QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT

Academic Year: 2020-2021

Members of Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the Institution (PCAQSI)

- Dr. Andromahi Kufo, Acting Head of QA Commission

- Associate Professor Dr. Ines Nurja, representative of the Faculty of Economics and Business

- Associate professor Dr. Eda Gemi, representative of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences

- Hektor Ruci, LLM, representative of the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences

- Dr. Narasimha Rao Vajhala, representative of the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering

- Jonathan Pano Student representative

Quality Assurance coordinator: Rafaela Alushaj MSc.

Members of the PCAQSI, are governed by the following powers and duties:

- Monitor the academic programs, academic units, academic support units, and research centers and Institutes to be reviewed using the Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process.
- Facilitate the review process to ensure it is proceeding according to the Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process. This includes orienting and advising review personnel, and monitoring and managing the progress of reviews.
- Receive and evaluate all documents produced for review processes, returning documents when revision is required and approving documents when they are complete.
- Disseminate the results of quality assurance reviews when they are completed and approved.
- Report annually to Senate and board of directors about standards implementations and quality assurance based on processes, reviews etc., undertaken and in progress dealing with and any issues arising from the review process.

Other regular duties were as follows:

• to provide quality assurance mechanisms acceptable to Senate and appropriate for internal and external audit purposes;

• to ensure that academic program, services and administration are of appropriate standard;

• to ascertain the validity of the program and services on offer;

• to ensure optimal use of available resources.

Quality Support Unit/office

The main function of the **Quality Support Unit/office** is to support the expansion and enhancement of the quality culture of and at UNYT. It does so by assisting in the development of suitable practices in the university's teaching, administration, research and advocacy endeavours. These practices may be campus-wide or otherwise specific to the particular units such as Faculties, Centres, student services, administration, student bodies, etc. It's meant be the centre of information and statistics of QAC and a coordinating and monitoring quality assurance action undertaken at all levels and units of UNYT. The staff of the Quality Support Unit is professional and dedicated to the process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF LEADING ISSUES OF THE YEAR

Enhancing the quality culture at UNYT

The heading quote of QA work for this academic year has been: **"Introducing and establishing the foundations of the quality culture at UNYT"**

Due to pandemic of Covid-19, the academic year 2020-2021 was organized remotely and the lectures were held online by using ZOOM platform. However, due to the correct and prudent support of the responsible instances of the university, the process went smooth and normal. The e-lectures courses and e-exam were delivered in the most prominent and appropriate way through e-Learning platforms: Zoom, and Turnitin.

Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standard (**PCAQSI**) and the Quality Assurance Coordinator during the academic year 2020-2021**,** were in charge of successfully coordinating and supervising the integrated Master of Science in "LAW" program accreditation processes. This was a fully involving process of all members and this task was achieved timely and in accordance to the requirements.

More specifically:

- instructing the group members on the procedures of the process of program accreditations and evidence collection,
- checking the self-evaluation report,
- uploading the documents in AMS system,
- participating in the meetings with the external experts of the accreditation

Among others the coordinator has been working closely with ASCAL by submitting to the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, (ASCAL) all the documentations for the reaccreditation of the integrated program Masters of Science in "Law" program offered by UNYT.

Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards (PCAQSI) at UNYT has managed and monitored the system of quality assurance (QAS) established to reinforce and contribute to the national and international **culture of quality**.

The PCAQSI, during the pandemic year 2020-2021 has monitored and demonstrated that the system of QA and its procedures and services are used to ensure that the programs and services offered by UNYT, are of an acceptable quality, appropriate academic standards and relevant to the needs of students and the society.

The **PCAQSI** is assisted in its task by all UNYT's units. UNYT has based its quality assurance procedures on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). As from 2014, the UNYT has started a process of periodic program and process review related to academia, services and administration as ongoing processes.

All departments and other units within the University are required to undertake periodic work review, processes review and program review actions, which essentially involve an evaluation of the complete portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programs on offer, services related at all levels, supporting services and infrastructure. Such a review generally involves internal and external stakeholders. This process of periodic review, outcomes of which are discussed, turns into action for improvement. It is an important aspect of the University's QAS and its respective tools means and

procedures, and serves to ensure that programs and services are of an acceptable quality, appropriate academic standard and relevant to the needs of students and society.

