PROJECT: THE LEBANESE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT (LEBPASS)

CO-FUNDED BY THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Diploma Supplement Needs Assessment Survey Proposal

May 26, 2020

Updated September 12, 2020

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1. Project Synopsis

The LEBPASS project aims at developing a Diploma Supplement for Lebanon to help students and graduates make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood both nationally and internationally, thus facilitating the mobility of both learners and workers. The Diploma Supplement is modeled according to the Diploma Supplement issued in Europe. The specific objective of the project is to:

- Provide accurate, fair and up-to-date information on an individual's qualifications
- Aid mobility and access to further study and employment abroad
- Provide fair and informed information relating to Lebanese higher education system
- Facilitate academic and professional recognition thus increasing the transparency of qualifications

The specific outcomes of the LEBPASS project is to:

- Ensure sustainable academic programs with clear educational objectives and student outcomes, which adhere with Diploma Supplement requirements
- Develop principles for generating a Diploma Supplement
- Create a rational platform through which the DiplomaSupplement module is integrated
- Adopt the Diploma Supplement module by the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE), university partners and progressively other universities in Lebanon
- Establish a national center that shall oversee the Diploma Supplement procedures, implementation and sustainability
- Promote awareness of the significance and benefits of Diploma Supplement among students, refugees, employers and education providers

2. Work package 1: Description and Deliverables

The aim of work package 1 is to assess the need of the introduction of a Diploma Supplement in Lebanese higher education institutions. This will be undertaken through a needs assessment of the different stakeholders of higher education including administrators, faculty, students, employers and professional associations among others. The specific deliverables are as follows:

- Conduct a needs assessment of the introduction of the Diploma Supplement in Lebanese higher education institutions using benchmarks of European higher education institutions' practices and approaches.

- Develop tools and techniques for data collection and analysis

- Identify the target population and sample

- Compile collected data for needs assessment

- Draft a summary of identified views of the significance of developing a Diploma Supplement.

- Carry out a national day to survey the significance of introduction of the Diploma Supplement in Lebanese higher education institutions.

- Conduct a final analysis of the significance of the introduction of the Diploma Supplement.

- Include in the final analysis of the needs assessment a set of recommendations to inform the work of work package 2.

3. Needs Assessment

3.1 Objectives

A **needs assessment** is a process that constitutes a review of practices and approaches in common use to determine priorities and identify developmental requirements. It is a recognized developmental tool that involves the assessment of gaps in practice and experience and aims at bridging the identified gaps through structured, focused and impactful development. There are numerous benefits of a needs assessment some of which are listed below:

- Contributes to planning by determining the gaps between the current situation and the desired situation and highlighting opportunities to improve

- Improves decision-making by making available relevant, accurate and timely information

- Helps identify the most pressing and crucial areas that need to be addressed

- Ensures community engagement and ownership by involving constituents in the development and implementation stages of plans to achieve defined outcomes

- Measures progress towards defined outcomes

- Encourages an evidence-based approach

3.2 Objectives of Needs Assessment for LEBPASS

The needs assessment of the introduction of the Diploma Supplement in Lebanese higher education institutions aims at defining current practices by preparing a detailed final report using benchmarks of the European higher education systems and institutional practices. It aims to ascertain higher education stakeholders' – national authorities, administrators, faculty, students and employers - awareness to the extent to which different practices are used to give insights into the skills and attributes acquired by graduates, the overall character of an award, the awarding institution, or the higher-education system in the country. It serves to assess the rationale behind the use of these practices and relevant national and institutional priorities.

The specific objectives of the "Needs Assessment" are as follows:

- Identify current practices in Lebanon by conducting interviews and focus groups discussions with the MEHE.
- Bring forward the experiences and needs of different stakeholders by collecting data through surveys and/or semi-structured interview meetings. The stakeholders include:
  a. Students (Students' perspective whenever searching for a job or transferring to universities abroad)
  b. Faculty & Administrators (The level of the university contribution to induct the Diploma Supplement and the contribution of a national authority to encourage the adoption of the Diploma Supplement)
  c. Employers and professional associations and organizations (Seeking graduates with competencies, skills and qualifications in given subject and impact of the Diploma Supplement on students' jobs and employability).
- Inform the development of a Lebanese Diploma Supplement with the goal of enhancing national and international transparency and academic and professional recognition of qualifications.

3.3 Research Questions

Key research questions were identified for the needs research study. They are as follows:

- What is the aim of introducing a Diploma Supplement for Institutions of higher education in Lebanon?
- Who is to benefit from the adoption of a Diploma Supplement?

