Curriculum modernization : a strategy and action plan

Bekerman, M, Foley, M, Popova, S and Valkanova, V

Title	Curriculum modernization : a strategy and action plan
Authors	Bekerman, M, Foley, M, Popova, S and Valkanova, V
Publisher	arrow@dit
Type	Monograph
USIR URL	This version is available at: http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/36825/
Published Date	2010

BBC World Service Trust

Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism, Bulgaria

EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG

<u>Curriculum Modernisation:</u>

<u>A Strategy and Action Plan</u>

Prepared by:

Michael Foley, International Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

Marek Bekerman, International Non-Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

Vesselina Valkanova, Local Non-Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

Snezhana Popova, Local Non-Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

"By the end of the Project, the implementation team will have produced a range of viable proposals for further improving the new curriculum at Sofia University's Journalism Faculty. These proposals will be based on the findings of a specially designed Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, and on the input of experienced experts. Focusing largely on optional subjects, MA programmes and teaching methodologies, the action plan will be formally adopted by the Working Group on Curriculum Modernisation and implemented beyond the project end date."

Excerpt from the Consortium's "Project Information" Document, January 2004.

Table of Contents

Curriculum Modernisation: Strategy and Action Plan　　　　　**Page - 4 -**

Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism Bulgaria
EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG: November 2005

1.0   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The end of the Curriculum Modernisation component of this project must be seen as a beginning for the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications at Sofia University. This **Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan** envisages a Faculty development that will go beyond a **five-year period** of sustained hard work and planning by the Faculty.

Implementing modernised curriculum is by its nature a long-term project: simply because of the university cycle of four or five years. In order to ensure change takes place and is planned it is recommended that a **post project follow up implementation team** be established. It is also observed that external support in terms of expert contribution will be necessary to ensure the Action Plan can be implemented.

The Action Plan recommends a move to a **50/50 split between theoretical and practice** modules. However, the state of the technology at the Faculty means it will be difficult to deliver some important modules that depend on computers, recorders, cameras and specialist software. The Project had no provision for supplying equipment, but without a serious up-grade of equipment it is hard to envisage a modern curriculum being in place or delivered.

Some of the key points envisaged in this document are:

- A Curriculum Review Committee, which will spearhead the modernisation process and see through its successful implementation.

- The Faculty to embrace the provisions of the Bologna Agreement which means culling outdated modules. It will mean identifying core elements of the new curriculum.

- Staff training needs to be identified and staff to be retrained in order to deliver a modern curriculum.

- Within three years of this Action Plan being presented, continuous assessment to be introduced, along with a student portfolio system of assessment and a fully assessed work placement scheme.

- Foreign languages to be introduced as an integral part of the degree programme.

- A student newspaper or magazine to be launched and the student radio station to be revamped.

- Plans to be drawn up to address the shortage of equipment along with schemes to improve links with the industry.

- The Faculty to develop certain specialist areas of research in order to attract foreign students and researchers.

- Within three years, the undergraduate programme to be overhauled

- A student newsroom to be established and used actively as a teaching space.

- A faculty strategy and business plan to be developed within a three year period.

2.0   INTRODUCTION

"Following the London seminar, we have to adequately answer the question: What is it that we want to produce: journalists or university graduates?"
(Curriculum Scholarship Initiative Participant)

The above quotation from a report of one of the recipients of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI) in a way encapsulates the debates that have been taking place since journalism schools were first established in 19th century America. Should journalism be taught in the university at all?   Is journalism a craft skill rather than something based on a body of knowledge?

The answer to all these questions is probably yes. Journalism should be taught in a university to ensure it is taught as a practice that is about society and democracy rather than simply the servant of one individual media conglomerate or owner; and yes, journalism is a skill, or practice, but one that engages with how society works, with social issues and public life.

Having said that, deciding what and how to teach journalists is not quite so simple; the journalism teacher is left with questions about how much theory and how much practice, and then - what practice and what theory.

