



governAnce, quality, accountability: a Piloting Reform PRrocess in kurdistAn region of Iraq

# The Implementation of Bologna Process in KRI Universities: perceptions of academics, staff and students in 8 Kurdish universities

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the framework of the APPRAIS project, Charmo University (P13) is the co-leader of the WP2 Definition of a roadmap for a better university governance and implementation of Bologna Process at KRI HEIs. In order to start the process of definition of the Roadmaps for the implementation of the Bologna Process by the Kurdish universities, a solid knowledge base was needed to support the process of consultation and strategic decision.

The Consortium deemed relevant to proceed with two preparatory steps.

At first, Charmo University was appointed to conduct an analysis of the status of the Bologna Process implementation in the Kurdish partners universities, through the collection of primary data by staff and students in the 8 universities of APPRAIS. Two surveys were designed specifically for the purpose by Charmo University, in consultation with UNIMED, to collect relevant information on the implementation of the major components of the Bologna Process at the Kurdish universities. It aimed to define the state of the art, with a focus on the major components of the Bologna Process, such as degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. It also aimed to identify gaps, challenges and future needs for training on Bologna Process with the support of UNIMED and European Partner universities of APPRAIS project.

The current document reports the outcomes of the consultation with Kurdish staff and students on the Bologna Process implementation in the Kurdish Higher Education sector. The results of the investigation were presented in a workshop held at the University of Pisa in March 2022 with all the project partners. Indeed, as a second step in the process of the Roadmap definition, on the same occasion the European Universities in APPRAIS were asked to describe the process of implementation of the Bologna Process in their institutions, to show the Kurdish colleagues the challenges faced, the lessons learned, and how to manage some of the most critical aspects of the shift towards the new system.

The outcomes of the investigation were also used to inform and guide the trainings of APPRAIS in WP3 and WP4, as complementary steps for the design of the Roadmaps.

A deep thank to all the participants who have taken their valuable time and have helped us in filling out the questionnaires.





### **STAFF SURVEY**

For the very first time, a research process is conducted to collect data on the progress of the 4-years old Bologna Process reform in major universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI). A survey was designed by Charmo University (P13) under the framework of APPRAIS Project to assess the implementation of Bologna Process in the 8 Kurdish universities Partners in APPRAIS:

- Salahaddin University, Iraq
- University of Sulaymania, Iraq
- University of Duhok, Iraq
- University of Halabja, Iraq
- Duhok Polytechnic University, Iraq
- Garmian University, Iraq
- University of Zakho, Iraq
- Charmo University, Iraq

The first survey developed for the purpose is directed to:

- Upper Administrative level staff
- Middle administrative level staff
- Lower administrative level staff
- Academics

Questions are designed in such a way that different levels of university staff can fill it out.

The survey was designed to take approximately one hour time for completion, depending on the level of experience of the staff member filling it out. It was recommended that in each partner university a variety of different staff members participated in filling the survey out. The more diverse staff participate in the investigation, the better outcomes are reached. The survey was meant to gain a complete overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the Bologna Process implementation in Kurdish universities.

The staff survey is available in Annex I.

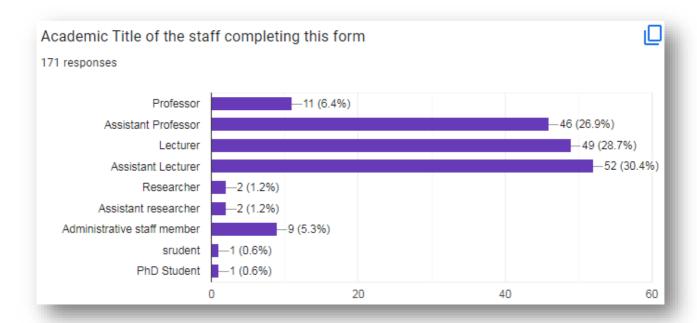




#### **PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

All in all, 171 respondents took part to the investigation.

A quite range and different and diverse staff and academics who have held different positions within their respective universities have answered the questions of this survey. Those who can participated in completing the survey are Senior Executives (Presidents, Deputy presidents, Chancellors or Vice Chancellors) University secretaries, Academic registrars, Directors of Bologna Process, Directors of Quality Assurance, Directors of Research Centers, Directors and staff members of International Relations Office, Deans and their deputies, Heads of departments, Lecturers, Assistant lecturers, Researchers, Assistant researchers, as well as other administrative staff members who are implementing dav-to-dav works of each respective partner universities. This variety of participants made results representative of a wide range of perspectives. The percentage of all those who have responded to the survey is presented in the following chart:



All the academics and staff members who participated in the survey work for those universities who have agreed to participate in the investigation, representing the 8 Kurdish public universities in APPRAIS.



### **RESEARCH OUTCOMES**

### A. INTERNATIONALIZATION

The following questions in the survey are on internationalization. First, we want to clarify what we mean by internationalization. All international activities that take place within the universities are referred to as internationalization. For instance (not exhaustive list):

- overseas students enrolled at the university
- English as teaching language and as university course
- Broadcasting lectures overseas
- Arranging international conferences and attending international conferences
- Incoming or outgoing exchanges of students
- Applications made through the Bologna process
- Cooperation agreements with foreign universities
- Conducting international research
- Collaborating with overseas universities.
- Joint diploma programs

### 1. Is there an international office in your university/Institution? If yes, how is the selection of the director and the members made?

Most of the universities surveyed have answered that they have an international office, regarding the selection of the director and the members most of them said that they are selected based on their skills and abilities, English language skills, skills in project management and their interests. Some of them have answered that the director is appointed by the president and or by university council members. Some of them hope that in the future the director will be appointed by public announcement and when their position is vacant. However, some of the academics and staff surveyed wrote that they do not know and or are not aware how they are selected.

#### 2. What is the international Office in charge for, what is the role and the main priorities?

There are various different answers but most of them are similar and relevant.

They include making links between university and other international universities and academic institutions. Securing and establishing relations with international universities and academic institutions, in charge of networking, signing MoUs and MoAs, and administering paper works to studying abroad. They have indicated that IRO and or international Relations Office is the key successful office to enhance the international relations with different academic stakeholders for exchange programs and post graduate studies along with fellowships and scholarships. However, some of the participants have said that they do not have such an office as far as they know nor do they know what are their functions.





### 3. How many agreements with KRI and international universities have been established?

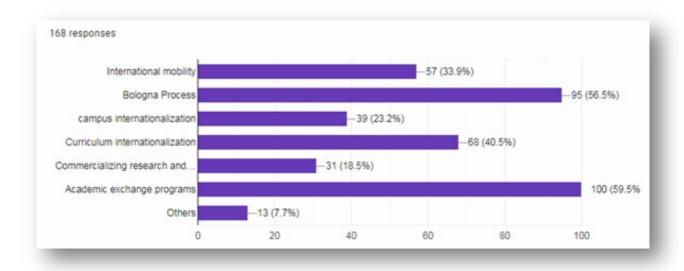
Again, there are various different responses to this question. Some of the IRO offices have indicated that they do not have any active agreements at the moment but some of them have reported they have around 39 agreements and MoUs. This depends on the size and infrastructure available at different universities. Some have reported they have many and or several agreements. One academic has reported that Duhok University is the most active in internationalization and they have several agreements and from 2013 to 2021 they have around 38 cooperation agreements. Others have reported that they do not have information and or are unaware about those agreements, most probably they are working from different departments than IRO. One participant indicated that this information are not shared with teaching staff except if they ask for them.

### 4. Have you recently organized international events in your institutions? If so, what kind of event?

Out of 171, participants only 141 have responded to this question. They have indicated that their universities have held local and national, conferences, workshops, international conferences, seminars and joint activities. Some of the participants have indicated that recently due to COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine and closure of universities, most of the events were held online, virtually. Even most of the activities of UNESCO and UNIMED project (APPRAIS) were held virtually through online methods. Generally Kurdish universities are relatively active for organizing workshops, conferences and or training.