The participation of the UNYT to the Erasmus + project: QAinAL "Strategic Support for Strengthening Quality Assurance Structures in Private Higher Education Institutions in Albania" has assisted UNYT and the rest, to improve and support quality assurance processes and mechanisms, to increase effectiveness of the academic and executive management of teaching and learning in private higher education institutions in Albania. It has supported greatly the path to quality culture.

This project was focused on creating and supporting processes for quality assurance and mechanisms for ensuring effective management and improving teaching and learning in private higher education institutions in Albania. Engagement in this project and training has served the institution and all its stakeholders in improving quality assurance practices

UNYT has started successfully to build up the quality culture as per international and national strategy and its own experience.

The QAS established and developed year to year at UNYT, has made the stakeholders active part of quality culture enhancement, insured and monitored by internal and external quality control.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AT UNYT

Enhancing the quality culture at UNYT

As part of QAS implemented at UNYT, there are tools and procedures of internal quality monitoring and assurance:

- Student Evaluation
- Grade transparency Report
- Peer evaluation
- Individual Assessment Performance Form
- Departmental Annual Report
- Programme Monitoring Report
- Annual objectives of departments and annual monitoring –action plans reports match.
- Other tools (student services monitoring reports- admission, registry, career and alumni, library, student governance)

Student Evaluation

In the framework of internal quality assurance, the UNYT periodically (on semester and annual basis) carries out the evaluation of the academic staff by their students. The evaluation of the student is score based and verbal as well. This process is coordinated by the Rectors' Assistant and Quality Assurance Coordinator and is overseen by the Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the Institution (PCAQSI) while final assessment results are examined on department level and are part of the departmental performance analysis and quality assurance actions.

Student evaluation process, especially for Master students, was very difficult to be implemented during the online teaching.

Statistics about student evaluations action performed during the academic year 2020-2021 are presented in **the appendix 1.**

Grade Transparency

Furthermore, in the framework of internal quality assurance, Department Chairs assign to all members courses to monitor how the grading process has been done by all the academic staff. The process is done through the selection of random samples of final exams submitted already to the registry office, to be checked. Each exam sample is checked how the syllabus determined weights of evaluation process are respected, how exam sample-syllabus information - registry grades are matched.   The results, findings and the respective recommendations are presented in the form called "grade fairness transparency, comparability and auditability report" This process is done periodically, once per semester, during the first 4 weeks of a following semester. The Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the Institution (PCAQSI) checks all the reports and the steps undertaken to work on issued raised by the process and that require action.

Courses Reviewed during the academic year 2020-2021 are presented in **the appendix 2.**

Peer evaluation

The Peer Review is a mechanism for evaluating all the professors. Due to the pandemic Covid-19 restriction and the online delivering of classes no peer evaluations were performed this academic year. Taking into the consideration the gap created due to pandemic situation and online learning, it should continue to be done regularly for the new professors, and rarely for seniors. This process should continue even if the teaching will be online

Individual Assessment Performance Form:

The aim of this document is to record individual performance and measure through the indicators and assess as well. Indicators refer to three areas of UNYT activity to be assessed, i.e. Teaching, Research and Services to students and community, not ignoring self-development activities attended.

All the academic staff have discussed this document with their immediate supervisors (programme director, head of department or lead researcher), then it is submitted to the Department Chair. For the purpose of a full assessment, faculty in managerial position should also get the feedback of their faculty-supervisees. This document it is filled up at the end of the academic year by all academic staff.