These are the issues that have been that have been part of the debate that has been taking place – not only within the framework of this Project – at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University for the past two years. The FJMC is not unique. A few years ago the president of Columbia University in New York, home of the prestigious Columbia School of Journalism, announced he was suspending the process of appointing a new dean of the School of Journalism while Columbia re-evaluated the role of the school. He said: "There is a role at the university for skills training, but it should not be the dominant position." His action provoked a debate among journalism teachers, journalists and graduates who were split as to whether they agreed or not; some supported the president's demand for a rethink; others denied Columbia was a 'trade school'; some defended the emphasis on skills training; while others maintained that what is considered training in 'mere' skills is in fact a rigorous intellectual training.

The process in Sofia has perhaps been more difficult than that at Columbia, or any other school in the US or Western Europe, where similar debates periodically take place.   Sofia University's Journalism Faculty is moving from a different journalism teaching tradition and going through the pain of embracing a tradition that grew up in a different place, a tradition that gives greater value to practice and craft skills. It also has to do it at a speed no-one in western Europe was ever forced to do.

The past two years has been one of tensions, often creative; of suspicion; as well as a partnership and a learning experience for all of us involved.

This Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan was produced by a team, and that team includes many members of the Faculty. Those who took part in the two Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives will find echoes of the ideas contained in their own reports, in this action plan. They will also find the comments and discussions that took place at the final review and evaluation meeting, as well as results from the survey, included.

Others also contributed. Local experts gave their views and ideas, and ideas also came in more informal settings, in London, Dublin and in Sofia. The other part of the team were the international experts who came to Sofia at different times during the life of the project, who visited the Faculty and talked to members. They also contributed ideas, based on their own experience in teaching journalism, which are included in this Action Plan.

As the International Key Expert charged with the Curriculum Modernisation module of the Project I have to acknowledge and thank a number of people. The team leader, Hans Staiger, for his immense management skills, who has steered this Project through to completion with authority and above all diplomacy. If he ever lost his temper, he did so in private. He was also great company for lonely International Key Experts. As was the Technical Assistant to the project, Elisaveta Alexandrova, who not only gave her linguistic skills, but who also acted as a cultural bridge for those of us whose knowledge of Bulgaria was rudimentary. She is also a great guide to Sofia.

The local experts: Dr Lilia Raycheva; Dr Julia Stefanova; Prof Milko Petrov; Dr Vesselina Valkanova, and Dr Snezhana Popova. The international experts: David Quin, of the Dublin Institute of Technology, who gave way and above the time allotted to his part of the project as those from Sofia who recall drives in the Dublin Mountains with him would testify. Prof Chris Frost of John Moores University, Liverpool, UK, also gave his expertise in organising the Association for Journalism Education in the UK and Ireland.

 Marek Beckerman of the BBC World Service Trust, deserves a special thanks. Marek contributed so much to the writing of this report and showed huge professionalism and friendship.

Many thanks must also go to Prof Vesselin Dimitrov, the Chairman of the Curriculum Modernisation Working Group, for all his support and back-up.

The Curriculum Modernisation aspect of the project is also grateful for all those who gave time translating or sitting on interview boards, and to all those journalists who put up with questions about journalism education.

A very special thanks must go to Assoc Prof Teodora Petrova, Vice Dean of the Faculty. Professor Petrova gave support and help from the start and ensured the Curriculum Modernisation component would work and happen, even at times when we thought that was in doubt. Her charm and diplomacy meant misunderstandings did not occur too often by explaining where we were going wrong or were being insensitive.

Thanks also to those of the Faculty who showed friendship and solidarity between colleagues from either end of Europe. I hope this collaboration can continue.

My colleagues and students at the Dublin Institute of Technology are also to be thanked for their patience and support. Dr Brian O'Neill and Dr Nora French ensured I was able to head to Sofia whenever it was necessary by juggling timetables and finding replacements for me.

It must be said that the Dublin Institute of Technology was honoured to be part of this project, which we at DIT viewed as an act of solidarity with our colleagues at the FJMC.

My immense thanks to my wife, Niamh, who put up with my constant travelling at a time when she was carrying on with her own academic career as well as going through a personal illness.

Finally, the BBC PHARE project is about improving the professional standards of the media in Bulgaria. This is one of the few international media projects that has been imaginative enough to realise that without reaching out to young journalists at university, those who have not even started careers, it is impossible to improve professional standards in any sustained way. Hopefully this Strategy and Action Plan will contribute to a long term future for good journalism in Bulgaria. It is hoped that the Faculty will now take up the running on this.