- What principles should guide the development of the Diploma Supplement?

- For which types of education and training should the Diploma Supplement be provided?

- By which Lebanese authorities do you think a Diploma Supplement should be endorsed?

- What aspects of a graduates' educational and professional experience does the adoption of a Diploma Supplement impact most?

4. Methodology

For the purpose of LEBPASS, the methodology chosen is survey research. Survey research can provide a description of how one or more variables are distributed among a population or sample (Check and Schutt, 2012). It attempts to provide a detailed verbal description of how members of a culture perceive the culture (Ponto, 2015). This study employed elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to elicit information relevant to the research questions. The objective was that the use of such a combination of approaches would permit the advantages of certain research techniques to offset the weakness of others thus increasing the validity and reliability of the findings through triangulation. Descriptive data – principles, benefits and impacts of the Diploma Supplement – that is quantitative in nature through ranked responses was collected from among the various stakeholder groups of higher education. The instrument used in the data collection process was a questionnaire, based chiefly on a fixed range of closed questions. The questionnaire had open-ended questions permitting free expression of opinion and providing access to the way the respondents apprehend their social world - the universities and the degrees they award. Such data is qualitative in nature.

4.1 Instrument

The "Diploma Supplement Needs Assessment Survey" is the questionnaire developed to obtain nationally representative responses related to the importance of issuing a Diploma Supplement for Lebanese higher education institutions. It covers the following areas or theme:

- Stakeholders who may benefit from the introduction of a Diploma Supplement in Lebanon

- Benefits of the Lebanese Diploma Supplement

- Principles that guide the development of the Lebanese Diploma Supplement

- Types of educational training where a Diploma Supplement should be issued

- Authorities that should endorse the Diploma Supplement in Lebanon

- Contributions of the Diploma Supplement to areas in need of improvement

- Areas of priority for the future development of the Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement Needs Assessment Survey was piloted by project participants from LAU and USEK. Changes were initially made based on the feedback obtained from the participants of these universities. In a second stage, the input of all local and European partners was solicited and the new updates were incorporated into the survey. The survey was then translated into French and Arabic by the USEK team and shared with the partner institutions in Lebanon for their input and suggestions regarding needed enhancements to ensure the translation is appropriate and the language used is clear. The results of the Needs Assessment Diploma Supplement will serve to inform the development of the Diploma Supplement for Lebanon.

4.2 Sample

The study included all higher education institutions in Lebanon that were encouraged to participate in the study by MEHE. The Diploma Supplement Needs Assessment Survey will be administered to the following stakeholders:

a. <u>Students:</u> At least five graduating senior (final year) students from each of the various disciplines and faculties and at least 3 graduate and doctoral students-professional practice. (e.g. 5 business study, 5 architecture, 5 engineering, 5 social science students…and 3 medical, 3 Pharm.D, 3 Masters students in Education, 3 in Computer Science, …). The target is a minimum of 50 undergraduate students and 15 graduate students.

b. <u>Faculty:</u> At least two full-time faculty with a minimum of three years experience from each of the various disciplines and faculties. The target is a minimum of 10 faculty members.

c. <u>Administrators</u>: At least 10 administrators including officers from the Office of the Provost, the Office of Students Affairs, the Registrar's Office as well as administrators in schools and faculties as deans and chairpersons across the institution.

d. <u>Alumni:</u> At least five alumni who have graduated in the past two years from each of the various disciplines and schools. The target is a minimum of 50 alumni.

e. <u>Professional associations</u>: Representatives of professional associations in Lebanon to include the Order of Engineers and Architects in Beirut and the North, Order of Pharmacists, Bar Association, Order of Nurses.

f. <u>Organizations representing employers:</u> Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Beirut and the North.

g. <u>NGOs</u>: Representatives of NGOs taking care of vulnerable groups (such as Refugee). These include UNESCO, Danish Refugee Council, UNDP.

h. <u>Higher education authorities:</u> The Secretariat of the Equivalence Committee and the Technical Committee.

i. <u>Accrediting Bodies:</u> Representatives of accrediting bodies such as NECHE, FIBA, Evalag, ABET

4.3 Data collection

The survey will be administered over a period of three weeks from September 28, 2020 to October 17, 2020. During the same timeframe interviews will be conducted with the higher education authorities and representatives of the professional associations. Results will then be analyzed and a final report will be developed by the end of October.

