with the Albanian – American Development Foundation (AADF), Junior Achievement of Albania (JAA) and Protik Center.

Following his presentation on the Silicon Valley opportunity, Mr. Belba also shared in his capacity as a graduate



The Department of Business Administration, of which the International Marketing and Logistics program is a part, along with the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability, hosted the information session at Epoka University on 9 January 2020.

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Established by Dr. Alba Kruja and Business Informatics students in October 2013, Innovators Club through their activities have aimed to synergize the Quadruple Helix of innovation and collaboration among University Students - Industry - Government - Society.

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## 5. Support, Resources & Representation

### 5.1 List of Students' Internships

Student		BUS Department	Company
Joana	Hasanaj	Business Administration	<b>Megatek</b>
Qamile	Zdrava	MSc Business Administration	<b>Megatek</b>
Kristi	Bejko	Business Administration	<b>Dhoma Biznesit të Diasporës Shqiptare</b>

### 5.2 Participation in Academic Events

#### Orientation Session for Freshman Students of BUS



At the beginning of the new academic year 2019-2020, the Department of Business Administration organized an orientation session for freshman students enrolled in the bachelor programs of Business Administration, Business Informatics and International Marketing and Logistics Management.

During this session, the 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.

During the presentation, students were informed about the evaluation system at Epoka, the importance of attending the lectures, the opportunities for exchange programs and many other important topics regarding their student life at Epoka.

We wish the best of luck to our students during this academic year!

### **TechSpace Study Visit**



On 13 January 2020, students of Epoka University, accompanied by Dr. Igli Hakrama, visited TechSpace to learn more about the opportunities for startup incubation and support available there.

Students from Business Informatics and Computer Engineering Departments participated in the study visit and information session. The information session was held from the manager of Tech Space, who is himself an Alumni of Epoka University and who explained in detail the mission of TechSpace and all the startup support opportunities available there.

The main focus was on the Start-Up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley, a unique opportunity in Albania. For students participating in the startup competition, the first step is having an idea. This idea is then developed through stages of incubation. Firstly, the interested students should apply online on at <https://techspace.al/home/startup-program>. These applications will be judged by a jury of both Albanians and qualified external evaluators.

The 20 best ideas will advance to the next stage of the competition and will present their ideas before a jury on the second week of February. In the presentation, which may include a Powerpoint

or PDF, students will explain the focus of their focuses, how it incorporates technology, how it solves a problem, and why it should be chosen.

From these presentations again, the same jury will select the 10 best ideas and presentations and these 10 bests will be the winners of the trip to Silicon Valley. From that moment the groups or the people who have developed these ideas will participate in six-week training provided by TechSpace to prepare for the implementation of these ideas. The training is the pre-incubation of the ideas to prepare the needed business models, promotion and marketing. In March students will visit Silicon Valley on a one-week trip for which the program pays the cost. This trip provides winners with an amazing opportunity of seeing the world's best technology center dedicated to innovations and social media.

After the trip, students will be back in Albanian, where for 6 intensive months they will work on their Startup ideas to generate the needed applications to make their ideas come to life. Every detail will be taken in consideration. These projects will be undertaken in teamwork so that everyone can contribute to creating the best version of the idea, to make it practical and useful. All stages will be taken in consideration, including design thinking, user interface experience and the creation of the prototype. These will be evaluated by a professional, selected jury.

Mature ideas may be sold to interested investors. The goal of this process is that the final product will be useful, profitable, and solve the problem which generated the idea.

Students who participated in the 13 January study visit to TechSpace had the opportunity to ask their questions which were mainly focused on the needed criteria of the application for the startup and then brainstorming common ideas. Students were also interested in TechSpace itself and asked about its operations and goals. The study visit concluded with a tour around the building, providing students with the opportunity to see TechSpace area, including the various work and meeting spaces and the facilities offered for students who worked for school project or for the ones who were using this place for generating their Startup ideas. The tour was very interesting and helpful for everyone; students were pleased to find that registration for the use of TechSpace is free and easy.