Michael Foley
International Key Expert
November 2005

3.0   INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

3.1   The Overall Objective of the Project

The overall objective was stated as follows in the Terms of Reference of the Project:

"To strengthen the independence of the media through improving professional standards in Bulgarian journalism."

3.2   The Structure of the Project

The Project was divided into four constituent and largely self-contained parts. The present report deals with the part described in the Terms of Reference ("TORs") as **Sub-Project 4**. It was entitled:

"Modernisation of the teaching of Journalism at Sofia University as a model for other faculties in Bulgaria."

The Terms of Reference stated the following with reference to journalism teaching at Sofia University:

"The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications at the Sofia University is the largest journalism faculty in the country. Its graduates constitute about 70% of practicing journalists in Bulgaria.
The Faculty programmes are outdated and lack resources and support. Important first steps have been made to reform its teaching methods and curriculum. These include the development of a bachelors and masters programmes in journalism and mass communications; opening up to cooperation with NGOs and participating in international networks.
But the Faculty staff say that there is a need for further support in updating teaching methods and methodology, for the introduction of new courses and techniques, including internships for students. A significant gap can be identified in ethics training and inter-cultural awareness."

3.3   General Objectives of the Teaching Modernisation Project

The Terms of Reference stated the following general objectives with reference to **Sub-Project 4:**

1.   *To carry out a participatory assessment of the modernisation needs of the curriculum at the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia University.*

2.   *To design and implement a Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI).*

3.   *To create an information and exchange network amongst at least three Faculties of Journalism in Bulgaria.*

4.   *To develop a Curriculum Modernization Strategy and Action Plan.*

3.4 Specific Objectives

The Terms of Reference stated the following specific objectives in relation to each of the general objectives:

1. Participatory Assessment:

a.   to assess the needs of modernisation of the curriculum at the Faculty of Journalism;

b.   to identify and specify targets, methods of data gathering and analytic techniques;

c.   to formulate key areas of concern

d.   to recommend a set of practical measures for further modernisation of the Faculty curriculum.

2. Curriculum Scholarship Initiative:

a. to develop guidelines and requirements for attracting additional academic human resources in support of the implementation of the action plan of the modernised University curriculum of journalism.

b. to support at least 10 individual scholars' initiatives that target the modernisation of teaching methods and content of the University curriculum of journalism.

c. to suggest and implement, after the approval of the WG, the overall design and implementation of the CSI, following the basic rules for grants within the Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the General Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions.

3. An information and exchange network:

a. to set up an information exchange network between at least 3 faculties of journalism in the country.

b. to develop adequate services and effective forms of communication, exchange of curriculum patterns information and effective representation of the interests of the academic community.

c. to provide various career opportunities to at least 50 students who are at their final stage prior to graduation and to young researchers in the area of media development.

4. Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan:

a. to draft and offer to the WG for approval a Curriculum modernization strategy based on the suggestions, recommendations and successful findings of the CSI, which will be approved by the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia State University.

b. to suggest for approval and develop an action plan with concrete practical steps and operational timeline for implementation of the Curriculum modernization strategy.

3.5   Ramifications

The following terms and conditions were set by the Terms of Reference:

3.5.1   The above objectives should be secured by subsequently ensuring the **sustainability** and proper **dissemination** of the achieved outcomes. They also needed to observe the latest **visibility guidelines**.

3.5.2   The intended commencement date was stated as **24 November 2003** and the period of execution of the contract was originally stated to be **11 months** from that date.

3.5.3   The project would be delivered by the appointed **Contractor** on the basis of a competitive tender, led by the overall Project's **Team Leader,** who would in turn select the following personnel for the delivery of Sub-Project 4:

a. **One Key International Senior Expert on University curriculum**, who would be working 10 days a month for the duration of the Contract
b. **Non-key experts:**
    1. One local short-term expert to prepare a participatory assessment;
    2. One short-term international expert to design and implement Curriculum Scholarship Initiative during two missions;
    3. Three short-term local experts to design and implement Curriculum Scholarship Initiative;
    4. Two short-term international experts to develop Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan during two missions;
    5. One short-term local expert to develop Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan;
    6. One short-term international expert to create an information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism;
    7. One short-term local expert to create an information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism.