### 5. When you think about internationalization in your university, what do you think about?

Out of the 171 respondents, 168 participants have answered this question. The table below indicates the percentage of all those activities that are deemed relevant for internationalization. Academic exchange programs held the highest percentage with a rate of %59.5. Next to this is the implementation of Bologna Process. These two trends are followed by other activities such as international mobility, curriculum internationalization, campus internationalization commercializing research and other activities respectively, as shown below.

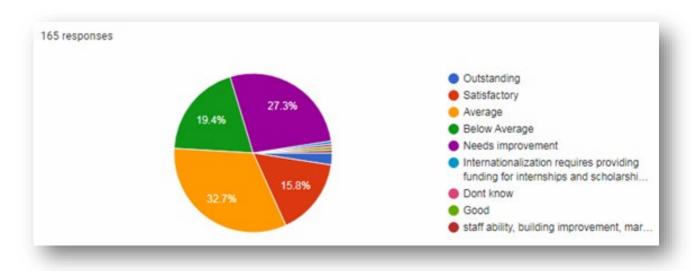






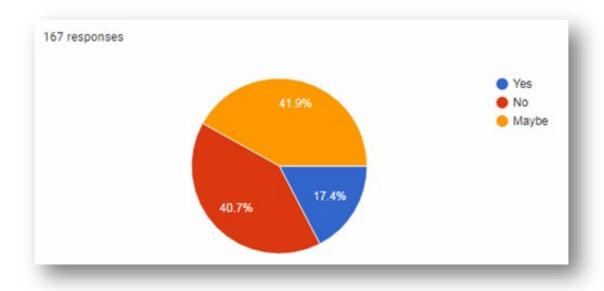
#### 6. To what extend does internationalization take place in your university's strategic goals?

There are 165 participants who have answered this question. The highest percentage that is %32.7 indicated average level, next to this a percentage of %27.3 indicated that internationalization needs improvement, also a percentage of %19.4 highlighted that internationalization is below average and a very small percentage agreed that it is at an outstanding level. Also, a %15.8 percentage agreed that it is at a satisfactory level. Some of the participants believed that internationalization requires providing funding for internship and scholarships.



### 7. Are internationalization activities carried out at your university sufficient to achieve your university internationalization Strategic goals?

167 participants have answered this question and the graphic below indicates that few people believe that internationalization is sufficient and the majority that is %40.7 do not believe it is sufficient and %41.9 are not sure.

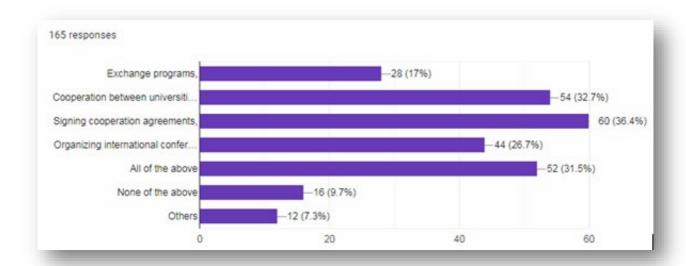






#### 8. Which internationalization efforts are prioritized at your university?

Exactly 165 participants have answered this question. According to their answers signing cooperation agreements between universities are prioritized, next to this is cooperation between universities, followed by organizing international conferences and exchange programs. Around 31.5% of all participants indicated that their universities are prioritizing all of those activities.



### 9. What are the most important challenges and or problems you experience when managing internationalization-related activities?

Only 138 participants have answered this question. We have noticed that when the question requires a written output some of the participants skipped to write their notes. But 138 out of a total 171 participant is enough to give us a clearer picture and overview for all the challenges. These challenges and or problems include (but are not limited to):

- English language skills and lack of opportunities to improve staff language skills
- The need for visa
- Logistical support
- Financial difficulties, lack of funding
- Lack of experienced staff
- Limited knowledge of and about globalization
- Limited cultural exchange
- Local standard in terms of research that do not compete with international standards.
- Lack of responsibility
- Lack of cooperation opportunities
- Overload, such for example the size of work needed to make an agreement with an international partner.
- Lack of support for staff
- Time-management
- Eccessive workload

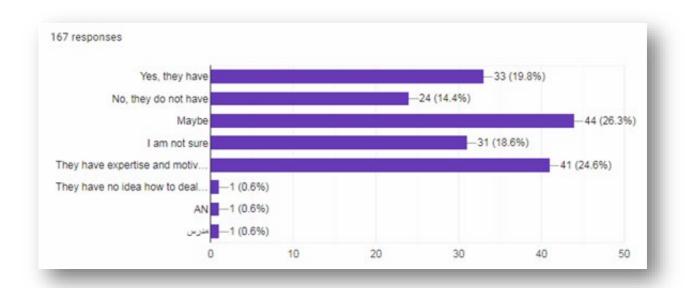




Overall, some respondents highlighted the difficulties in the implementation of Bologna Process as the key problems and challenges to overcome by the institutions.

### 10. Do you believe your university's administrative staff have the required expertise and motivation to carry out internationalization efforts?

167 participants have answered this question. The highest percentage of the answers is %26.3 who are not sure and have responded as maybe, next to this the second highest percentage of the replies is %24.6 are confident that their staff have both the expertise and motivations, a percentage of %14.4 claim their staff do not have expertise and motivations.

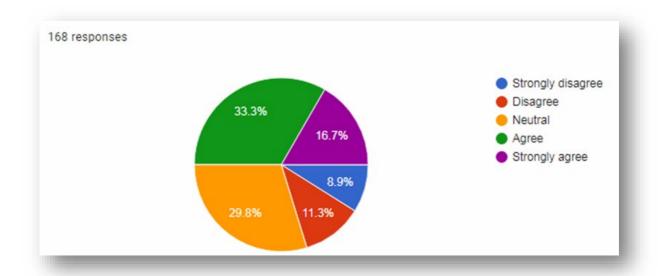


### 14. In today's condition, it is argued that internationalization is an unavoidable requirement for universities all around the world. To what extend do you agree with this idea?

168 participants have responded to this question and the highest percentage of them that is %33.3 agree with the above-mentioned statement. Next to this is a percentage of %29.8 being neutral, neither agree nor disagree with it. And a percentage of %11 disagree with that statement. But %16.7 strongly agree that internationalization is an unavoidable requirement for all universities. Taken together %50 agree with internationalization as a major requirement.







### 15. What role will internationalization play in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) universities in the next year? What are your thoughts on this?

It is not easy to sum up and or find one single pattern and or trend in 137 different questions. However, it is possible to state that internationalization is significant for most of the respondents, who highlighted that the focus should be on capacity building, more joint programs and the implementation of Bologna Process. Others indicate that the local customs and traditions hinder and do not allow / do not facilitate internationalization.

Others also highlight research, staff and student exchange: encourage developing relations with regional and international universities so that there is an opportunity to knowledge, scientific, cultural and touristy and religious exchange scholarships. Generally, most believe that internationalization will improve the study level in Kurdistan Region universities and it contributes to the development of the quality of education of all Kurdish universities. The majority prefer improving academic quality, orientations of students and staff internationally, improving the quality of education and research as well as serving larger social goals and that the third mission of university (that must become prioritized).

Some indicate that it is important that all Kurdish universities focus on strengthening their relationship with international organizations as well and to learn more from their experiences, as Iraq and Kurdistan region are still post-war and post-conflict societies and many International NGOs are operating in this region. Also highlighted that internationalization will support the economy, and further strengthens the country politically as well.

Many academics indicate that the KRG must make internationalization as a priority in order to build a bridge of understanding between the region and the outside world. Others have also not hidden the fact that they do not have any idea at all. Some believed that internationalization will not play any role in the upcoming few years because they believe that lecturers are overloaded (in the expressions of one respondent, they have become like robots) to meet requests. They believe that lecturers are over exhausted and they do not have time left for further changes.



