

ALBANIA: Tertiary Education

Policy Brief #3 - University Governance under the Higher Education Law 2007: Guidelines for Strategic Planning



Ministry of Education and Science



The World Bank

Tertiary education in Albania is at a critical juncture. The system has evolved since 1946 when the first higher education institute for teacher training was established. Albania now has 13 public tertiary education institutions, and more than 10 private institutions. The number of full-time students in tertiary education exceeded 50,000 in 2006. To meet the rapidly changing demands of the labor market and to integrate with European and global systems, tertiary education in Albania needs to adapt and transform. Some of the key issues that the Albanian higher education system faces include: moving towards increased autonomy and accountability of universities, defining the size of the system and differentiation of universities, improving teaching and learning at universities, and strengthening governance. The Higher Education Law, reflecting the new direction for greater autonomy and accountability of universities, was adopted by the government in 2007.

Albanian universities are moving towards autonomy in steps. The 2007 Higher Education Law 2007 is the first step; it increases university autonomy - although it is not full autonomy. To operate effectively and efficiently under the new Law, universities will need to refine and develop their governance arrangements, in particular, their management and decision making processes and their structures. Some changes may only be refinements of current arrangements, but many tasks will be new. Under five headings, this note provides policy **guidelines** for each University for its new governance requirements. The five headings are:

- Strategy formulation
- Planning and resource allocation
- Management and internal accountability
- Courses and students
- Staffing matters

The guidelines are based on international good practice, so to some extent they reflect perfection - few universities manage all of them well and it would be unrealistic to expect Albanian universities to do so either. But they provide a target for universities during this period of implementation of the 2007 Law. In using these policy guidelines, each University should:

- embrace the spirit of increased autonomy with its implied basis of trust
- make sufficient staff time available for the work (and the training) needed to develop the processes needed and the new management culture
- accept external professional help - as a sign of strength, not of weakness

Based on international experience, the implementation of these guidelines - and hence of the 2007 Law, will probably take the fastest Albanian university about two years and the slowest about five. Once a university has made the changes, the principles should be incorporated into its Statutes.

Universities will need two types of help to implement the guidelines. First, they will need external technical assistance on the topics that are unfamiliar; some of this is indicated in the report. Second, they will need central provision to train senior staff for their new management roles; such training would need to be provided externally.

Once the new governance arrangements are operating effectively in any one university, then the second step to full autonomy can be considered. This would require a new Law and further governance developments by the universities.

1. Strategy formulation

The 2007 Law required each University to prepare a strategic plan for its future - albeit on an unrealistic timetable. The preparation of a university Strategic Plan is important in two ways: the **process** for its development and the output in terms of the **strategic issues** that it addresses. The process is as important as the output.

Strategic Planning Process

During the preparation of its Strategic Plan, the University should try to ensure that it has been widely debated with its rationale explained, even if not all agree with it. The emphasis should be on understanding rather than on consensus. The process should take a little less than a full academic year. In times of change such as currently prevail in Albania, a new Plan should be developed about every four years - or perhaps even every three.

The first step is for the University to develop a clear statement which defines:

- its identity, purpose and strategic direction
- the factors that are special about the university (especially those that make it different from other universities)
- the constituents that it seeks to serve and their (broad) needs
- an inspiring future vision for what it wishes to become - slightly out of reach, but also realistic
- broad, tangible goals - particularly ones that help hold the institution together

It is absolutely essential in Albania that such statements are clearly different for the different universities, and especially for those in Tirana and the Regional Universities - whose 'mission' should be defined in more 'local' terms and with more emphasis on education for local labor markets.

After drawing up an initial 'mission' statement (e.g. by the Rectorate), some time should be made available to debate it within the University; the time allowed should be limited, perhaps a month, as diminishing returns set in quickly.

In parallel with drawing up this 'mission' statement, there are three types of objective information that the University should gather and analyze:

- information about general external factors affecting the environment in which the University operates
- information specifically concerned with the external 'stakeholders' or 'customers' of the University (mainly employers and prospective students)
- information about internal factors

The University should set up three (small) working groups to undertake the data collection and analysis on each factor - outlined below. The members of the groups should be from different subjects and should include junior as well as senior staff. There is an overlap in scope between the three groups, which is inevitable and even desirable, but the terms of work for each group still need to be well defined.