5. References

Check, J., & Schutt, R. K. (2012). Survey research. *Research methods in education*, 159-185.

Ponto, J. (2015). Understanding and evaluating survey research. *Journal of the advanced practitioner in oncology*, *6*(2), 168.

Appendix 1: Invitation message for Diploma Supplement Needs Assessment Survey

Dear higher education stakeholders,

The Lebanese Diploma Supplement/LEBPASS is a co-funded project by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union. It is a national project led by the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK). The first activity of this project, championed by the Lebanese American University, is to carry out a "Needs Assessment" study. Thus, we are undertaking a survey with stakeholders of higher education to find out if there is a need for a Lebanese Diploma Supplement.

The Diploma Supplement is an important tool for graduates that accompanies a higher education degree. It aims in helping students and graduates make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Lebanon, as well as across the region and internationally, thus facilitating the mobility of both learners and workers. The survey is strictly confidential. Participation in the survey is anticipated to take 7 to 10 minutes of your time.

The LEBPASS team would like to thank you in advance for participating in the study.
We invite you to click here to access the survey.

For any questions or inquiries, please feel free to e-mail us at dira@lau.edu.lb

Sincerely,
LEBPASS team

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Appendix 2: Diploma Supplement Needs Assessment Survey

The Diploma Supplement is an important tool for graduates to ensure that the degrees they have attained are recognized by higher education institutions, public authorities and employers in Lebanon and abroad. It is a document accompanying a higher education degree providing a standardized description of its holders learning outcomes as well as the nature, level, content and status of the studies completed. It gives an insight into the skills and attributes acquired, the overall character of an award, the awarding institution, or the higher-education system in the country. There is a growing need for an additional formal document as a Launchpad for a student's life after graduation. The Diploma Supplement is an effort to bridge this gap by presenting in a standard format a more complete picture of a graduate's achievements and abilities on the one hand and the characteristics of the awarding institution on the other.

The Diploma Supplement contains eight sections providing information concerning:

1. Information Identifying the Holder of the Qualification

1.1 Last name(s)
1.2 First name(s)
1.3 Father's name(s)
1.4 Date of birth (day/month/year)
1.5 Place of birth
1.6 Student identification number or code (if available)

2. Information Identifying the Qualification

2.1 Name of academic qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language)
2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification
2.3 Name of awarding institution
2.4 Status of awarding institution (private/public)
2.5 Name of institution and campus administering studies (in original language) (if different from 2.3)
2.6 Status of institution (private/public) (if different 2.4)
2.7 Language(s) of instruction/examination

3. Information on the Level and Duration of the Qualification

3.1 Level of the qualification

3.2 Official duration of the program in academic years or semesters in full-time mode

3.3 Official duration of the program in Credit hours in full-time mode

3.4 Official duration of the program in ECTS in full-time mode

3.5 Admission requirement(s)

4. Information on the Program Completed and the Results Obtained

4.1 Mode of study

4.2 Program learning outcomes

4.3 General program description (credits in general education, credits in major, …)

4.4 Program description in terms of individual credits gained and grades/marks obtained (Transcript)

4.5 Grading system and, if available, grade distribution table

4.6 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language)

5. Information on the Function of the Qualification

5.1 Access to further study

5.2 Access to a regulated profession (if applicable)

6. Other Relevant Information

6.1 Additional information (Recognition of program by state authority(s)

6.2 Further information sources

    a-University links (url of institution, url of program)

    b-Accreditation links (e.g. Institutional accreditation status, Program accreditation,…)

    c-Ministry links

    d-Registration Number

6.3 Special regulations

7. Certification

7.1 Date (day/month/year)

7.2 Signature

7.3 Capacity

7.4 Official stamp or seal

8. Information on the National Higher Education System

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Needs Assessment Diploma Supplement Survey

Background Information

★ **1.** In which capacity are you responding? Please select all that apply

☐ Higher education provider

☐ Further education and training provider

☐ Employer

☐ Employer representative body

☐ International organization (EU/UNESCO...)