3.5.4   No equipment was to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract, which was to be acquired by the beneficiary country, must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

3.5.5   Incidental expenditure for the whole Project included the cost of the distribution of at least 10 scholarships as part of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI) at up to a maximum of EUR 10 000 per scholarship.

3.5.6   The Terms of Reference imposed specific **reporting requirements** for the Project, of which the following applied to the Sub-Project 4:

a. To produce a general **Inception Report** at the beginning of the Project;
b. To produce a **Participatory Assessment Report**;
c. To produce General periodic **Interim Reports**;
d. To produce the **Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan** (the current document)

3.6 Sequence of Key Activities and Events

The Contractor and the appointed members of the team have conducted the following actions in the course of achieving the objectives:

February 2004:
>Following the Inception Report in January 2004, an **International Curriculum Experts** meeting convened.

March 2004:
>**Working Group on Curriculum Modernisation** set up and operative.

April 2004:
>**Participatory Assessment** conducted.

May 2004:
>**Findings** of the Assessment presented to the Working Group.

June 2004:
>A more comprehensive and forward-looking analysis report prepared for debate and consultations on the basis of the Assessment Report by the Key Curriculum Expert entitled: **Curriculum Modernisation: Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.**

July 2004:
>Guidelines and requirements developed and drawn up for the **Curriculum Scholarship Initiative** by the Key expert and local and international experts.

August 2004:
>Details and conditions for the **Curriculum Scholarship Initiative** announced, published and circulated with the deadline for applications set at 30th September 2004.

September 2004:
>A **meeting** of the Key Expert and Team Leader with the **University authorities**, Faculty members and the Project Implementation Unit convened on 29th September to discuss concerns raised by the findings and recommendations of the Key Expert's **Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.**

October 2004:
>An **Evaluation Panel** established to assess CSI applications consisting of the Key Expert, an international expert, a Sofia University representative, a media industry representative and a local expert in scholarship and exchange programmes disbursement.

November 2004:
>- Approval of nine applicants for the CSI first round by the Evaluation Panel after selection interviews on 3rd and 4th November.
>- Formal approval of the extension of the Overall Project to run till November 2005.

December 2004 – January 2005 – February 2005:

Finding, agreeing and arranging **CSI placements** for successful candidates at European universities and institutions; development and design of scholarship itineraries and schedules.

March – July 2005:
    First round of CSI scholarships takes place.

May 2005:
    Second round of CSI scholarships conceived and the new "seminar" formula designed.

June 2005:
- **Applications officially invited** on 3rd June for the second round of CSI. **Selection interviews** conducted on 28th June.
- Advanced preparatory work by international and local experts on establishing a **Faculty Network for exchange of information.**

July 2005:
    Two-week **Curriculum Modernisation programme** takes place as the second round of CSI in London, attended by seven Faculty members.

September 2005:
- A **one-day review and evaluation meeting** of all recipients of both rounds of CSI takes place on **13th September** with the view to carrying its benefits over into the curriculum modernization process.
- A **two-day conference** held on 15-16th September in Sofia attended by representatives from nine journalism-teaching universities in Bulgaria to establish and found a faculty **information exchange network**.
- Agreement by consent to establish a countrywide "**Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications in Bulgaria.**" Organising Committee set-up, timeframe agreed. **Press release** published and circulated on the 20th September.

October 2005:
- Appointment of one international expert and two local experts to assist the Key Expert in finalising the **Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan** and starting **advance implementation action**.
- Work on adoption of **a unified template** with guidelines for individual module construction by all Faculty members.
- Work on designing a **student course-book** with simplified module templates.
- **Analysis** of findings, conclusions and recommendations in post-CSI reports and surveys of all recipients.
- Advanced work on compilation and adaptation of post-CSI reports to produce a Faculty **internal publication** to inform further curriculum modernisation programme.
- Consultations with faculty members on identifying **leadership structure and roles** for the future **Curriculum Review Committee** (Curriculum Action Group).
- Identification of the proposed new modules for selection to run as **experimental/pilot courses**.

November 2005:
- **Unified module template** adopted for the Faculty subject to formal approval

Curriculum Modernisation: Strategy and Action Plan   **Page - 14 -**
Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism Bulgaria
EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG: November 2005

- **Student workbook** drafted along the Bologna lines
- First draft of internal publication on the **findings and benefits of the CSI**
- Further consultations on setting up the **Curriculum Review Committee**
- Further work on the launching of the **Association** of Journalism Educators in Bulgaria
- **Association** of Journalism Educators in Bulgaria **established**. First executive established and **association registered in court**.
- **Curriculum Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to Working Group**

3.7 Essential Details of Major Events and Documents

3.7.1 The Key Expert's **Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations,** drawn in June 2004 on the basis of the Preparatory Assessment document, caused a considerable stir within the Faculty and wider, at the Sofia University. A series of informal meetings and consultations followed, which culminated in a meeting of the Key Expert and Team Leader with the University authorities, Faculty members and the Project Implementation Unit on 29th September 2004 to discuss concerns raised by the findings and recommendations of the Report. The meeting dispelled fears that the Report would undermine the position and standing of the Faculty within the academic community, and made it clear that it was an interim discussion document to engender debate and engage more Faculty members in the modernization process.

The key findings and key recommendations of the original assessment report are summarised below:

3.7.1.1 Key findings:

- **No overall strategy** identified with regard to teaching or modernizing the curriculum, or responding to changes in the media industry;
- Little or **no organized and coordinated curriculum** development by international standards;
- **Little journalism practice** in the teaching process; and the existing practice inadequately integrated into the courses;
- **Technical equipment in an appalling state**, raising doubt about the viability of delivering successfully any of the modernized courses; no possibility of providing a simulated newsroom environment essential for modern journalism training; **acute equipment shortage** a major problem in genuine implementation of curriculum modernization;
- **Atomized teaching** with no logical connection between individual modules, and with **no logical progression** built into the courses; no content description of existing modules;
- An institutional stumbling block encountered as the Project coincided with a recent curriculum review of the undergraduate programme, which envisaged no further improvements in the near future.
- Members of staff are generally research-active, but there is little evidence of **dynamism** or **creativity and openness** in the teaching component;
- **Students skeptical** about the usefulness of some of the courses, and unhappy about the low practical content;
- **Low attendance**, with students often working already from the second year, and attending to take exams only in order to secure a degree;
- **Inflexible employment policies** and insufficient links with the media industry.

3.7.1.2 Key recommendations

In his June 2004 document, the International Key Expert drew up the following set of recommendations:

- The Faculty should adopt a **model of professional education in journalism as seen in medical studies, engineering or architecture**, or the model of applied arts such as music or design, where there are strong links with working practitioners, rather than continue with a simply academic approach.
- The Faculty should aspire to increase its teaching of journalism practice to about 50%, and to **integrate theory and practice** in its courses.
- The modernized syllabus should ensure that the Faculty produces **reflective practitioners**, with practical skills underpinned by theoretical knowledge.
- Comprehensive modernization work is necessary in undergraduate programmes, as they currently produce the majority of entrants into the media industry job market. A **new undergraduate degree programme** should be developed, conforming to European quality standards.
- Further international expertise should be employed to ensure that the Faculty programmes fully comply with the **Bologna Agreement**, and implement **quality assurance schemes** as well as **modern assessment methods**.
- **New modules** should be developed taking in the latest requirements in the media industry. They should include the teaching of **media ethics, media law and media management**. They should not be developed in isolation, but rather be part of completely new programmes. New modules developed on the MA level need to be properly incorporated into the programmes.
- **The CSI beneficiaries should be actively involved in the modernization process**, and should participate in the Faculty's strategic report for the next five years.
- More flexible employment procedures should be adopted to enable **the hiring of practitioners from the industry** as well as recognized names to boost the teaching of journalism practice.
- Technical deficiencies must be addressed by the Faculty. Students should have **access to the Internet** at all times, and to the **telephones** for some of the classes. **Sound recording equipment and cameras** should be available for the relevant courses, and **a range of studios** with built-in flexibility to cater for the needs of the practical courses.
- Communication with other journalism-teaching establishments should be improved. It is recommended that an organization similar to the British **Association of Journalism Educators** be established in Bulgaria to subsume and fulfill the functions and tasks of the information exchange network postulated in the Terms of Reference.