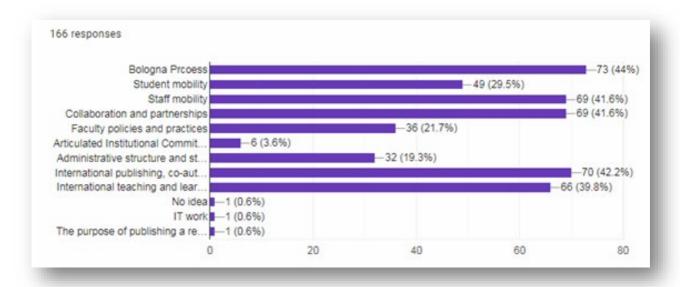


Also needs to be accounted for, is that the academic staff and students should be familiar with what going on in all universities in order to be able to make changes in Kurdish universities. They emphasize that we need to have open minded attitudes, creative and strong academics and students in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude, that is why they recommend that the only way to do this is to familiarize all students, staff and academics with international events, educations and communications between Kurdistan region and outside world, especially with EU country's educational institutions.

All in all, some of the academics are satisfied with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research trying to build and facilitate the main steps and pillars for the basic needs of internationalization such as exchange of students, improving university autonomy and provide further opportunities for capacity building activities especially for university staff.

### 17. Which part of internationalization in your professional life is more essential to your activities?

One hundred and sixty-six 166 participants have answered this question and the highest percentage say that Bologna Process is more essential followed by international publishing, co-authoring papers, collaboration and partnerships, staff mobility, international teaching, as well as other essential activities such as student mobility, faculty policies and practices, articulated intuitional commitment, and administrative structures are essential form them. The table below shows the percentage of the essential parts of internationalization:



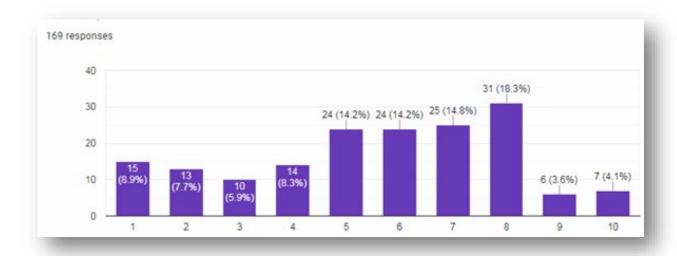


### **B. BOLOGNA PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION**

A second part of the survey includes questions on the Bologna Process implementation, to collect perceptions and information on how universities stand in the overall process.

### 11. How would you rate the Bologna Process and the practices implemented at your university?

The participants had a choice to rate from 1 to 10, 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest level of satisfaction. The table below indicates that 169 participants have indicated their own rating. The highest percentage indicated is 8 that is %18.3 of all responses. Only %4.1 have rated 10 out of ten and it is worthwhile to indicate also that %8.9 have given a rate of 1, that is least satisfactory. Altogether, around 73 of all the participants, that is %33 of all respondents, have rated between 5 to 7 meaning it is satisfactory to them.



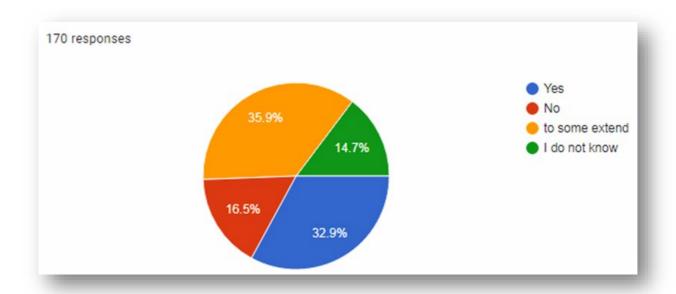
Answers are quite diverse, showing that perceptions may vary deeply from person to person, depending on his/her specific position, on the degree of implementation of the reform in the different universities, as well as on the impact of the change on the daily routine.

### 12. Do you think that implementing programs including ECTS credits, Diploma Supplement, and determining learning outcomes be mandatory for all university personnel?

One hundred and seventy 170 participants have answered this question. Out of this rate %35.9 think that to some extent implementing programs such as ECTS credits be mandatory, next to this a percentage of %32.9 Agree and a percentage of %1.5 do not agree with the statement mentioned above. Some percentage of %14.7 do not know whether is should be mandatory or not. This indicates that academic staff encounter more workload as a result of Bologna Process, and may not be completely willing to make changes mandatory. On the other hand, answers may also express a certain degree of uncertainty on the instructions given at institutional and/or national levels.



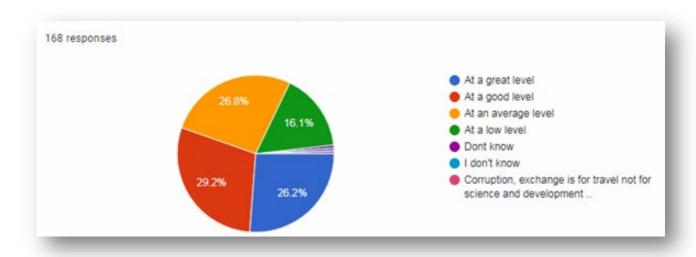




### 13. Can exchange programmes like Erasmus+ and international exchange programs engage you more actively with improving Bologna Process?

One hundred sixty-eight 168 participants have answered this question. Quite the majority of respondents agree to a great level that such programs improve Bologna Process. A percentage of %29.9 agree to a good level and a percentage of %26.8 agree to an average level. Very few percentages indicated at a lower level and some of them indicated that such exchange programs are treated as a privilege for a minority and exchange is for travel and not for scientific development. It is with concern that such attitudes do exist within academia because some of the academics feel marginalized and or excluded from exchange programs.

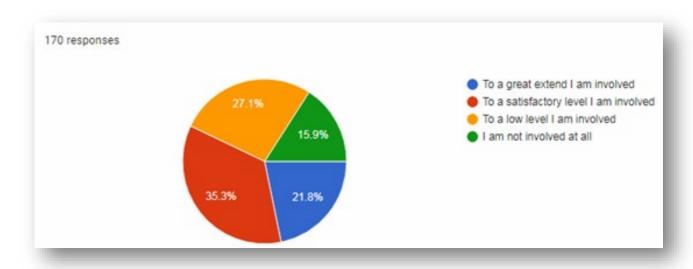
The graphic below indicates such perceptions.





### 16. To what extend are you involved in the development of policies for implementation of Bologna Process?

Out of all the 171 participants, 170 academics have answered this question. The highest percentage of the respondents that is %35.3 believe that they are involved to a satisfactory level, next to this is %27.1 who claim that they are involved to a low level and %21.8 said that are involved to a great extent. Worthy to mention is that a percentage of %15.9 answered that they are not involved at all. Overall, one can synthesis that a great majority are involved to a great and or satisfactory level and that engagement and participation are at an adequate level.



### 18. What are your aspirations for Kurdistan's higher education and Bologna Declaration's future?

We can note that fewer academics have answered this question compared with the level of engagement in the previous questions and that 'only' 130 have answered this question. Again, their inputs vary greatly and we can deduce the following patterns.

Some of them are not much optimistic about Bologna Declarations future. They say more progress and experience are needed and that there is a bright future for the generations of Bologna Process graduates and that it will lead to further internationalization. Indeed, some look forward to increasing cooperation with European universities for the development of universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. They believe that the main advantage of this process is to standardize and internationalize the organization and they are hopeful these goals will be achieved in all academic institutions in Kurdistan. These staff and academics are hopeful, optimistic and believe in progress of the KRI education system in general.

However, others are not sure, or more critical and or cynical: they believe that the current system is working very well and they propose cancelling the reform because they believe the students in the Kurdistan region of Iraq are not well prepared for such a system or process. These respondents claim that much more needs to be done to improve the implementation of Bologna Process and thus there is a need for systematic and structural enhancement of the education system.

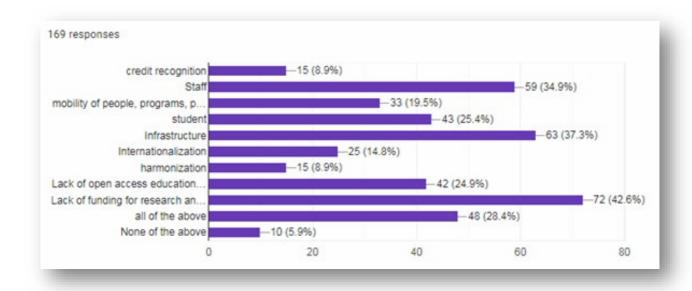




All in all, all university academics, staff and students in Kurdistan are divided over the implementation of Bologna Process in Kurdistan. Some are proponents and others are opponents. Each side has their own justification for implementing or not implementing Bologna Process. Their arguments are quite understandable as the region in the recent years have recovered from age-old rivalry and political conflicts that have engulfed all of Iraq. With regime change and rapidly developing society, technology and globalization the Kurdistan region, universities have undergone great transformations. Change is not easy, especially in the realm of educational systems and it requires for efforts, funds and collaborative and cooperative projects with the outside world. Thus the education system in Kurdistan can make adequate progress just like all the other advanced countries. What is important is that the reform steps have long began and it will take some time to make real changes and adapt to the new reality, which is indeed what also happened in Europe.

### 19. What are the main obstacles to implementation of Bologna Process at your university?

169 Participants have answered this question. The most identified obstacle for the implementation of Bologna Process is the lack of funding for research and academic exchange, followed by a set of other challenges including infrastructures, staff, mobility of people and programs, internationalization, harmonization, and lack of open access education. All in all, %42.6 of all respondents say that a combination of all the challenges above are hindering the implementation of Bologna Process at their respective universities.



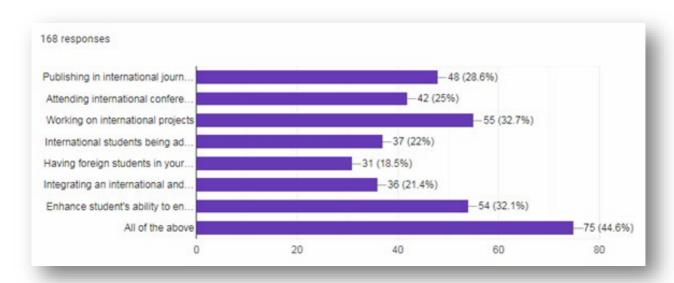
### 20. Which of the following activities associated with implementation of Bologna Process and internationalization you think must become a priority?

It is worthy to note that 168 participants have responded to this question. The highest percentage of the respondents claim that all of the mentioned activities are important. However, working on international projects is priority number one, exchange of students is priority number two, publishing in international journals is priority number three, attending international conference is





priority number four, having international students, integrating an international and national framework as having foreign students at your university are other priorities as per their ranking.



### 21. What difficulties do you believe international students who come to study at your university face?

Out of 171 academics, 140 have chosen to answer this question. They have identified a range of issues and or difficulties that international students will face if they choose to study at one of the Kurdistan public universities. They have highlighted that no international students have yet come to study in our region, that they will face language, culture, and living difficulties due to lack of infrastructures, inadequate system and academic staff members to support them. Also, they have highlighted that there are other issues such as security, lack of cultural awareness, traditions and the political situation of the region, which might concern them. They also reported that generally our universities are not prepared in terms of infrastructure and academic staff, and government laws and legislations and how to deal with the community they will be living with.

However, some also claim that international students will not face any problems as there are many international NGOs and foreign companies and expat who are working in this region and they have never faced a single problem in our region compared with the rest and or other parts of Iraq. Below is a sample of their answers:

The university is not prepared in terms of infrastructure and academic staff

- 1- the finical issues students face
- 2- the lack of funding.
- 3- after graduating they don't find jobs with their specialties





### 22. What sorts of difficulty do international faculty members face when they come to teach at your university?

Out of the 171 staff surveyed, 138 have chosen to answer the questions. It is worthy to note that most of the difficulties facing international students might be similar to those facing international faculty members and some of the challenges are mentioned in the previous questions of this survey.

However, many have indicated that it is easy to bring international academic staff members to universities of Kurdistan and most of them have done so in the past. However, some mention other issues such as language barriers, financial considerations, weather issues, living places and or accommodations, routine administrative procedures, lack of updating knowledge and or legislations and or rules and laws, the political and economic and financial circumstances of the region, and lack o halls and or devices, and some of them highlighted travel issues to the pandemic procedures and covid-19, kindly remember this study was carried out in March 2022 and even at this time there were tight regulations. Some of the small local universities have mentioned that they do not have international academic staff.

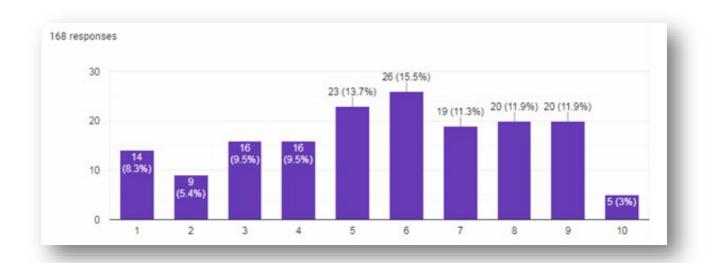
Despite all of the challenges, difficulties and barriers in this region it is worthy to note that the Kurdistan region of Iraq is internationally considered the most friendly, pro-European and safe environment for international staff working in the region. In the past, not a single foreign journalist and or staff member was injured and or harmed while working in this region. The people are also very hospitable and they like to socialize with those who choose to come to this region. There is a historical reason why the people of Kurdistan and the government institutions provide the most facilitation and support to international staff who prefer working in this region. Back in the 1980s and 1990s and even after 2000 hundreds of thousands of Kurds left the Kurdistan region due to political conflict and they settled in Europe as refugees. As a result of this most families have loved ones who live in Europe and they have assimilated with their norms and traditions and this have had an impact on a more predominant pro-Europeanism felt in the region. Also worthy no note is that many Kurdish universities have invited and or hosted and accepted several scholars, academics and lecturers from neighboring countries such as Iran and Turkey universities and or even several American university lecturers have taught in Kurdistan universities without having any issues.

### 23. Do the Bologna Process and the practices implemented work out correctly and how would you rate it at your university?

Exactly one hundred sixty-eight 168 participants have responded to this question. This ranking question have given the participants to rank from 1 (the lowest) to 10 (the highest). The highest percentage is %15.5 have given a rank of six 6. Next to this a percentage of %13.7 have chosen a ranking of 5. Only a few that is %3 has indicated 10 but %8.3 have also selected ranking 1 that is the lowest. An accumulated %35 have chosen ranking between 7 to 8. Generally speaking, more than half of all participants that is %53 have chosen a ranking of over 5 to 10 and a percentage of %47 have ranked the implementation of Bologna Process either 5 and or lower. The graphics below shows their ranking preference.









### **CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS**

At the end of the survey, we have given respondents the opportunity to write down their extra notes and suggestions, and if we have forgotten something important that needs to be mentioned. Because we have already mentioned per each section what are the gaps and how they might be filled, we would like here to provide a summary of their final concluding remarks and use this space as a platform for staff and academic suggestions for improvements.

Quite a large number of them just thank us for the opportunity and they have indicated that all the key and important questions have already been mentioned and that they have nothing else to elaborate. However, we would like to highlight some of the most important suggestions made by academics and staff who participated in this survey. In the words of one of the respondents: "I think training of several staff from each scientific departments on workshop's related to Bologna Process will be quite useful. This project should involve more academics from the faculties and departments". Also, they highlight that we need to prepare students and staff before using new systems. Some state that these topics are all important and universities should discuss and develop this Bologna Process more deeply.