The **first group** should examine the possible impact on the University of **changes** in factors such as:

- Government policies on higher education; many of these can be deduced from the Government's 'Strategy for Higher Education'
- developments in the economic environment in Albania, particularly in employment and various labor markets (e.g. the employment and unemployment of graduates, post experience training and lifelong learning)
- demographic trends in the potential student population
- technological changes that might affect the delivery of University teaching
- political and other changes from outside Albania (e.g. from the EU and Bologna)

The **second group** should consider how **changes** in the expectations of the main external stakeholders might impact on the University, such as:

- the numbers and levels of qualifications of school leavers and in their expectations of higher education
- the attitudes and likely future requirements of the business community for the services of the University (not least, the future demands for graduates)
- the ways in which other universities and institutions within Albania might interact with the University in future (and mainly for TU, universities abroad)
- the perceptions and attitudes of the media and the general public about the role and value of the University (as opposed to other universities in Albania)

The **third group** should examine the strengths and weaknesses of the University as it currently is; this would include:

- an honest analysis of what the University is good at, not only in its own terms, but also by comparison with other universities in Albania
- a similarly honest analysis of what it is not good at - also comparatively
- ideas about ways to take more advantage of the strengths in future and, more difficult, ideas about what might be done about weaknesses - which may be to improve them, but may be to drop them
- an analysis of how well the public (and peer group) perceptions of the University match the above realities - and any implications for actions
- the expectations and aspirations of the main groups of staff

Output: the strategic issues to be covered

Based on the overall 'mission' of the University, the Strategic Plan should cover at least the following strategic issues, with a clear statement about the University's intended goals on each. The plan should be sufficiently specific and with meaningful targets, to provide a basis for assessing the University's future achievements in the light of its strategic aims:

- the future size of the University in terms of student numbers, and the ratios of sub-degree students to degree students to postgraduate students
- broad changes in the balance between different academic subjects
- the characteristics of academic programs (e.g. in terms of flexibility in choices of courses, the development of modules and cross-disciplinary courses)
- the quality of the teaching and particularly the methods and style of teaching - and ways to improve them
- the nature of the learning and the 'pastoral' experience that students should expect
- types and sources of potential students to be targeted for admission
- for TU, and for one or two specific topics in other universities, a research strategy for the areas in which research effort will be focused (if any) and the rationale for selecting those areas - and the amount of research effort
- the links to business, the community and public bodies for applied research work and other services, and an indication of the extent of that work
- any other expected role that the University intends to play within its region
- the types and extent of professional development for staff (academic and non-academic)
- any major changes sought in the buildings and/or the geography of the University, including the opening or closing of branches
- an information strategy, to cover both the provision of information to students (and staff) and for the purposes of University management
- the financial strategy of the University, including future income sources, and levels of expenditures

2. Planning and resource allocation process

Perhaps the most important governance task for the University is to develop and operate an effective planning and resource allocation process. The **purposes** of a university planning process are:

- to improve the quality and performance of the University
- to promote a better understanding of the objectives of the University across all interest groups within it

- to assess the impact and success of previous plans and activities and to evaluate performance
- to develop plans to achieve the goals of the University by making explicit priority decisions and trade-offs between competing claims for resources
- to create room for new courses and programs, to improve or expand existing ones and/or to contract or close weak ones
- to allocate resources between competing claims according to overall University priorities

This is different from current arrangements in which most plans are an extension of history. There are **principles** on which the University should base its planning process:

- operational plans and their budgets should normally be on a three year rolling basis and include developmental/capital plans
- the University should define the planning process, the analytical steps in it and the decision making in way that is totally clear and totally transparent
- the process should be participatory and both ‘top down’ as well as ‘bottom up’
- the process should start with top down guidance provided on the basis of the University’s strategy
- there should be a top level ‘Planning and Resource Allocation Board’, chaired by the Rector and normally including the Deputy Rectors and all Deans (which could well be the Rectorate); this Board would provide the top down guidance, assess the competing priorities of proposed plans and decide on final plans with consequences for resource allocation
- a clear timetable should be set for each stage in the annual cycle (see below)
- a Deputy Rector should be designated for Planning, responsible for the process; he/she may need support from a small Planning Office (1 or 2 people)

The University should first define the lowest level of ‘unit’ for which plans are to be prepared. The units must be small enough to have academic coherence, but big enough to enable efficient use of teaching staff and ‘cross teaching’. In most universities, the units would be the Faculties. For large Faculties, it may be sensible for the units to be the Departments - or some other basic unit, in which case the Dean would provide them with Faculty level guidance and co-ordinate their work.

