

## HEALTHCARE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN INNOVATION

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### Abstract

The aim of the three-year project (registration number CZ.1.07/2.2.00/15.0357) was to innovate three out of the existing five study programs of the Faculty of Health Studies, University of Pardubice (FHS UPa) and to enhance the professional competence of the academic staff, which would lead to the modernization of teaching methods and incorporation of new, scientific knowledge in the educational activities. The project responded to the societal demand for highly qualified healthcare personnel in the context, among other things, of an aging population. The project involved all four departments of the faculty: The Department of Nursing, The Department of Midwifery and Health and Social Work, The Department of Clinical Subspecialties, and the Department of Informatics, Management, and Radiology. In addition, the project had a partner institution – the Pardubice Regional Hospital, joint-stock company (JSC). The project consisted of four key activities.

The project started on April 1, 2011 and ended on March 31, 2014. It was part of the Operational program Education for Competiveness; Priority Axis 7.2 Tertiary Education, Research, and Development; Area of Intervention 7.2.2 Higher Education.

Keywords: Healthcare, innovation, hospital.

## 1 PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS: FOUR KEY ACTIVITIES

The project consisted of four key activities. Key Activity 1 was focused on innovation of educational activities for students enrolled in the bachelor and master study programs. Key Activity 2 was focused on improving the study environment in the partner hospital – the Pardubice Regional Hospital, joint-stock company (JSC). Key Activity 3 was focused on enhancing the professional competence of the academic staff. Key Activity 4 was focused on organizing workshops and conferences for the bachelor and master-level study programs.

### 1.1 Key Activity 1

Key Activity 1 was focused on innovation of educational activities for students enrolled in bachelor and master study programs. This was an extensive activity as it aimed to innovate 40 courses. It concerned the following study programs at the bachelor level: Nursing (General Nurse), Midwifery (Midwife), Specialization in Health Care (Paramedic) and the following study programs at the master level: Nursing (Nursing; Nursing in Selected Clinical Subspecialties). It consisted of a variety of activities: writing study texts, preparing electronic study materials, audio recordings and films, photos, and also experiential workshops that supplemented the practical part of the study. The amount allocated and spent was 3.50 million CZK.

#### 1.1.1 Challenges

Because this was such an extensive key activity, it was quite challenging to coordinate it. Some of the staff involved in the activity were only part-time employees, and regular meetings were not realistic. However, to overcome the challenge, the coordinator of this key activity was the head of one of the involved departments, who was very experienced not only from the professional, but also from the organizational and managerial point of view. In the final part of the project, another issue became relevant: maintaining the balance between the request by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

of the Czech Republic (MEYS) to hand over all the prepared materials on the one hand and the necessity to prevent certain products (such as tests) from being made public.

## 1.2 Key Activity 2

Key Activity 2 was focused on improving the study environment in the partner hospital – the Pardubice Regional Hospital, JSC. Specifically, a study centre was set up and was equipped with computers that were connected to the university network. This enabled the students to use the university intranet and all the relevant services, such as electronic databases accessible through the university library. In addition, audio-visual equipment and notebooks were purchased for use during classes held in the hospital. The amount allocated and spent was 0.53 million CZK.

### 1.2.1 Challenges

The focus of this key activity was on improvement in the partner institution, the hospital. Making the students aware of the innovation, specifically, making them aware of the existence of the study centre was a challenge as the students had been used to using the computers at the faculty. However, the students were reminded of this option, mainly through workshops, competition questions, and so on.

## 1.3 Key Activity 3

Key Activity 3 was focused on enhancing the professional competence of the academic staff. The staff attended various seminars and courses. After acquiring new knowledge, they shared it with their colleagues and also used it for teaching their students. The amount allocated and spent was 1.05 million CZK.

### 1.3.1 Challenges

To a certain extent, it was a challenge to attend all the courses mentioned in the project proposal as some of the courses organized by other institutions in the past (before the project was implemented) were no longer offered. However, in the end, the objectives were met.

## 1.4 Key Activity 4

Key Activity 4 was focused on organizing workshops and conferences. A total of 15 such activities were organized for students in all the above mentioned study programs. Through these workshops and conferences, the students learned more details about the project. In addition, they had an opportunity to meet with experts from other institutions. The amount allocated and spent was 0.45 million CZK.

### 1.4.1 Challenges

It was important to engage the students and to support active involvement. To achieve this, the administration team had to be flexible and creative. In the end, it was possible, for example, to have interesting dialogues most of the time, and to involve students as much as possible.

## 2 ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

The project was administered by the administration team. The team met on a regular basis. There were many organizational aspects to look after, for example, tenders.

### 2.1 The Administration Team

The team was headed by the project manager; financial aspects were handled by the financial manager. Three of the key activities were led by heads of departments. One was led by a non-academic staff. The project proposal included a professional guarantor (an academic) position; however, this position was not approved.

### 2.1.1 Challenges

One of the big challenges was the fact that funding was much lower than anticipated (the requested budget was 15.48 million CZK). The budget cut affected even the administration team. As mentioned, the position of the professional guarantor, who was supposed to be a link between the project activities and the faculty, was not approved. Funding received for the manager's position and the financial manager's position was cut by approximately 50%. It was very difficult to manage the project under such conditions. In total, the budget for the administration team was 0.58 million CZK as opposed to the planned 1.34 million CZK.

## 2.2 Tenders

Tenders had to be conducted using strict rules. The process was, in some cases, quite complicated.

### 2.2.1 Challenges

One of the challenges involved the fact that the MEYS declared some of the expenses related to a tender unfounded and although The Office for the Protection of Competition (OPC) supported our procedure stating that the tender process had been conducted correctly, the MEYS initially resisted to accept the OPC's conclusion. In the end, the expenses were accepted.

## 3 FINANCIAL ASPECTS

As mentioned, the requested budget was 15.48 million CZK. However, the approved budget was 8.60 million CZK. The biggest cut concerned salaries: as far as the salaries of the professionals working on the key activities were concerned, the final allocated amount was 3.47 million CZK (as opposed to the planned 7.16 million CZK). As for the administration team, the final allocated amount was 0.58 million CZK, as mentioned above (as opposed to the planned 1.34 million CZK).

Although the budget was cut so severely, the amount of the professional work to be done in the four key activities remained almost the same. This was not easy for the staff and required excellent organization of work and supporting the project in various ways. The final spent amount was 7.26 million CZK. It was possible to save some money, for example, through purchases that were cheaper than anticipated.