Others have highlighted issues such as "We have many problems related to Bologna Process like infrastructure, Staff, Halls, Labs, Students number, time of new accepted students". Another participant wrote "I believe that the number of students at each level has to be balanced to fit the activities in Bologna system". One more participant wrote "I think it is important to think about our educational environment next time you think of a new system. Please bring the European libraries, European funding, and the European educational environment with your next educational system you experiment here in Kurdistan". The difficulties faced are also expressed by another participant: "The Bologna system in many foreign universities has its standards specially in terms of the no. of students, research facilities, financial supports, and etc. This process cannot be implemented in the KRI university when the no. of student in a class exceeds over 100 person".

One participant suggested that "Concerning Bologna Process implementation, better not to give the authority to the university for modifying the process. All universities better to follow Ministry rules so as to unify the regulations and rules among all the universities in KRI". Further to Bologna Process another participant argued that "There are disorganizing instructions form high ECTS committee at the Ministry level. We should have unified applicable instructions and guidelines for implementation at all universities". One participant focused more on providing useful and relevant infrastructure for universities writing "Please support the universities to prepare the teaching devices, like data show, computer, white board and teaching halls". Another participant made this suggestion to cancel the entire Bologna Process "I suggest canceling the application of this system in our universities, for several reasons, including the large number of students in the class, which makes it difficult to divide them into groups, and a waste of time, which leads to the difficulty of completing the syllabus". This participant suggested that we have reduced numbers of students in each class.

Some participants added valuable comments, for example: "I would suggest to have more collaborative workshops with universities implementing Bologna Process to enhance the already achieved practices in this regard". Another one mentioned something important and relevant not mentioned by others: "The role of education in primary and secondly schools need improvements





that can make strong background for students prior to higher education and scientific research". One respondent focused the attention to other relevant issues with Bologna Process, writing "Foundations should be laid before implementing Bologna Process. Bologna Process is very good, but it needs to apply in schools also, the universities alone cannot have a good output ".

In one of the answers, a respondent stated "Make our voice heard".

The survey was indeed meant to make voices heard, and collect perceptions, suggestions and experiences with the major changes KRI universities are facing. We will conclude this survey with what one participant suggested writing that "Please, follow up the outcome of this questionnaire. Please follow up on the survey results; otherwise, things will remain as they are in KRI. The survey is very useful and relevant to most of the issues we have, otherwise things will be the same as they are". And finally, one optimist participant noted that "We have very good academic and administrative staff but only we need financial support and more training and capacity building activities". The outcomes of the survey will be guiding the next trainings indeed.



### **STUDENTS SURVEY**

As it was for the staff survey, for the very first time a research process is conducted to collect data on the progress of the 4-years old Bologna Process reform in major universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI), targeting this time the students involved as beneficiaries of the process. A second survey was designed by Charmo University (P13) under the framework of APPRAIS Project to assess the implementation of Bologna Process, and 1225 students from the 8 public Kurdish universities of APPRAIS have responded, which is an outstanding result per sé.

The second survey was directed to students at all levels.

The survey was designed to take approximately one hour time for completion, depending on the level of experience of the students. Universities were encouraged to involve students from different departments.

The students survey is available in Annex II.



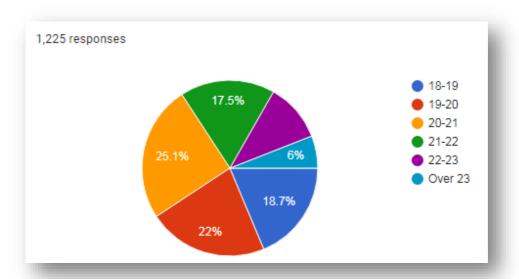


### **PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

All in all, 1225 respondents took part to the investigation on students' perceptions.

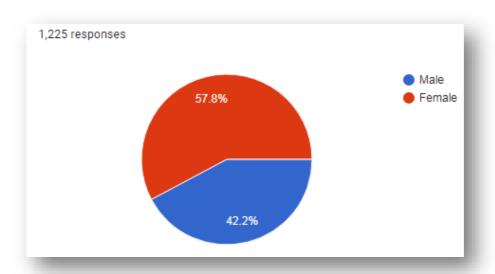
### 1. Age of the students

First the survey asked the age of the students who participated in filling out the survey. The majority of students were aged in between 20 to 21 years which comprises %25.1 of all respondents. Then 22% of students were between 19 to 20 years old. In general, students represented in the survey have a quite diverse ages, from 18 to over 23, being a representative sample.



#### 2. Gender

Out of 1,225 students who took part in this survey %57.8 of them were female students compared to %42.2 who were male. This indicates a slightly higher proportion of female students are engaged in this study.

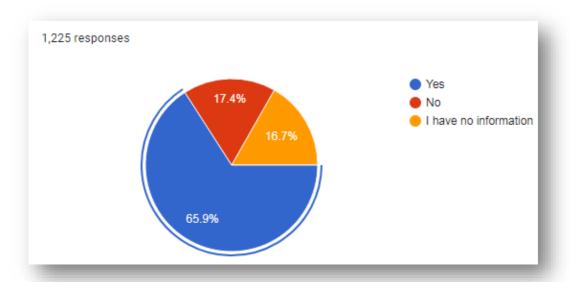




### **RESEARCH OUTCOMES**

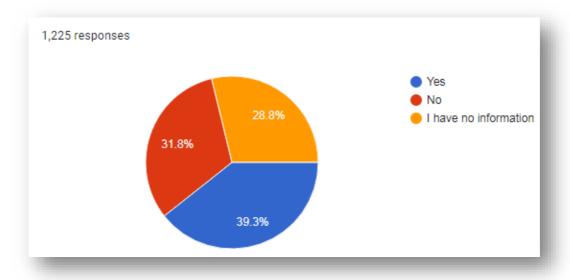
#### 3. Student awareness about Bologna Process

In this section we have asked the students whether they are aware of or not about the implementation of Bologna Process in their respective universities. The responses indicate that the majority of the students, that is %65.9, are aware of the implementation of Bologna Process and yet %17.4 are not aware and that %16.7 indicated that they do not have information.



### 4. Student Awareness of higher educational reforms in KRI universities

In this section we have asked the participants of this survey whether or not they are aware of higher education reforms in KRI universities. The majority of the respondents that is %39.3 indicated that they are aware of the reforms, yet a slightly comparable number that is %31.8 of students indicated they are not aware of and also %28.8 they have no information at all.

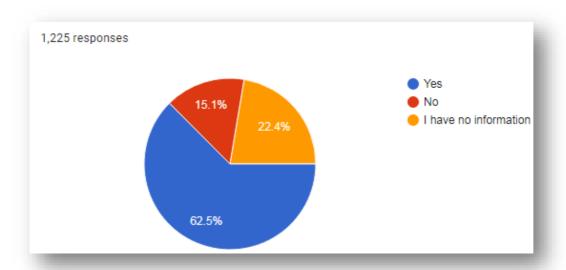






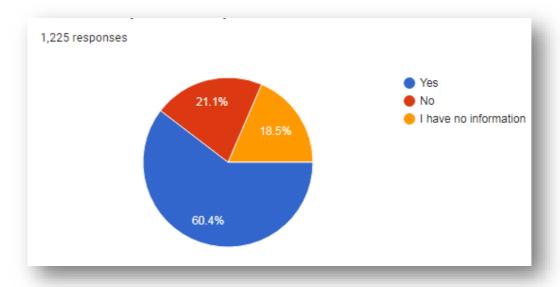
### 5. Student awareness on university implementing Bologna Process

In this section we have asked the students whether their universities are implementing Bologna Process or not, the majority that is %62.5 indicated that their universities are implementing Bologna Process, however, %22.4 indicated that their universities are not implementing Bologna Process and %15.1 responded that they do not have information.



### 6. The Impact of Changes in University education system

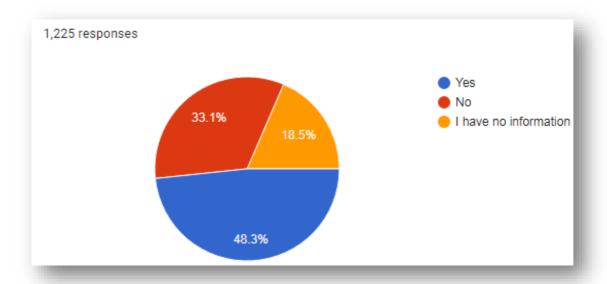
In this section we have asked students whether they believe that implementing changes in university systems have had an impact on their education in their universities. The majority that is %60.4 have responded affirmatively and %21.1 do not believe so, also %18.5 indicated that they do not have information.





### 7. Observing Changes in curriculum and learning design

In this section we have asked the students whether or not they have observed or noted any changes in their curriculum and learning design, the majority that is %48.3 have responded affirmatively that they have observed and noticed changes in both curriculum and learning design. However, a percentage of %33.1 answered negatively that they have not observed changes, and a rate of %18.5 had no information at all.



### 8. Factors affecting their knowledge of changes in curriculum and learning design

Only 759 out of 1225 students have answered this open question. They stated that generally they have observed useful changes, however, a high number of respondents claimed that:

- the education system is still weak
- the system is still old
- there is a lot of theoretical information but not much practice
- there are not enough practical rooms
- some of the teachers do not provide adequate information and resources.

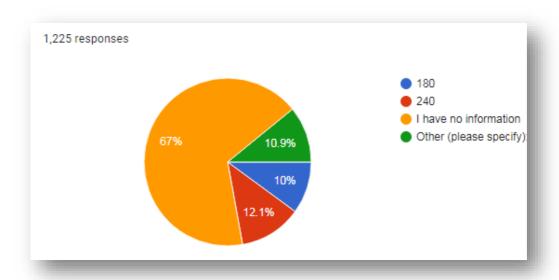
Some of them also indicated their reliance on technology and self-study and their dependence on technological platforms for further improving their knowledge and skills.

#### 9. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in their degree of their study

In this section we have asked the students what are the number of their credits (ECTS) in their degree of studies, the majority that is %67 indicated they do not have information. Meaning that they do not know their credits, however, %12.1 indicated they have 240 credits and %10 indicated they have 180 credits and %10.1 responded that they have other credits.

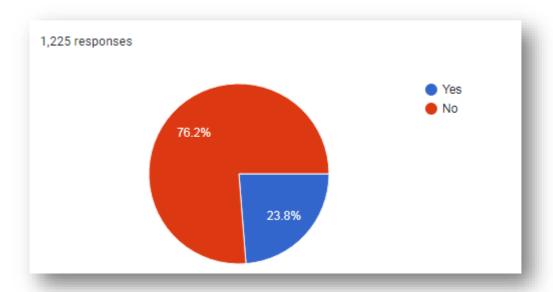






### 10. Participation in courses or internship abroad during study

In this section we have asked students if they have participated in any course and or internship abroad during their studies, the majority that is %76.2 answered that they have not participated in any course abroad, but %23.8 answered affirmatively that they have participated in courses and or internship abroad.

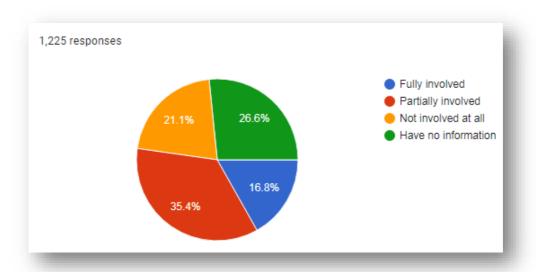


#### 11. Level of Involvement in curriculum development

We have asked students to what extent they have been involved in the curriculum development. The majority that is %35.4 said they have partially been involved in the curriculum development and a lowest percentage of %16.8 said they are fully involved. However, a percentage of %21.1 responded that they have not been involved at all and %21.6 said they have no information.

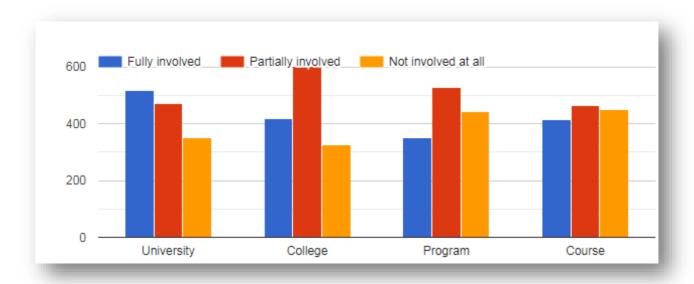






#### 12. Student Participation in evaluation process

In this section we have asked the students to what extend they are involved in the evaluation process of the university, college, program and courses. The majority of student responses indicate that students are generally fully involved in evaluation of their university, yet they are partially involved in the evaluation of their colleges and programs.

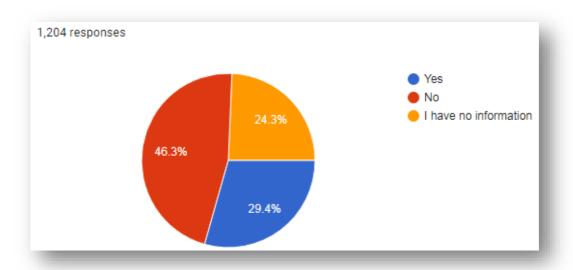


#### 13. Joint Program and degrees

In this section we have asked the students if they have any joint programs and/or degrees at their universities. 1204 out of 1225 students have answered this question. Only a percentage of %29.4 said they have joint programs and/or degrees, and the majority of them that is %46.3 said they do not have a joint program and/or degrees at their respective universities. Also a percentage of %24.3 had no information or knowledge if their universities are having joint programs and degrees.

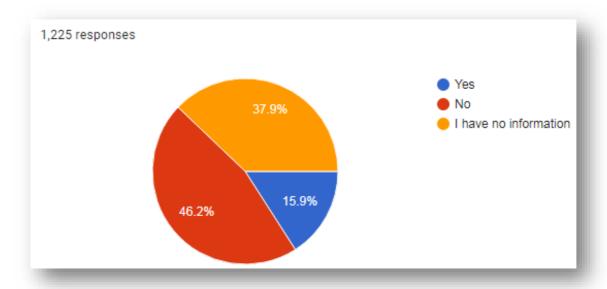






### 14. Financial assistance for studying abroad

In this section we have asked our students if their universities are offering financial assistance for completing their studies aboard and overseas. Only a small percentage that is %15.9 indicated that their universities are offering financial assistance to study abroad and a majority that is %46.2 said financial assistance is not available.



#### 15. What form of financial assistance is available

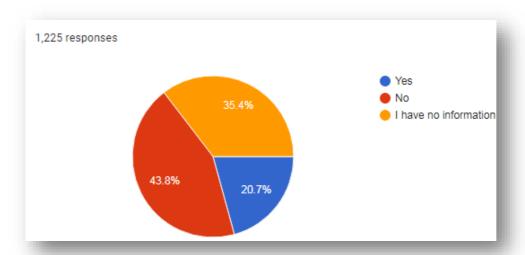
In this section the students are asked what form of financial assistance is available for those students who study abroad. Only 521 students out of 1225 students have answered this question. The answers varies and it is not easy to sum up or find patterns for over 500 different answers. However, the majority indicate that they are not aware if further financial assistance is available, and yet some of the students indicated that they may receive partial state student aid to continue their study abroad, especially for MA and PhD degrees.





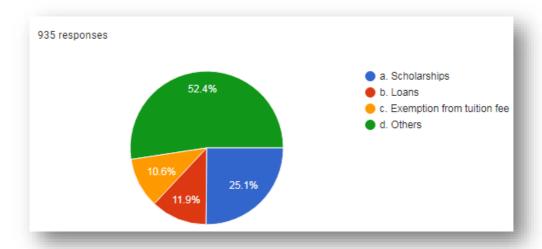
### 16. Financial support to begin and or continue education

In this section, the students were asked if financial support is provided by university to begin and/or continue their education. The majority that is %43.8 responded that financial support is not available and only %20.7 indicated that financial support is available. While also %35.4 claimed that they have no information at all. It is worthy to note that all of the 1225 students have answered this question. It is worthy to note that this survey was conducted among 8 public universities and in these public universities education is free and students are not charged for tuition fees, except for those students who are admitted under the parallel system of admission, where the tuition fees range between 600 to 2,000,000 lraqi diners per year and this varies per program studies.



#### 17. What form of financial assistance is available

In this section, we have asked the students in which form the financial assistance is provided for studying abroad. It is worthy to note that only 935 students out of 1225 students have answered to this question. %25.1 said that the financial assistance is available in the form of scholarships, %11.9 said that assistance is provided in the form of loans, %10.6 said that financial assistance is available in the form of exception from tuition fees, the majority that is %52.4 said that financial assistance is available in other forms but not specified.







#### 18. The Strengths and Weakness of Bologna Process

In this section we have asked the students for their opinions on the strengths and weakness of Bologna Process. It is worth mentioning that, compared to the other open questions, well 828 students out of 1225 students have responded to the question. While it is not easy to find patterns or trends in their answers, yet one can find some repetitive responses that are prevalent among student opinions on the implementation of Bologna Process. Most of the students express that this process improves the level of student learning and culture, it is quite flexible for students to choose what subjects they are interested in. Yet they do not hide the fact that it puts a lot of burden on students doing a lot of homework. Some of them say that this system prepares students for the job market, yet others indicate it does not allow for student creativity. Generally speaking, they think the process is useful and facilitates learning good and useful materials. But there are also large numbers of students who have admitted they do not know what are the advantages and disadvantages of the bologna process.

### 19. How quality of education has changed

In this section students are asked what they think about how has the quality of education changed. They believe that changes is evident with the shift from only theoretical study to more practical, but also in the way academics communicate with their students. However, the majority of the students express that they do not know or have not observed changes.

### 20. Bologna Process and extra opportunities

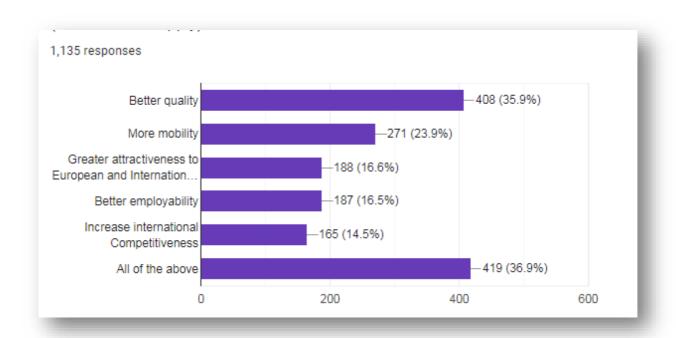
In this section the students are asked in what ways does the Bologna Process provide them with extra opportunities while they are studying or after they have graduated. 782 students out of 1225 students have answered this question. While again it is not easy to sum up or conclude with a grand statement, we can still observe some repetitive patterns. A quite number of students believe that this process has contributed to an increase in their knowledge, and provides more opportunities for practical rather than only theoretical lecturers. However, some of the students indicate they do not like this new approach and or they do not know what the benefits or extra opportunities are.

### 21. Bologna Process benefits for students

In this section the students are asked what they think are the benefits of the implementations of Bologna Process. 1135 students have answered this question. The majority that is %36.9 (an approximate number of 419 students) indicated that Bologna Process is useful for better quality, more mobility, graduate attractiveness to European and International Institutions, and also is useful for better employability and an increase in international competitiveness. A percentage of %35.9 (that is 408 students) believed that Bologna Process is useful for better quality of education. The graphics below shows student attitude to the benefits of Bologna Process and their percentage of significance.









### **CONCLUSION AND FURTHER COMMENTS**

We would like to express our appreciation to all those students who have taken their valuable time and have answered the questions. We have asked them if they think there is anything else we have forgotten to mention and they might like to add comments, so an empty space is provided in the survey for their suggestions and or recommendations. It is worthy to note that all of the 1225 students surveyed have answered this section.

The majority indicated that they are satisfied with their study. Also, they were happy that they were asked to participated and engage with this survey. A large percentage of them just thanked us for the opportunity provided to share their feedback, but they did not have any further comments.

All in all, the students were happy to be engaged, and most of them hope that the public universities and the government stakeholders do more to improve both the quality of education and the infrastructure that are available for higher education academic institutions in KRI. Also, they expect the government to provide more job opportunities and academic exchange program with European Universities.



## **ANNEX I - STAFF SURVEY**





## Survey on the Implementation of Bologna Process in KRI Universities- Appraise Project, Work Package Two (WP2)

#### Greetings,

This survey prepared by Charmo University (P13) under the framework of APPRAIS Project, in particular in the context of the Work Package 2(WP2) aims to assess the implementation of Bologna Process in Universities of KR-I Partners in APPRAIS Project.

The survey explores the progress of the 4-year old Bologna reform in major universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The survey's main goal is focus on the major components of the Bologna process, such as degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. It also aims to identify gaps, challenges and future needs for training on Bologna Process with the support of UNIMED and European Partner universities of APPRAIS project.

The questions of this survey are designed in such a way that different levels of university staff can fill it out. The survey addressed these target groups:

- The Upper Administrative level,
- The middle administrative level staff and,
- lower administrative level staff.

Those who can participate in completing the survey are Senior Executives (Presidents, deputy presidents { Chancellors or Vice Chancellors} University secretaries, Academic registrars, directors of Bologna Process, directors of quality assurance, directors of research centers, Directors and staff members of international relations office, Deans and their deputies, Heads of departments, lecturers, assistant lecturers, researchers, as well as other administrative staff members who are implementing day to day works of each respective partner universities.

To answer the survey can take an approximate one hour time depending on the level of experience of the staff member who fills it out. It is preferable that in each partner university a variety of different staff members participate in filling it out. In fact the more diverse and more numbers of staff participate the better we will be able to have a complete overview of the strengths and weakness of the Bologna Process. So please share this survey with as much as possible with academics, lecturers and both senior and junior staff members of your university.

The results of this survey will be presented in a workshop that will be held in Italy, at the University of Pisa with all the project partners. The outcomes of this survey will be used to inform and guide further future training in APPRAIS project namely in WP3 and WP4 activities and other activities. It will also help each university to identify and prepare a road map for the implementation of Bologna Process in the later.

Kindly also note that the deadline for filling this survey is March 5th 2022.

Thank you so much in advance and we really appreciate your time answering the questions.

Should you have any further questions kindly do not hesitate to contact us.