A second task for the University will be to identify the data requirements needed for planning - and for management more widely, not least for monitoring implementation and expenditure. As well as external data (e.g. on labor markets) and input data (e.g. on staff/student ratios, expenditures), the data should cover output performance measures for each Faculty (or Department), which might include student numbers enrolled and average Matura results, drop out rates, completion ratios at the end of 4/5/6 years, employability rates of graduates, student satisfaction scores.

The third task for the University will be to design the whole planning process - and then to operate it effectively. The process would normally be in four stages:

Stage I: University ‘top down’ guidance

The University should prepare guidance to the Faculties for the production of their proposed plans.

Typically this would be about 5-6 pages long and would cover:

- the external context within which the University operates, including information about:
 - national/local needs (e.g. from data on labor market changes and on the destinations of graduates - perhaps from a careers service)
 - Government priorities
 - target numbers for the recruitment of publicly funded students (by broad program) based on the ‘quotas’ for first cycle students set by Government
 - the likely availability of resources (staff numbers, space, finance) for the (three year) planning horizon
- guidance based on the University’s strategic goals and priorities, including changes in balance (from expansion or contraction) between Faculties
- the analysis to be undertaken by each Faculty and/or basic unit including:
 - the points to be covered
 - University level data and likely sources of Faculty level data

- output measures and any targets for them, e.g. a subset of those given in the national Strategy for Higher Education
- efficiency measures (e.g. staff/student ratios; use of buildings & equipment)
- the costs to be included for any activity and how they are to be estimated
- an explanation of the criteria and priorities which will be used to assess the proposed plans at University level, including their resource implications
- how the past performance of the Faculty/basic unit will be taken into account in decisions on future priorities
- for completeness, how the plans for the central administration and auxiliary support units will be prepared and assessed

Stage II: Plans and budget proposals from each Faculty

This Stage is at the heart of the process. It should be the responsibility of the Dean of each Faculty, although this may be passed down to the Heads of Department in large Faculties. It is the ‘bottom up’ component of planning which should involve staff. The analysis required will have been set out in the ‘top down’ guidance. The best way for a Faculty to learn how to do this is simply to try. Each Faculty may wish to form a small team to do the work, as follows:

- analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Faculty in terms of current and potential course/programs and their own priorities - which must be **consistent** with the strategic priorities of the University
- collect data about past performance of programs/course (e.g. their ability to attract well qualified student applicants; assessments of quality; the success of the graduates in the labor market), together with any information on trends in student applications and labor markets for the future - which could be ‘soft’ information gathered, for example, from links with employers
- invite any member of staff, on the basis of this information, to propose ideas to open, expand, contract or close course and programs - and particularly to think about new cross-disciplinary programs
- invite ideas and plans for activities other than teaching (e.g. to provide services - perhaps generating income; or, mainly for TU, for possible research projects)
- discuss any marketing implications, for the Faculty and/or for the University
- build an initial set of options, taking account of the top down University guidelines about priorities and resource expectations
- assess the resource implications of the options, including:
 - academic staff numbers, work loads and any required staff training
 - requirements for, and usage of space, facilities and equipment
 - consumables and other cash costs
 - requirements for support from any auxiliary units in the University
 - estimates of related income, from whatever source
 - any major capital implications
- on the basis of Faculty priorities, assess the options to produce a shortlist of prioritized proposals, with their associated resource requirements
- check that the aggregation of the proposals across the Faculty is within the resource guidelines given in the ‘top down’ guidance

Stage III: Bring plan proposals together, assess their priorities at University level and so produce an overall plan and allocate resources

The proposals from each Faculty are likely to exceed the resources available to the University as a whole. At this point, each Dean should have bi-lateral discussions with the Deputy Rector for Planning, to discuss how best to adjust the Faculty proposals before they are put to the ‘Planning and Resource Allocation Board’ (PRA Board). It is the responsibility of the Board to examine the competing proposals and their bids for resources and to assess them by reference to:

- their fit with the priorities of the University as defined in its strategy
- past performance of the Faculty in terms of outputs (e.g. student destinations), assessed quality and efficiency in the use of inputs (staff and space)
- the validity of the Faculty’s analysis in the proposals and their justification

- the extent to which the proposals have taken account of external markets (e.g. links to, and views of, employers; student applications and their quality)
- their implications for resources and for budgets
- levels of acceptable cross-subsidy between programs and between Faculties
- project appraisals for costs and benefits of any proposed capital development

The PRA Board should consider, at the same time, the plans and resource bids for the auxiliary support functions, the plans for which should also be prepared on an annual basis. The University should develop a method for the heads of the auxiliary support functions to prepare their plan proposals and resource requirements in a way that ensures that they are efficient and that reflect the needs of the wider university.