This study visit to TechSpace was an excellent means of not only learning about the exciting Start-Up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley event, but also for getting to know more about TechSpace itself and the other valuable opportunities it provides for entrepreneurial-minded students.



## **Tirana Tech Open Information Session**



The organizer of Tirana Tech Open, Mr. Albi Greva, visited Epoka on 16 January 2020 to invite students and staff to participate in the upcoming Tirana Tech Open Second Edition in the Autumn of 2020. Mr. Greva cast the vision and shared the history of Tirana Tech Open as a forum that brings together the great minds and key actors of the innovation ecosystem in Albania, in the region, and from around the world to share their insights, network, and mentor teens and young entrepreneurs. Tirana Tech Open combines inspirational talks with features of a trade fair and includes a bootcamp for high school students from across Albania and a startup networking and mentoring program.

Students from Epoka are invited to participate in the startup networking and mentoring program starting in January 2020 and may contact the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability or the Department of Business Administration for further details.

Academic staff are also invited to contribute research findings and participate in the networking events of Tirana Tech Open Second Edition.

The Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability and the Department of Business Administration hosted the Tirana Tech Open Second Edition Information Session at Epoka

University to provide the students of Epoka with ongoing opportunities to develop and launch their businesses.

### **Operations Management Practices of Marketing & Distribution Introduced to BUS Students**



Operations Management class welcomed on 20th of January, a representative from Marketing & Distribution, one of the leading logistics and distribution companies in Albania, duly representing the most qualitative national and international brands. Mr Rigers Kuci, a Telecommunication Engineering graduate and a prominent IT &

Logistics coordinator, lectured Business and IML students on the Layout Strategy, Warehouse Design and Inventory Management practices applied on the premises of Marketing & Distribution, in accordance with the theory introduced in the course by Dr Alba Kruja. Mr Kuci discussed in detail how the company implements Operation Management strategies and techniques to fully utilize their storing and distributing capacity, facility and technology in order to reach maximum efficiency. In the end, he invited the class for an on-site tour to gain better insight into the operational practices concerning storage and logistics.

### **Introducing Fintech to Albania**



Innovators Club hosted today its first Open Forum for the Academic Year 2019-2020 with Mr. Altin Kadareja, CEO of CARDO.AI as a guest speaker. A discussion was made among him and attending Epoka students regarding the role of innovation and technology in the marketplace of Startup Companies. Mr. Kadareja briefly shared his career path on establishing a FinTech

Company. Students were encouraged to be risk-takers in society and to follow up with their ideas. The audience was informed about the market requirements, networking, technology improvements as well as the financial institution's strategy. With his great public speaking skills and work experience, Mr. Kadareja managed to attract attention. After the Forum, the Innovators Club advisor Dr. Alba Kruja and its board members discussed with Mr. Kaderaja further partnership opportunities. Innovators Club will have in its agenda other activities with the CARDO.AI.

### **Company Visit at Youth Albanian Professional Services**



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.

### **Human Resource Development Practices at Agna Group**



On January 22, 2020, Mr. Artan Koxhuku was a guest speaker during the Operations Management Course lectured by Dr. Alba Kruja at Epoka University.

Currently working as the Director of Human Resources, Mr.Koxhuku was invited to discuss with Business Informatics students the recruitment and human resource development processes at Agna Group. He emphasized the importance of continuous employee

training processes at Agna and the role of leadership Academy on staff motivation and performance. Currently, Agna Group Company brings high employee potential in the marketplace. For everyone that is trying to have a successful career, Agna Group can be a great start.

### **Online Course with Real Cases and Professionals**



On April 21, 2020, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Mustafa Üç hosted an online discussion with students of “Principles of Auditing” class about Ethics and Fraud at HealthSouth, featuring Aaron Beam, a founder and the first Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of HealthSouth, a Fortune

500 company well known for being involved in one of the most significant accounting frauds in the U.S. business history.