International Relations Office Charmo University



*Campo obbligatorio
Email *  Il tuo indirizzo email
Academic Title of the staff completing this form *  Professor
Assistant Professor
Lecturer
Assistant Lecturer
Researcher
Assistant researcher
Administrative staff member
Altro:
Position of the staff completing this form *
La tua risposta
Name of University *
La tua risposta
1. Is there an international office in your university/institution? If yes, how is the selection of the director and the members made?.
La tua risposta
2. What is the International office in charge for, what is its role and the main priorities?
La tua risposta

3. How many agreements with KRI and international universities have been established? (please list them)
La tua risposta
4. Have you recently organised international events in your institution? If so, what kind of event?
La tua risposta
5. When you think about internationalization in your university, what do you think about ?
International mobility
Bologna Process
campus internationalization
Curriculum internationalization
Commercializing research and postsecondary education
Academic exchange programs
Others
6. To what extent does internationalization take place in your university's strategic goals?
Outstanding
O Satisfactory
Average
O Below Average
Needs improvement
O Altro:

7. Are the internationalization activities carried out at your university sufficient to achieve your university Internationalization Strategic goals?
O Yes
O No
O Maybe
8. Which internationalization efforts are prioritized at your university?
Exchange programs,
Cooperation between universities,
Signing cooperation agreements,
Organizing international conferences,
All of the above
None of the above
Others
9. What are the most important challenges and or problems you experience when managing internationalization-related activities?
La tua risposta
10. Do you believe your university's administrative staff have the required expertise and motivation to carry out internationalization efforts?
Yes, they have
No, they do not have
Maybe
I am not sure
They have expertise and motivations but need further training
Altro:

11. How would your university?	you r	ate tl	he Bo	ologr	na pro	oces	s and	the	pract	ices i	mplemented at
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1 is the lowest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10 is the highest
12. Do you thinl Supplement, and personnel?											
O Yes											
O No											
o to some exte	end										
O I do not know	V										
13. Can exchan programs engag  At a great lev  At a good lev  At an averag  At a low leve  Altro:	yel yel e leve	u moi									
14. In today's corequirement for this idea?											an unavoidable do you agree with
Strongly disa	igree										
Disagree											
O Neutral											
Agree											
Strongly agre	ee										

15. What role will internationalization play in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) universities in the next years? What are your thoughts on this?
La tua risposta
16. To what extend are you involved in the development of policies for implementation of the Bologna process?
To a great extend I am involved
To a satisfactory level I am involved
To a low level I am involved
I am not involved at all
17. Which part of internationalization in your professional life is more essential to your activities?
Bologna Prcoess
Student mobility
Staff mobility
Collaboration and partnerships
Faculty policies and practices
Articulated Institutional Commitment
Administrative structure and staffing
International publishing, co-authoring, research networks,
International teaching and learning
Altro:
18. What are your aspirations for Kurdistan's higher education and the Bologna Declaration's future?
La tua risposta

19. What are the main obstacles to implementation of Bologna Process at your university?
credit recognition
☐ Staff
mobility of people, programs, projects, and policies
student
☐ Infrastructure
Internationalization
harmonization
Lack of open access education, lack of international students, lack of extra curricular activities,
Lack of funding for research and training
all of the above
None of the above
<ul><li>20. Which of the following activities associated with Implementation of Bologna process and internationalization you think must become a priority?</li><li>Publishing in international journals</li></ul>
Attending international conferences
Working on international projects
International students being admitted to universities and or mobility
Having foreign students in your lecture hall
Integrating an international and intercultural and global dimension into teaching, research, and service function of the institutions (Third Mission)
Enhance student's ability to engage in job-related problem solving and decision making in ways that reflect knowledge and respect for other cultures
All of the above
21. What difficulties do you believe international students who come to study at your university face?
La tua risposta

22. What sorts of difficulties do international faculty members face when they come to teach at your university?											
La tua risposta											
23. Do the Bolog how would you ra					-	tices	imple	emen	ted w	ork ou	ut correctly and
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1 is the lowest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10 is highest
Thank you so mu anything else you mentioned you c	u'd lik	e to r	nenti	on ar					-		
La tua risposta											

Invia Cancella modulo

Non inviare mai le password tramite Moduli Google.

Questo modulo è stato creato all'interno di Charmo University. <u>Segnala abuso</u>

Google Moduli

### **ANNEX I - STUDENTS SURVEY**





# (2) WP2 Survey of Implementation of Bologna Process in KRI universities-Appraise Project Work Package 2 (WP2) to be completed only by students

This survey prepared by Charmo University (P13) under the framework of Apprais Project, Work Package 2(WP2) aims to assess the implementation of Bologna Process in Universities of KR-I Partners in Apprais Project WP2. Objective.

This survey explores the progress of the 4-year old Bologna reform in major universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). The survey's main goal is focus on the major components of the Bologna process, such as degree structure, quality assurance, mobility, and social dimension. It also aims to identify gaps, challenges and future needs for training on Bologna Process with the support of UNIMED and European Partner universities of Apprais project.

The survey can take an approximate one hour time and or more time depending on the level of experience of the student who fills it out. It is preferable that in each partner university a variety of different level of students and from different departments participate in filling it out. In fact the more diverse and more numbers of students participate the better we will be able to have a complete overview of the strengths and weakness of the Bologna Process. So please share this survey with as much students as possible.

The results of this survey will be presented in Apprais Project partnership meeting in Italy, University of Pisa. The outcomes of this survey will be used to inform and guide further future training in APPRAIS project.

Kindly also note that the deadline for filling this survey is March 5th 2022

Thank you so much and we appreciate your time answering the questions.

International Relations Office Charmo University



m.zipoli@uni-med.net (non condiviso) Cambia account



\*Campo obbligatorio

Your age *
O 18-19
O 19-20
20-21
O 21-22
O 22-23
Over 23

Gender *  Male Female
Name of your university *  La tua risposta
Department *  La tua risposta
<ul> <li>1. Have you heard about the Bologna process? *</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>I have no information</li> </ul>
2. Have you heard about the reforms in higher education in Kurdistan Region of * Iraq (KRI)?  Yes  No  I have no information
<ul> <li>3. Does your university implement the Bologna process? *</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>I have no information</li> </ul>

4. Do you believe that these changes have an impact on the education at your * university?
○ Yes
○ No
I have no information
5. Do you notice changes in your curriculum and learning design? *
○ Yes
○ No
I have no information
6. If you notice any changes in your curriculum and learning design, what could be the cause?
La tua risposta
<ul><li>La tua risposta</li><li>7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *</li></ul>
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *  180  240
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *  180  240  I have no information
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *  180  240  I have no information
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *  180  240  I have no information  Other (please specify):
7. What is the number of credits (ECTS) in the degree you study? *  180  240  I have no information  Other (please specify):  8. Have you done any course or internship abroad, during your studies? *

9. To what extent a	are you involved in the	e curriculum developr	ment? *
Fully involved			
O Partially involved			
Not involved at all			
Have no informati	on		
10. To what extent h			aluation of the *
	Fully involved	Partially involved	Not involved at all
University			
College			
Program			
Course			
11. Do you have any	joint programs/degr	ees at your university	?
Yes			
○ No			
J			
I have no informat	tion		
	rsity offer financial as		g abroad? If not, *
I have no informate  12. Does your univer	rsity offer financial as		g abroad? If not,     *
12. Does your universkip next question ar	rsity offer financial as		g abroad? If not, *
12. Does your universkip next question ar	rsity offer financial as		g abroad? If not, *
12. Does your universkip next question ar  Yes  No	rsity offer financial as nd complete the surve	ey.	

14. Is financial support provided by your university to begin and continue your education? If not, skip next question and complete the survey.
○ Yes
○ No
I have no information
15. In which form is this financial assistance provided for studying abroad:
a. Scholarships
O b. Loans
C. Exemption from tuition fee
Od. Others
16. According to you what are the strength and weakness of the Bologna Process?  La tua risposta
17. In what way do you think that the quality of education at university level changed?  La tua risposta
18 In what ways does the Bologna process provide you with extra opportunities while you are studying and after you have graduated?
La tua risposta

19. What benefits does students get from the Bologna Process? (Check all that apply)	
Better quality	
More mobility	
Greater attractiveness to European and International Universities	
Better employability	
Increase international Competitiveness	
All of the above	
20. Thank you so much for answering the questions. We appreciate your time. If *you think there is anything else we have forgotten to mention and or you wish to comment on please write it down here:	
La tua risposta	

Invia Cancella modulo

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