The PRA Board must ensure that the total resources required by the plans (staff, space and finance) are within those available to the University - from whatever source, including the State Budget. The final decisions will form a consolidated operational Plan for the University with an allocation of resources to each Faculty. The final Plan and resource allocations should be presented to the academic Senate for any academic comments and discussed with the Advisory Council. Until full autonomy, the resulting Plan and resource allocation would also be sent to the Government - along with proposals to open or close course or programs.

Stage IV: Implementation and monitoring

Once plans and budgets have been finally agreed, the PRA Board should formally inform the budget holders (usually the Deans) about:

- the approved plans and budgets
- targets for performance against which they will be assessed in following planning cycles
- the level(s) of authority to be delegated to the Dean
- the extent of acceptable flexibility for in-year changes to the plans

It will then be for the Faculties to implement the agreed plans. They will also need to collect and analyze monitoring and performance data; the University should specify what performance data is to be provided to the centre for the purposes of financial control. The monitoring information should cover:

- information about outcomes and achievements
- other data to measure performance
- input data, particularly for financial monitoring and control (see section X)

The data should be part of the University wide Management Information System (MIS) - the design of which must start from the data required for such management purposes (see section 3). Further, there is no point in collecting performance data (inputs or outputs) unless something is done with it. During the year, the data might show that the University should prompt some corrective action. At the end of the year, some of the data would be used to assess the year's performance and so inform the subsequent planning cycle. The University should define how it will make use of the monitoring data - which should also be an input into the design of the MIS.

Success factors

Designing and operating a successful planning and budgeting process - and then implementing the results in a controlled way - is very difficult, as many universities in developed countries have found; by no means do they all do it well. Some of the critical success factors are:

- the level of clarity of the initial top down guidance
- the transparency of the overall process
- the adequacy of the data that is required
- the readiness of staff to see the need for the concept and their willingness to participate in the process

3. Management and internal accountability

One of the most significant implications of the 2007 Law is that each university will need to operate with good and accountable management within a clear structure. It is important to note that 'good' management - as opposed to poor management - takes account of all points of view and balances them before making a decision about what is best for the university as a whole. In fact, 'good' management is more collegial than current decision making in many universities - and not only in Albania. Each University will need to develop good management arrangements:

- decision making processes that are simple, objective, justifiable, transparent
- a strategic planning process - as set out in Section 1
- a planning and resource allocation processes - as set out in Section 2
- a clear and objectively justifiable set of internal regulations
- defined responsibilities so that everyone knows who is responsible for what
- internal accountability in which each decision maker is held accountable for his/her decisions and which ensures that no decisions are influenced by improper pressures or patronage - particularly in resource allocation
- a means to ensure that decisions are implemented
- a system to monitor the results of implementation, to take corrective action where necessary, and to control finance
- awareness throughout the University of costs and the need for value for money
- for those universities with a hospital, a clear set of management and financial arrangements for it - which should be public knowledge

The University will need to determine the posts that comprise senior management - in most cases, they will also be academic leaders. The 2007 Law implies that this is: the Rector, Deputy Rectors, Deans of Faculties, Heads of the other principle academic units, and the Head of Finance (the Chancellor). For each of these management posts, and for the Heads of the other auxiliary units, the University should prepare:

- a statement of the role of the post; a job description, including its management and financial responsibilities as well as any academic duties; to whom the post reports, on what and how; the term of office if limited; and, for the Rector, the balance between external and internal responsibilities.
- a statement for how each post holder will be held accountable, and by whom, for his/her responsibilities, in terms of reporting arrangements, the way their performance is to be appraised and by whom, indicators of achievement etc.

As the Law currently prescribes that the academic management posts should be elected, it is important for the University to have a prior process to ensure that a candidate would only be eligible to stand for election if he/she was both able and willing to satisfy the job description and its responsibilities.

The most senior management 'group' is the Rectorate, whose composition is set out in the Law. The University will need to define the terms of reference of the Rectorate, which must include its responsibilities under the Law, but other points too. The University should define how the Rectorate is to operate, for example the frequency of its meetings and that its agendas and minutes would be public - unless there was a particularly good reason why any individual item should be kept confidential.

The University may decide that it needs one or two other management committees to provide advice; these should be kept to a minimum, but the terms of reference (ToR) and scope should be defined for each, along with whom the committee is to advise. The ToR should include how its members are selected, for how long they serve and, for those members who are selected to represent an interest, how they should ensure that they reflect the views of that interest rather than simply present their own views.

For academic matters, the University can determine its own academic organization in terms of Faculties, Departments, Institutes, Centers - although under the Law, this needs government approval. For academic policy and operations, the Senate is the supreme body. There are (at least) six responsibilities of Senate which the University should ensure are effective:

- the awarding of degrees, ensuring that they are of adequate quality
- the internal Quality Assurance process (complementing the external one)
- processes to evaluate and review courses and programs, with a view to expand, contract or close them or to open new ones, but all based on pre-defined objective criteria (e.g. student and labor market demands); this would be an input to the Planning process (Section 2)
- an objective appeals mechanism for students who consider that the results they have been awarded are not an accurate reflection of their performance
- policies on teaching which reflect the needs of the nation - with teaching methods that encourage learning by being interactive and encouraging students to think and reason, rather than just to learn facts
- policies and criteria for the admission of students

The University will need to define the role and new terms of reference for the Senate which should reflect its responsibilities as an *academic* Senate - not concerned with management issues. The terms of reference for Senate should include its membership and their method of selection and also any committee that is established to provide advice to the Senate on academic policy, especially on teaching (see Section 4). For each committee, its ToR should include its powers, to whom it reports and/or advises, how it would ensure that its decisions were well informed, how it would be held accountable - as well as the points as for management committees (how members are selected, for how long and how members should ensure they reflect the views of the interests they are selected to represent rather than simply present their own views.)

The University may wish to provide some level of delegated authority - not least on finance. Initially, these should be at fairly low levels until experience of dealing with budgets and related management issues has been developed. The University should provide clear definitions of the levels of delegated authority, including how they are to be monitored (by performance as well as by inputs) both at the Faculty level and at the level of any basic unit below that of the Faculty.

Underpinning the management of any university is the need for information, which must be timely and accurate - although it only needs to be as accurate as is needed for its purposes. The University should determine the information that it needs both from external sources (e.g. on labor markets and student destinations) and from internal sources - both on outputs and inputs (e.g. on students, staff, use of space, and finance). The University will need such information to inform management decisions, for accountability, for monitoring and for financial control.

In deciding its information requirements, the University will also need to determine how the data is to be collected and analyzed, to whom it will be provided and in what form, and how it will be used. This would be the first step in defining a management information system (MIS) - the design of the IT aspects of the MIS should be considered last, after all the above management issues have been fully addressed.

Central administration and auxiliary units

The new Law will have an impact on the central administration of universities. In effect, the auxiliary services of the central administration will provide professional support to the university in ways that hitherto had been the responsibility of government. For these services, the University will need to define:

- the main units of administration for the effective operation of the University: finance; planning; academic administration; academic services such as the library and ICT; personnel; land and buildings; industrial liaison; external relations; portering, cleaning, catering, contract management
- the roles and functions of each unit and an organization structure and reporting lines for each unit
- the reporting lines for unit heads and for any 'Head' of administration (normally to the Rector)
- performance measures for each unit
- their relationships with Faculties, where appropriate

The central service most affected by the new Law will be finance, which will be critical to the future of the University. The University will need to decide the capacity and skills needed for the augmented finance function, and in particular for the Chancellor - who should report directly to the Rector. The University will need plans for how to increase the capacity and caliber of their finance staff to match the new finance responsibilities.

The central auxiliary services will need to be planned on an annual basis. The process will be different from that required for academic activities; the University will need to develop a method to plan and budget for these services in a way that ensures that they are efficient and serve the needs of the University and its academics. For senior administrative staff, the University will need to ensure that those appointed to the jobs are able to undertake them effectively by being actively involved in their selection - even if only with a power of veto.

Universities will have more influence over decisions about capital investment in buildings and major items of equipment than hitherto and so each University should develop a project appraisal process to assess the costs and benefits of any major prospective capital investment. Before any bid is made for a major investment, the University should ensure that its existing assets are used to maximum effectiveness; this will require an up-to-date list of major assets (buildings and equipment) and measures of their usage. For major equipment, this is relatively simple, but it is more complex to assess the usage of buildings and teaching rooms over the working week.

4. Courses and students

Teaching and students are at the heart of all universities in Albania. Governance processes are needed to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is as high as possible and that it meets the needs of the country. The overall responsibility for academic quality within each University rests with its academic Senate.

The University will wish to establish the equivalent of a Teaching Policy Committee (TPC) as part of its Governance structure, reporting to Senate, with responsibility for the processes concerned with the quality of teaching and learning. The TPC should comprise between 6 and 10 academics who have experience of up-to-date teaching methods and between them cover the main disciplinary areas of the University. It would be a good idea if several of the academics on the TPC had observed and worked outside Albania in universities which had adopted modern teaching methods.

There are three high level tasks which the University should expect from the TPC; the first is to develop a set of University **objectives and policies for the curriculum**. The policy should provide an order of importance for learning objectives; these might include the development in students of:

- analytical thinking skills
- an understanding of the principles and structured overview of the subject(s)
- practical application skills
- writing and oral communication skills
- an ability to gather and assimilate detailed facts and information
- creativity and problem solving capacities
- enjoyment of learning and interest in the subject
- preparation for examinations
- general skills such as the ability to communicate in English and to use IT

Based on these objectives, the University should require each program/course to have:

- a statement of objectives in terms of what the students will be expected to achieve by its end (for example, some of those in the previous paragraph)
- specification of the content of the constituent courses that will deliver those achievements
- the teaching and learning methods
- a statement of how students will be assessed for their skills and ability (and not just their knowledge)

The second high level task for the TPC will be to develop and keep under review University **policies on teaching and courses**. In the current context in Albania, the policies should stress the importance of:

- courses designed in modular form with flexibility for students to package different combinations of modules (within limits) - also needed for Bologna
- the development of courses that cross disciplinary (and Faculty) boundaries (e.g. engineering with management; science with languages)
- modern teaching methods and teaching styles that are ‘student centered’, emphasizing ‘learning’ more than ‘teaching’ by being interactive with students, including open discussions, tutorials and projects
- examinations and assessment methods which assess developments in students in accordance with the curriculum objectives - as above

In the first instance, it may be helpful for Albanian universities to receive external advice on such policies - especially about modern teaching and learning methods. This might be done, for example, by the establishment of a small, national unit with the remit to provide training and experience in methods of teaching to all universities; the unit would need to include teaching experts from outside Albania.

The third policy task for the TPC will be to establish and operate a **regular course review process** which rigorously assesses courses for academic quality, both existing courses and any proposals for new courses, and advises Senate about the academic grounds for opening or closing courses. This University level process should:

- be regular and systematic - but not too frequent, perhaps every four years for each course or program
- include someone from outside the University (and for TU courses, from outside Albania)
- assess programs and courses against University objectives
- generate a culture of self-evaluation and a recognition that curriculum development is a continuous process, not just something that happens every four years at University level

The University should design the four year course review process to be bottom up, starting with a Departmental evaluation of the course and covering points such as:

1. a ‘market analysis’ of the future needs of Albania and employers’ needs for graduates of the program
2. how well the course (continues to) fit with the University strategy and the overall University portfolio
3. related new ideas and curricula from other universities (for TU, from outside Albania)
4. trends in student demand for the program
5. an analysis of student satisfaction and their feedback and suggestions
6. an analysis of outputs in terms of student achievements and destinations
7. review of the teaching, learning and assessment methods, not least to identify the need for staff development in teaching methods
8. the need of the course for resources: academic staff (including from other Departments), space, library and IT provision, consumables and other finance

In addition to the above processes for programs and courses, each University will need to develop a process for the **admission of students**. The precise nature of the process will depend on the development of the Matura and on the establishment of the new University Admissions Body, but most of the following design principles apply in the University in any case:

- preparation of a University Prospectus, covering all programs and courses, written in a student friendly way - and ideas about other forms of marketing
- policies about entry to programs and the choice of course modules
- assessment of the number of places that can be offered for each program or course - taking account of capacity and the quotas set by Government
- implications for the minimum entry requirements - with reference to the new style Matura
- any other criteria to be taken into account in decisions about student entry
- the means to collect information for any other criteria, including, for example, any need for interviews

- policies about what to do if a program is over- or under-subscribed
- co-ordination of all the above within the University to ensure there are reasonable economies of scale - while keeping any final decisions about individual students at the Faculty or Departmental level

The University also needs to design an **appeals process for students** who consider that their assessment has in some way been unfair. This should be a two stage process, the first of which would simply be a 're-mark' of their assessment by another examiner; if the student was still not satisfied, the second step would involve the student putting his/her case to a small group, perhaps chaired by someone from outside the University and including at least one student. The decision of the group would be final with no further appeal to another body. To deter frivolous appeals, there might be a charge to the student, small for the first stage, larger for the second.

5 Staffing matters

The 2007 Law allows universities a limited amount of autonomy on staffing: they can move posts and staff around within a Government ceiling on numbers, but they cannot develop or use their own criteria for selecting, promoting or paying staff; this remains the task of the Council of Ministers.

However, universities can select and promote staff within these criteria. This will require the University to have a process to **select and promote staff**, including for initial appointments, albeit according to the Government criteria. It is essential that the University defines a process that is, and is seen to be, objective, fair and transparent. The University will need to define each step of the process (e.g. initial short-listing, interviewing, final selection), what each step requires, who is involved and in what capacity. Because of its more international nature, TU should consider involving academics from outside Albania for the final stage for the most senior academic posts.

Selection and promotion of academic staff requires judgment; while the process should be as transparent as possible, the University should also design an **appeals process** to which unsuccessful candidates can appeal if they think that they have been treated unfairly or improperly. Complaints to the appeals process should be heard and judged in an objective and fair manner. The process should involve a neutral party from outside the University.

As part of its governance arrangements for staff, each University will need a system of **performance management** for staff appraisal and development. As part of internal accountability, individual members of staff should be accountable for their own time and responsible for their own performance. Performance management should encourage staff to be self-critical, to innovate and to evaluate their innovations. The performance management process should help the University to achieve its aims and to help each member of staff to maximize his/her contribution in the knowledge that the contribution will be recognized.

The University should develop a staff appraisal and development scheme, based on the following principles:

- the process should apply to all academic staff, irrespective of seniority - otherwise it is unlikely to be acceptable to more junior staff
- the process should be open and two way, starting from self-assessment
- all discussions should be confidential
- the outcomes of the process should be acted upon and monitored
- the review should be either annual or bi-annual
- the Head of Department would normally undertake reviews for members of the Department - or would need to ensure that they were done - and fairly
- there should be training for reviewers and for those to be reviewed

The process should comprise three main steps:

- **Preparation**
 - self evaluation - although there may be a tendency to over-evaluate
 - peer assessment - from 2 or 3 staff who know the individual's teaching
 - student feedback - the results from student questionnaires

- the reviewer's own input
- **One to one semi-structured discussion** (the heart of the process)
 - the reviewer discusses the individual's performance in the past year (or two), his/her achievements in terms of outputs, and feedback from the other sources above
 - the results of the discussion are agreed personal objectives and targets for next year that reflect the University's mission and cover all his/her activities; this would include work-load allocation
 - the other outcome is the action for professional development
- **Record of discussion and action plan**

The University will need to provide training for the process, not only for the reviewers and for those to be reviewed, but also for students about how to complete feedback forms. As part of the design, the University should prepare a checklist of topics to be covered in the review process. These might include:

- activities on course design - to check how well it was done
- teaching delivery - including teaching methods and approach, assessment of students, availability to students outside the class room
- non-teaching activities - for example the provision of services to support the Department/University, or externally to the community and local businesses
- where relevant, research activities and their outputs
- professional and personal skills

Given the current state of university teaching in Albania, the staff review processes in the universities are likely to identify an extensive need for development in modern teaching and learning methods. Such training might be provided in a national Development Centre, which would need assistance from outside Albania. The Development Centre would promote, and provide training for, up-to-date teaching and learning methods drawing on best practice internationally. The Centre could provide:

- courses and workshops on modern methods of teaching and learning
- induction courses on teaching methods for new staff
- local, departmental based workshops, on request
- in exceptional circumstances, arrangements for a few staff to undertake training in teaching methods abroad - who would be expected to return to pass on what they had learned