Mr. Beam's participation as a guest speaker was part of the surprise Prof. Üç had been working on for a few weeks in order for the students to learn from a real-world account how important business ethics are to one's career.

It was a valuable experience for all our Master students. Mr. Beam openly and honestly answered all the questions that they had. He expressed and showed them the importance of putting business ethics first and knowing how to deal with ethical dangers in the workplace.

"It takes a lot of courage to be ethical. You have to really stand up for what is right. Over the years you have to prepare yourself for ethical dilemmas and think through how you are going to handle it. Just like an athlete prepares for a competition in a sport. A tennis player hits the ball a thousand times until he can do it without almost thinking about it. And you need the same kind of discipline when it comes to ethics. You should practice being ethical every day."

Students were encouraged to never fall for the idea that the behavior will only happen once.

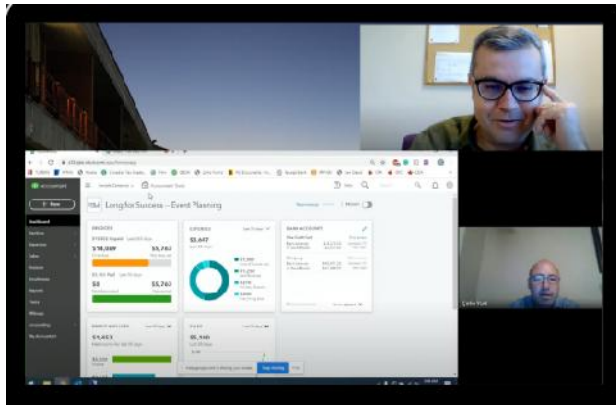
"People don't set out to commit fraud or do something unethical, but they get themselves in situations where their judgment is not that good as it should be. Realize that in business and in finance you will be faced with ethical dilemmas. You will be tempted to cheat. You will be asked to cheat, and you have to have the courage to stand up and do the right thing. And it's not easy. Sometimes you may have to leave a job and your career may not take off like you want."

Aaron Beam is a popular, highly regarded speaker trying to make a positive difference by educating others about the pitfalls of unethical business practices. He has spoken to student



audiences as a guest lecturer at many business schools across the US (Univ. of Chicago, LSU, UAB, Penn State, Stanford, Arizona State, and over fifty other schools) over the past years. We thank him for the time and the valuable lessons that he shared with us.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa ÜÇ hosted a virtual meeting with Mr. Cetin YURT- Director of PKF Antares Toronto Office**



Last week (June 11, 2020) in the Financial Accounting course, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa ÜÇ hosted a virtual meeting with a guest lecturer Mr. Cetin YURT to give a presentation on one of the most used cloud accounting software in North America.

Mr. Cetin Yurt is a CPA, and Director of PKF Antares Toronto Office, PKF is a global accounting firm. During his presentation students learnt how to use the cloud-based accounting software to help manage a business's finances. Mr. Yurt showed them

how to record daily, common transactions, track inventory, and generate customized accounting reports.

Millions of businesses and thousands of accountants have chosen to use cloud accounting software because it is powerful and intuitive makes available to work from home such an extraordinary day. Learning how to use it, it provides students with an in-depth understanding of sales, purchases, inventory, and payroll in a small business.

After a Q&A session in the end, students came away with an understanding that it is their knowledge of the principles of accounting, that it needed to be successful in business.

We thank Mr. Yurt for accepting the invitation and taking his time to be with our students, as well as professor ÜÇ for organizing and hosting this online presentation in the benefits of the financial accounting students. "

### 5.3 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

#### **5.4 Acknowledgements**

Department Business Administration expresses its gratitude to all full-time staff, part-time staff, departments' coordinator, research assistant, teaching assistants and students and for being highly dedicated the whole academic year.

#### **Department of Business Administration**

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