3.7.2 Curriculum Scholarship Initiative

3.7.2.1 CSI-1 Scholarship Recipients and their placements:

Asst Prof Vyara Angelova   –   University of Dortmund

Assoc Prof Christo Kaftandjiev   –   Dublin Institute of Technology, and University of Westminster, and BBC. Prof Kaftandjiev also attended second CSI round seminars in London.

Asst Prof Svetlozar Kirilov   –   University of Westminster

Assoc Prof Zdravka Konstantinova –   CNRS / EHESS in Paris

Asst Prof Manuela Manliherova   –   City University, London

Asst Prof Maria Neykova   –   BBC, Cardiff University, and Thames Valley University

Assoc Prof Teodora Petrova   –   Dublin Institute of Technology, Thames Valley University, and BBC

Assoc Prof Vessela Tabakova   –   Dublin Institute of Technology, and University of Stockholm

3.7.2.2 CSI-2 Scholarship Recipients: Curriculum Modernisation Seminar London, July 2005:

Asst Prof Greta Dermendjieva

Assoc Prof Efrem Efremov

Assoc Prof Petranka Fileva

Asst Prof Ivo Piperkov

Asst Prof Latchezar Totchev

Assoc Prof Veronica Valkanova

Assoc Prof Minka Zlateva

3.7.2.3 Impact and Usefulness of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative

- Curriculum Scholarship Initiative has played a central role in ensuring the success of the Curriculum Modernisation project, and of the overall Project.

- The Contractor exceeded by far the requirements set by the Terms of Reference to extend the CSI to at least 10 qualifying members of the Faculty. In the end, as many as 15 staff members benefited from the scheme.

- Its purpose concentrated on curriculum development, rather than research, obliging successful recipients to write up and make available their findings to assist other Faculty members in designing new modules.

- Most recipients found the CSI extremely helpful, which was reflected amply in their reports:

"I would like to start with expressing my gratitude for this wonderful project. My visit to London was very useful, as it confirmed that I am moving in the right direction trying to adopt a more practice-based approach to teaching. There were interesting lectures which presented well the points of view in question. I was also relieved to find out that the ethos and subject matter in journalism teaching is largely shared by my British colleagues and that the differences between us are not that significant in that respect."

Curriculum Modernisation: Strategy and Action Plan   **Page - 17 -**
Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism Bulgaria
EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG: November 2005

"My participation in the academic curriculum modernisation seminar in London was very satisfactory for me. It confirmed the value of the project I put forward as part of the CSI. My visit to a real newsroom in England helped me to formulate better the parameters of my course for students of journalism at Sofia University".

"The Curriculum Scholarship Initiative was an opportunity for many of us to update our courses in compliance to the Bologna Agreement. The project also enabled us to do research to acquire books for the new-design courses."

"The scholarship initiative made it possible to "open a file" on each of the problems discussed which would be particularly useful for seminars and practical work with students."

"J'avais une grande chance de travailler parmi les collegues de l'EHESS – toujours prette de m'aider non celement 'sur le terrain' de l'EHESS, mais aussi de faire d'autres contactes et de voire d'autres horisonts."

"The participation of a large number of the Faculty staff members in the BBC-run project was more than a very good investment in the profession's future at Sofia University."

"Ich schaetze meine Fellowship als erfolgreich fuer mich - erstens als wissenschafliche Qualifizierung und zweitens als Erfahrung und Vorstellung, die ich vom deutschen Ausbildungsystem mitbekommen habe. Das, was ich oben genannt habe als Elemente, die wir eventuell auch benutzen koennen, werde ich mit meinen Kollegen besprechen und nutzen."

"Such programmes are extremely useful, particularly the possibility to learn more about the foreign teaching experience. They also help to integrate the teaching of journalism on the European scale."

- The participants were asked not only to produce a detailed report, but also to design one or more syllabus documents for their courses, informed by the demands of modern curricular design. This proved hugely successful and has the potential to form the core of a new curriculum at the University. It was clearly reflected in a number of post-CSI reports:

"I will update my course on the New Media in accordance with the online module I have seen at the Dublin Institute of Technology"

"A significant contribution to my study was the technique of structuring a module, presented in detail by the Head of School of Media at the Dublin Institute of Technology."