It includes the assessment of five sections

- A. Books and Paper Publications
- B. International and National Conferences
- C. Teaching Load Details
- D. The administrative duties at UNYT
- E. Any other activity for UNYT

Departmental Annual Report:

Each department at the end of the academic year drafts and submits the Annual Report which consists of**:**

- Executive summary of key issues arising during the year
- Response to action points in last year's report
- Department chair's critical overview of the programmes on offer by the department
- External examiner(s) reports (if any
- External quality assurance inspection activity
- Academic standards
- Student feedback
- Learning enhancement
- Curriculum development
- Assessment of departmental faculty
- Planning of next academic year's peer evaluations:
- Action plan for next year

Annual objectives of departments and annual monitoring –action plans report match.

At the beginning of the academic year each of the head of the Department should submit annual objective which consists of**:**
Objective and Action Plan in:
- Teaching and Development
- Services
- Research

Internal quality control as an agregated system

UNYT is constantly trying to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In pursuit of continuous quality enhancement, study programs are subject to multi-faceted quality monitoring controls. Instructors, for example, are subject to multiple forms of evaluation. These consist in student evaluations on a course-per-course basis, peer evaluations, an individual faculty performance evaluation, as well as annual evaluation presented through the respective reports about teaching, services and other tasks related QAS and its tools, means and procedures implemented. Standard related reports are compiled by each Department at the individual and department level, at the end of the academic year. To further ensure the quality of teaching and learning reports are about, are prepared by the Head of the Department and by the Research Center's Director in regards to quality of research output

> UNYT engages a number of supervisory structures, as well as multiple internal and external evaluation mechanisms and structures. Further assurance through reports and other informing tools is gotten by study program directors, Faculty deans and the Rectorate. Discussions, suggestions, decisions, action taken in regard to further improvement of human resources and structures as well on ongoing bases, the pyramid of quality -checks, monitors, actions taken, output measured and compared, reaches the top with a summarized informing annual report, presented at the Senate for approval at least once per year.

UNYT's communication channels make available to all stakeholders its annual set of tools means and reports with detailed info through the apex, giving them the general picture and the dynamics of a year of activities related to all areas. The picture of the activities performed and the quality of their performance is given through the QAS, the findings, fulfillment of the annual objectives and decision for improving further the performance based on QA standards are taken for the following academic year. All academic structures report their needs, in the institutional annual report and action start to be taken. The chain of action flows as follow: The annual monitoring report of the Department identifies a need for additional staff members, the Faculty Search Committee ensures that the need is acknowledged in the institutional annual report; when the budgets are made, the need for staff turned into an annual objective becomes part of it as a separate item.

Responsibilities in monitoring and quality management, to the department level

As stated at in the Statute of the university, the responsibilities of the Internal Quality Control for the MSc Program are to enhance and develop the quality system in compliance with the mission and

national requirements of the institution. The Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards and the Quality Assurance Coordinator, in collaboration with the Deans of Faculties, Heads of Department covering the Program are in charge of quality assurance matters and continuous teaching improvement.

Every year, the Head of the Department collects the Program Director's Reports, self-assessment forms, which include scientific research, application for internal/external funds, and teaching load as well as services to the institution in order to prepare the Annual Departmental Report.

Self assessments of the programs dissimination

The Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards makes sure that all students are informed via email or during Open Discussion Days about action taken by UNYT respective unit, regarding their feedback addressing issues about the programs and services and academic staff. Quality improvement policies, are drafted on the basis of periodic self-assessment

All Quality Assurance procedures are reviewed on regular bases and all the performance results with the relevant proposals are submitted to the Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the Institution. If Senate decision needed for further actions, new policies and practises there is one more step to finish the peocess of quality improvment.

Quality Assuring Capacity strengthening

Participation of UNYT as a partner in the Erasmus + project: QainAL "Strategic Support for Strengthening Quality Assurance Structures in Private Higher Education Institutions in Albania",was an upgrade in creating a quality culture and improving processes of quality assurance, enriching tools and mechanisms that ensure and improve effective management of teaching, learning and serving. Engagement in this project as taker and giver of know how, expertise and experience, introduced the staff to different level of trainings and practices regardin QAS and quality culture, upgrading the understandingabout improvment of quality assurance practices and quality culture awarness.

Institution uses evaluation methodologies, measuring and evaluation instruments for the progress of study programs.

In pursuit of continuous quality enhancement, UNYT uses a set of evalutation methodologies measuring and evalutation instruments incorporated in QAS. As above mentioned, can be counted as such: student evaluations on a course-per-course basis, peer evaluations - one to one individual faculty performance evaluation, as well as annual evaluattion about teaching, learning and the related quality standards, at Department level at the end of the academic year,

summarised in respective annual reports.

In order to perform in depth assessment, UNYT uses various the indirect instruments, that involve students, graduates, alumni, academic and administrative staff.

The students' evaluations forms are processed electronically and the output in scores as well as verbal throgh comments are made available to the respective instructors after the course has been completely done. The Head of the Department as well as the respective Dean are informed in details about the results of the process in order to take action and propose improvements, when needed.

The peer-evaluation proces embodied in its form is signed by the instructor and the evaluator, with comments and proposals from both parties. The form is submitted to the Head of the Department and discussed with him/her and if action needed, further proceded.

The Institutional Annual Report in its final stage, is approved by the Senate, and then it is made public for all the stakeholders. Based on it, the Performance Document is compiled, and it is open to all staff and students, furthermore it is part of the package being presented to the new applicants

Institution uses formal mechanisms for periodic reviewing, approving and supervision of study programs;

As prescribed above, some of the formal mechanisms for periodic reviewing, approving and supervision of study programs; are the revision of the Syllabus by the head of the Departments and the Deans per semester, and based on the developments of the institution, legal requirements and the market needs there is a periodic revision of the curricula which is finalized by the Senate.

Institution aims to continually raise awareness of its staff and students, who pursue offered study programs, about the quality importance and quality assurance

Institution publishes regularly unbiased, objective, qualitative and quantitative information for internal evaluation.

The study programmes are available on the institutional Website(https://unyt.edu.al/index.php/bachelor-programs/, https://unyt.edu.al/index.php/master-programs/) and are also published in the Student Handbook. The handbooks are available and delivered to students as hard copies as well and are presented to during induction seminars. Summarised versions are available at UNYT's premises, at reception desk. Course syllabi are published at UNYT's website (e.g. http://unyt.edu.al/courses/u-s-history-ii/), but they are also handed over to students in hard copy or electronically at their first course session on the first week of their classes; published on the websites as well. Last but not least, all syllabi a part of being submitted at the respective departments, are deposited at the Rectorate as well (also keeping archives on account of the Deans' Offices) for any future reference.

Student admission criteria are clearly defined and promptly communicated to the prospective students. These criteria are part of promotional materials. They are declared at the Ministry of Education and the relevant agencies dealing with quality issues and published at UNYT's website [http://unyt.edu.al/admissions/undergraduate/application-process/] and at the U-Albania portal.

UNYT has developed its newly improved policies and strategies under the guidance of improved QAS and presented according to the new learnings about quality, documents as such:

- Faculti Regulations
- Faculty Rules and Regulations
- Department Rules and Regulations,
- The program Rules and Regulations

- Revision of Research Pillars with the focus of involving the master students in the research groups,
- Teaching Learning and Assesment Strategy (2020-2025), Maximising Achivement: Excellence in teaching and embracing the future era of education.

Student engagement in quality assurance

Student engagement in quality assurance procedures is an integral aspect of the quality culture of the University. There are many ways how students are actively involved in enhancing the quality of processes and outcomes:

- Student feedback to courses
- Complaint's procedure
- Student Advisory Services / Counselling Services
- Other student organizations (Clubs, charity association, sports team etc)
- Students are represented in all decision making and monitoring bodies such as senate, Committees etc.

UNYT structures to assure the quality as decision makers

UNYT uses its set of appropriate instruments for quality assurance, assisted by its structures named as follow:

- Senate as highest academic decision-making body
- Faculty Councils
- Departments
- Ethics Committee
- Petition Committee;
- Student Union:

Student feedback is provided in various forms. For instance, students express their opinions, comments, and concerns through the Student Union, the Dean of Student's office, student evaluations process, academic advising, professor's office hours, petitions, membership in all structures of UNYT and direct access to department chair, dean and deputy rector's office. Since spring, 2013 semester, students are active part of the Academic Council where voice up their concerns, suggestion through their representatives as member of the body and as part of decision making with their vote. The membership in all the structures of management at all levels enables them to raise up issues of importance or concern of their student body. In addition, their feedback about teaching, learning and lecturers is provided through the evaluation process where they express themselves filling out respective course forms, used as well as a valuable instrument in upgrading and developing the curricula. Student suggestions in terms of teaching methods, teaching materials, grading schemes, etc., have been high importance, and it has been an encouraging process to them to speak up about all UNYT life issues and witness their sayings to be taken into consideration by UNYT decision makers, when deemed reasonable and quality enhancing.

The student participation in all the decision-making levels has become a way of life at UNYT. Students have their own representatives all over (in the Senate, Faculty Councils, the Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the institution, Ethic Committee, etc. The Student Union and their representatives make the decision-making process more democratic and collegial representing them at all levels and all issues related to them and UNYT as a whole.

Student advising process is another way of developing a bond and a dip relationship between academics and students, face to face on a permanent base. It enhances quality decisions on student side regarding further studies and career wise. It is a check and balances process and an UNYT quality assurance instrument.

Institution establishes a policy and follows certain procedures for quality assurance and standards of their programs; Documents produced to support the process are:

- Strategic Plan
- QA Manual
- Statute of UNYT
- Annual objective
- Action Plan of QA

UNYT has the Statute, STRATEGIC PLAN of UNYT, and Quality Assurance Manual as the basis of its general policy to assure that the quality of each study program in line of the required standards with the Albanian Legal Framework. The QA Manual provides all the procedures and the information/templates of the evaluation form applied in the institutional level such as; Grading Fairness, Transparency, Comparability and Auditability Report, and Self-Assessment Peer Reviews and Self-Assessment Report. The procedure of this process is supervised by the Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the institution.

PCAQSI has already standardise the documents used by QAS such as:

- QA Manual, 2019
- Internal Action Plan
- Syllabus (new format, appendix 3)
- Student Evaluation
- Grade transparency Report
- Peer evaluation
- Individual Assessment Performance Form, (new format, appendix 4)
- Departmental Annual Report
- Research Output
- Programme Monitoring Report

Syllabi as well are improved based on QA controls done permanently by the departments.

Training is provided by older academics to the young ones.

EXTERNAL QUALITY CHECK AT UNYT

The institutional reaccreditation process was completed in 2020 and the University of New York, Tirana was re-accredited with maximum years (six years) by the Albanian Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASAL) by the decision of the Accreditation Board no. 61, date 18.12.2020.

Based on the recommendations left by the Accreditation Board, the **PCAQSI** drafted an Action Plan for the Implementation of the recommendations as below:

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ACTION PLAN
FOR
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACCREDITATION BOARD ASCAL

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Recommendations	Action Steps	Individual/Department Responsible	Date to Begin/ Date Due	Comments
1. Institucioni, të përfshijë më shumë studentë, në varësi të ciklit të studimit, në kërkim shkencor, projekte kërkimore dhe programet e shkëmbimit. **The institution, to include more students, depending on the study cycle, in research, research projects and exchange programs.**	To include more students, in research, research projects and exchange programs through: -the research components in courses, -departmental groups of research, - student's conferences - academic seminars - Erasmus + exchange programs.	- Head of each Department - International Relations Office - Rectorate	- To be included in the annual objectives of each Department and IR Office 2021-2022/ - within July, 2022	- October 2021, checking the annual objectives of each Department and IR Office - July 2022, checking the Annual Departmental Monitoring Report
2. Institucioni, të fuqizojë më tej rrjetin alumni dhe të rrisë përfshirjen e tij në sigurimin e brendeshëm të cilësisë. **Institution, to further strengthen the alumni network and increase its involvement in internal quality assurance.**	To further strengthen the alumni network and increase its involvement in internal quality assurance through - updating the database, - questionnaires, - feedback invitations, - guest lectures, forums, - membership in the committees.	- Alumni Center and Dean of Students - Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the Institution (PCAQSI)	- During the academic year 2021-2022/ - within July, 2022	- July 2022, checking the Annual Monitoring Report
3. Institucioni, të fuqizojë më tej rrjetin alumni dhe të rrisë përfshirjen e tij në sigurimin e brendeshëm të cilësisë. **Institution, to further strengthen the alumni network and increase its involvement in internal quality assurance.**	To further strengthen the alumni network and increase its involvement in internal quality assurance through - updating the database, - questionnaires, - feedback invitations, - guest lectures, forums, membership in the committees.	- Alumni Center and Dean of Students - Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards of the Institution (PCAQSI)	- During the academic year 2021-2022/ - within July, 2022	- July 2022, checking the Annual Monitoring Report

The Permanent Commission for the Assurance of Quality Standards (PCAQS) in their meetings discussed the implementation of the ACTION Plan as well as monitoring all the recommendations left by the Accreditation Board, from the last accreditation on institutional level and all the study programs.

Accreditation process that will take place during this academic year 2021-2022

1. Master of Science in Psychology with profiles "Clinical Psychology", "School Psychology", "Legal Psychology" (we applied on 30th May 2021)

2. Master of Science in "International Commercial Law" (we applied on 30th of May 2021)

3. Master of Science in "International and Commercial Law" (with condition)

4. For all the reorganized and new programs, we have to apply within 31, May 2022.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR THE ASSURANCE OF QUALITY STANDARDS :

UNYT has Quality Assurance mechanisms at various levels that work well to reach the purpose. The best level is the departmental level, wherer programs, procedures and quality of them are checked through the adequade processes presented by repective reports and other documents, submitted at the final stage to the the department chairs. (evaluation of every course from the students, peer evaluation, grade transparency, annual objectives, annual reports and action plans, selfassesment reports etc).

The final precess at department level is crowned with departmen annual report, research evaluation report etc, where the Unit is evaluated as a whole and and has adjusted practices, tools and process according to the outcomes of the QAS.

It goes further to the faculty and University level where the scope goes larger and includes administrative staff, procedures and other supporting units.

The pre-enrolment process and personalized support for students, including those with specific learning needs, it is better established (compare to other Universities), which facilitates their entry to the University.

UNYT has ensure the systematic involvement of students as partners in program approval and review, and the enhancement of the student experience, in quality culture enhancing process.

In order to secure academic standards, degree-awarding bodies have established transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

The University oversees the standards and quality of its education provision through its committee structures as described above.

To be further taken into considerationand improved:

More actions to be taken regarding suggestions coming out from student evaluation process, to garanttee transparency and confidenciality, while working on improving the outputs of the process. PCAQSI has already recommended to the rectorate to take action. The best is this evaluation to be done on line.

- More training about QA awareness to be done with youngster staff and students.
- Channels of communications among different levels of management to be opened and added.
- The Quality Support Unit/office should have more staff.
- To guarantee more transparency, to communicate openly more info on line need to be provided about what is going on at UNYT not only about UNYT activities related but about documents and reports related to external evaluations, annual reports etc.
- An external evaluator has to be engaged to perform this duty and to ensure that the quality culture has become part of UNYT.

Appendixes

1. **Student Evaluation for Bachelor Program:**
   - Performance report Fall 2020/ Spring 2021
   - Comments Fall 2020/Spring 2021

Performance report Fall 2020.pdf   Comments Fall 2020.doc   Comments Spring 2021.doc   Performance report -Spring 2021.pdf

2. **Grade Transparency**

QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT ON GRADING   2020_2021_QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT   Grade transparancy report Spring 2021_EC   QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT ON GRADING   2.Quality Assurance Report on Grading Tr

3. **Syllabus, new template**

Course Syllabus Empty Template FINAL   Course Syllabus Empty Template FINAL

4. **Individual Assessment Performance**

Individual Performance Assessm

➤ **Date when the External Evaluation Groups visited UNYT**:

- Integrated program Master of Science in Law (PIND): **on 04 June, 2021**