☐ Learner/Student

☐ Student representative

☐ Teacher/Trainer/Lecturer

☐ Career guidance professional

☐ Research/Consultancy body

☐ Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

☐ Government department or government agency

☐ Professional syndicate or association

☐ Other (please specify)

★ **2.** To what extent is the Diploma Supplement beneficial to:

Note: Use the key: 1= Not beneficial; 2=Moderately beneficial; 3 = Highly beneficial; N/A= Not applicable

	1	2	3	N/A
Higher education provider	☐	☐	☐	☐
Further education and training provider	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employer	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Employer representative body
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

International organization (EU/UNESCO...)
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Learner/Student
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Student representative
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teacher/Trainer/Lecturer
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Career guidance professional
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Research/Consultancy body
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Government department or government agency
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Professional syndicate or association
.... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

★ **3.** To what extent is the Diploma Supplement beneficial in:

Note: Note: Use the key: 1= Not beneficial; 2=Moderately beneficial; 3 = Highly beneficial; N/A= Not Applicable

	1	2	3	N/A
Providing a common framework for the recognition of academic qualifications and programs by higher education institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recognizing degree by public authorities and employers in their home countries and abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐
Applying for employment				
Applying for graduate and further education programs	☐	☐	☐	☐

Improving the visibility and autonomy of higher education
institutions
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
....

Defining learning outcomes
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
....

Improving the understanding of different grading systems
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
....

Increasing mobility
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
....

★ **4.** To what extent do the statements below represent principles that should guide the development of the Diploma Supplement?

Note: Use the key: 1= Not important; 2=Moderately important; 3 = Highly important; N/A= Not Applicable

	1	2	3	N/A
A flexible, non-prescriptive tool	☐	☐	☐	☐
A device that has national applications	☐	☐	☐	☐
A device that has international applications	☐	☐	☐	☐
A system to aid academic and professional qualifications recognition	☐	☐	☐	☐
An approach that specifically excludes any claims and value-judgements concerning recognition	☐	☐	☐	☐
A tool to focus on the outcomes of the learning that has taken place	☐	☐	☐	☐
An addition to the original credential, not a substitute of it	☐	☐	☐	☐
A concise tool that avoids information overload	☐	☐	☐	☐
A system that is done centrally and not devolved to different parts of academic institutions.				
A nation-wide database centrally managed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education that contains explanatory in formation and templates, regularly updated and accessible via a web platform	☐	☐	☐	☐

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....

A tool that is produced by higher education institutions according to standards agreed by the European Union Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in alignment with those of Ministry of Education and Higher Education .... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

A tool that should be issued by institutions to every graduate, automatically and free of charge .... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

A tool that should be provided in the native language of the country (Arabic) and the foreign language (English or French) .... ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

★ **5.** For which of the following types of education and training should the Diploma Supplement be provided? Select all that apply

    ☐ General education in school

    ☐ Initial technical education and training in a school or college

    ☐ Initial technical education and training in the workplace

    ☐ Continuing technical education and training in the workplace

    ☐ Undergraduate level in higher education

    ☐ Graduate level in higher education

    ☐ Doctoral level in higher educational

    ☐ Adult and lifelong learning

★ **6.** By which Lebanese authorities do you think a Diploma Supplement should be endorsed? Select all that apply

    ☐ Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon

    ☐ Ministry of Labor in Lebanon

    ☐ Higher education institutions in Lebanon

    ☐ Technical education institutions

    ☐ Professional syndicates / associations

    ☐ Employer representative bodies

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☐ Other

★ **7.** Please indicate to what extent the Diploma Supplement contributes to improving the following items listed below:

Note: Note: Use the key: 1= A small extent; 2= A moderate extent; 3 = A large extent; N/A= Not applicable

	1	2	3	N/A
Transparency	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality-related impact	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lifelong learning and mobility of learning and qualifications	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employability related impact	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching, learning and assessment practice	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promoting informed judgments about qualifications	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accommodating rapid changes in educational structures	☐	☐	☐	☐

★ **8.** Please indicate the level of priority you would attach to each of the following for the future development of the Diploma Supplement.

Note: Use the key: 1= Low priority; 2=Moderate priority; 3 = High priority; N/A= Not Applicable

	1	2	3	N/A
Communication Function – making the Diploma Supplement easier to understand	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality Assurance Function – ensuring that the Diploma Supplement is more reliable and valid	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Regulatory Function – using the Diploma Supplement to facilitate access to the market for qualifications in Lebanon and abroad
....

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Progression Function – using the Diploma Supplement to address obstacles within and between the education & training system
....

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Recognition Function – supporting the recognition of Lebanese qualifications abroad and the recognition of foreign qualifications in Lebanon
....

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Additional Feedback

9. We would also welcome any additional observations you may have, including in relation to successes or failures based on your engagement with the Diploma Supplement, any views on the effectiveness of how the Diploma Supplement has been developed, implemented and promoted, and any additional suggestions you may have concerning future policy priorities for the Diploma Supplement: