

“Accelerating Western Balkans University Modernisation by Introducing Virtual Technologies”

VTech@WBUni

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Defining the regulation and the mission and vision of Virtual Technology Hub

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VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGIES (VTECH) HUB/LAB RULES AND REGULATIONS

All Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from Albania and Kosovo, which are part of the consortium of VTech@WBUni Erasmus+ project, will establish their own VTech HUB/Labs at their premises. The functional aspects of the HUB will be discussed with EU partners. The legal framework of the VTech HUB/Lab will be adjusted according to the needs of the strategy and the legal specifications of each WB HEI.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Virtual Technologies HUB (VTech HUB) is a dedicated space for virtual technologies experts, researchers, and new eager learners. This unit will be the center of Innovation, Education & Research, and Business opportunities within the university and will be the link to the community, industry, and businesses.

Virtual Technologies HUB is a space designed to support education, research, innovation, and business opportunities related to Virtual Technologies (Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR)) area. Aiming to create a knowledge-based community among different stakeholders, the HUB will support advancements in the field and their applications in the field of education and wider. The HUB will include different combinations of various sectors: local, national, and international partners and will be open for cooperation with interested non-governmental organizations, and scientific and educational institutions.

The main objectives of the HUB will be:

- **To support students and learning opportunities in the VTech field:** The HUB will have its Virtual Technologies laboratory/space for students and academic staff to help both learning/teaching processes and research. Students, as defined on their syllabuses and curricula, will also have the right to practice and use the equipment of the laboratory when needed.
- **A research center:** The HUB will serve as a research center in the field of virtual technologies by allowing researchers to experiment, test, and generate their ideas. Academic staff working on the implementation of virtual technologies (AR/VR) or related fields of expertise will have the right to use the laboratory equipment and HUB services for testing, experimenting, and other research purposes.

- The HUB will be a **safe workspace** for anyone that has innovative ideas and the desire to work but does not have the necessary equipment, space, and possibilities to realize them. This **innovation space** will support and aims to enhance innovative initiatives and entrepreneurship in the area of virtual technologies. It will **support** interested users to try, realize and explore new ideas for entrepreneurship initiatives. Among specific competencies the HUB aims to possess to support innovation and entrepreneurial activities will be *idea generation, incubation, and idea acceleration*.
- VTech HUB will serve as a **platform to strengthen communication between the university, business, and community**. It will improve industry-university and university-community collaboration through joint activities, discussions, research, and implementation of solutions in the community and accordance with the state and university's innovation and development strategy.

The aim, objectives, and priorities should be listed under the strategy of the university and vision and should be clearly defined and easily measured. Some of the indicators are listed as follows:

- Attract the best academics and students
- High-quality education
- Stronger education-research linkage
- Stronger education-industry linkage
- Stronger education-research-industry-government linkage
- Encouraging interdisciplinary research while maintaining strong disciplines
- Maintain healthy and mutually beneficial interchanges with other universities, the government, corporate sectors, and society at large.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF VTECH HUB/LAB

The HUB will serve as a special unit within the university and will have its legal and ethical framework.

The HUB will help to promote a culture of cooperation and innovation. Everyone has to respect the legal and ethical regulations and at the same time, dynamics and flexible aspects not in conflict with the HUB principles are allowed.

The organizational structure of the HUB will be characterized by organizational aspects of both hierarchical and network structures. This hybrid structure of the HUB will allow more flexibility in distributing and assigning roles and responsibilities. Different divisions (project teams) might have different needs and independent approaches to leadership.

Central management and coordination are needed for the general management of the HUB. This type of organizational structure seems to be the most suitable. The hierarchical structure is made by a group of people each assigned a management-related role.

More specifically, the HUB will have a multidisciplinary steering team composed of:

- **Main Director** – responsible for managing the team, coordinating and monitoring the activities, developing strategy, and monitoring its implementation.
- **Organization and Public Relations (PR) manager** - responsible for coordination, network establishment, promotions, and setting up a well-known name of the HUB.
- **Academic Representative** - One person from the academic community, responsible for the academic strategy of the HUB and its linkage with the university.

The steering team will be in charge of facilitating, managing, coordinating, and leading decision-making processes and strategic visions of the HUB. They do not have full control of the development of the activities within the HUB. Some parts of the leading and controlling aspects will be delegated to the nodes. The nodes are project teams leading the project's activities. They will be in charge of the successful implementation of the tasks and at the same time in strong collaboration with the steering team, which will bring forward the vision of the HUB and the work done within the projects. The project manager of the node teams retains the final authority for the implementation of the project's activities. Formality is needed to document the process.

Project teams: The project team is a team responsible for the successful implementation of a specific project. They will be organized according to their research field or might be a multidisciplinary team in case of not scientific or research projects.

*This excludes the lessee project teams renting/using the equipment and the space of the HUB. In that case, the steering team has no right to intervene in the project's activities.

FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATORY FRAMEWORK (A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE)

This section is not valid, until a second revision from the decision-makers

1. The HUB will be regulated under the HEI and state financial regulations.
2. The university will support financially the main coordinator of the HUB and the Organization and PR manager for the first three years of the HUB. After these three years, the HUB itself should be responsible for the future payment of its employees.
3. The students using the HUB/LAB for teaching and education purposes will not pay a fee.
4. The teachers using the HUB/LAB for teaching and education purposes according to the university contract, will not pay a fee.

SOME REGULATIONS REGARDING ETHICAL ASPECTS

By joining VTech HUB/LAB, everyone agrees to follow certain rules and regulations. If one does not follow the Rules, it affects all individual members and VTech HUB generally, and therefore as a condition of membership, everyone agrees to abide by these Rules and Regulations.

1. The facilities of the VTech HUB will be available to current tenants, the university community, and the greater community.
2. Everyone that desires to use the space and the equipment of the HUB shall be responsible for describing the use and nature of events on the premises and shall be required to obtain written permission from the manager for all activities that take place.
3. For every scientific result, or innovative idea produced by the team or the individual using the equipment of HUB/LAB, VTech HUB will make no claims for the idea or the scientific results (patent or copyright).
4. Everyone will be morally and legally responsible if damaging on purpose the equipment according to the prior agreement done with the HUB/LAB.
5. All facilities must be returned to the condition in which they were found by the time specified in the agreement.

Laboratory rules:

- Everyone must sign in for every use.
- No food or drink is allowed in the laboratory.
- Smoking is not allowed inside the HUB/lab space.

COMMUNICATION RULES

- Documentation is a very important part of the managing process of the HUB.
- Every official communication must be written in hard copy and/or soft copy.
- Every meeting of the leading team must be documented.
- In the case of VTech HUB financing a project, the team will be responsible for documenting their activities, academic, and scientific through periodic reports. Periodic reporting will be done.
- There will be written formats for using the space or the equipment of the VTech HUB/LAB.

Complaints

Defamatory or disparaging comments about VTech HUB or other members are not ethically accepted. If you have any complaints or need to let us know about an issue or problem let VTech HUB managers or staff know about it. If we do not know about it, we cannot fix it, therefore give VTech HUB a chance to fix whatever issue you may have or at least talk about it.

Community

Believe in yourself, believe in others, and especially believe in the collaborative power of the Virtual Technologies Hub community. Network, Collaborate. Work hard. Have fun. Improve Virtual Technologies Hub for all. Give input to make VTech HUB a better workplace.

SUSTAINABILITY OF VTECH HUB/LAB

Fundamental issues for sustainability are:

- Academic excellence
- Leadership
- Serious financial sustainability issues.

VTech HUB will be and have:

- A strategic location
- Institutional autonomy
- A culture of “Education meets industry”
- A world-class approach and functional strategy
- A gateway for HEIs, students to enter the virtual technologies industry

A Sustainable HUB has:

- Existence of autonomous activities
- Academic system that holds ethics, professionalism, and quality as its core values
- Conductive environment that welcomes national and international top academics, experts, quality students, and business representatives.
- Large funds to support research and academic activities
- A diversified portfolio of funding options for long sustainability
- Opportunities for internship and employment.
- A supportive infrastructure for national and international networking and collaboration spirit.
- Active innovation and commercialization
- Vibrant industry and community
- Excellent academic and entrepreneurial leadership