"Je suis tres contente de possibilities, qui m'a donne ce projet. J'ai travaille sur une theme de projet – complex et profonde. Avec une chance unique – de cree un nouveau programme de cour sur l'histoire de la publicite pour la premiere fois en Bulgarie a l'aide des meilleurs specialists dans ce domaine en France."

"Both hosting institutions I have visited are experienced in developing distance learning modules. In cooperation with them, their good practices and experience can be used when designing our distance learning modules."

"The meetings dedicated to curriculum modernisation with colleagues from British universities and with BBC experts were a big contribution to my work on the module I have designed. The way the seminar was organised helped me identify precisely the current issues in journalism and the ways of addressing them in the teaching process."

- A considerable number of the CSI beneficiaries stress that the scholarships have also made a direct impact on their way of teaching journalism:

"In Bulgaria, there if often an antagonism between theory and practice, and I am really glad that the UK experience showed us how to connect the two."

"The modernisation of the methods of assessment of knowledge in journalism was the focus of the meeting with an expert from City University of London who provided us with a valuable insight into the application of various techniques to evaluate a student on an interim or periodic basis."

"As a whole, the seminar was very efficient and useful, since all the different meetings with leading English universities in the field of journalism gave us a clear idea of the academic training in journalism in the UK."

"I came out of the London seminar experience with a clear goal in mind: to produce analytical practitioners and to give academic background to all practical skills. I can guarantee that I will apply in a practical way all the benefits obtained during the seminar."

- Most CSI beneficiaries said that the programme brought to their attention the necessity to **"strike the complex and dynamic balance between theory and practice in the academic teaching of journalism."**

- Several praised the CSI organisers for their placements; captured in the words of one of the recipients: **"a very careful choice of the universities relevant to my field of work and research."**

- There were several critical comments in the reports about the CSI delivery, but they were in a clear minority, and all are quoted for the record below:

"The application and selection process ended on late October 2004, and yet until mid March 2005, when the first recipients travelled for their assignments, the Project Team had not arranged a single meeting with the scholarship beneficiaries. Such a meeting would have been of great importance in tailoring the scholarships to our needs and stated preferences."

"Due to the late start of the project, some of the components had to be implemented in a shorter period of time. They might have been designed and timetabled in a different way. This led to some difficulties in the implementation of the project."

"Greater attention should have been devoted to the Bologna Process, on which only one lecture was delivered. This process is of particular importance to

Bulgarian universities at the threshold of Bulgaria's membership of the European Union."

"The implementation of the scholarship initiative could not have been aimed at radically changing the syllabus nor is it necessary: the course syllabus has already been discussed and approved by the FJMC Faculty Council and complies with existing academic standards. Yet, the goal was to develop and improve the syllabus in two respects: the development of journalist practice and the introduction of aspects of ethical standards studies and elements of self-regulation."

- All participants in the CSI have produced valuable recommendations and proposals, ranging from practical measures concerning their immediate areas of activities, to long-term and strategic solutions and changes. The wealth of their proposals has been incorporated, and is quoted extensively in the main body of the present document.

3.7.3 Faculty Network Meeting: 15-16 September 2005

3.7.3.1 Hosts

The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Sofia and the BBC PHARE Media Support Project jointly hosted the Network Meeting, and the Project wishes to express it gratitude to the University of Sofia for providing the meeting room for this event free of charge.

3.7.3.2 Participants

The following journalism teaching institutions were represented at the September 2005 meeting:

Sofia University, Plovdiv University, Shumen University, University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo University, Burgas Free University, New Bulgarian University Sofia, Varna Free University, and the American University in Bulgaria (Blagoevgrad).

3.7.3.3 Outcomes

3.7.3.3.1   The Conference participants all agreed to set up an Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications in Bulgaria.

3.7.3.3.2   They established an Organising Committee which was given the task of preparing all necessary steps for the creation of the Association.

3.7.3.3.3   The Committee was chaired by Prof Milko Petrov (FJMC Sofia).

3.7.3.3.4   The Association subsumes all the functions and tasks of the Faculties information exchange network envisaged by the Project's Terms of Reference:
        (i) to develop adequate services and effective forms of communication among participating members;
        (ii) to exchange curriculum patterns information, and to constitute an effective representation of the interests of the academic community.

3.7.3.3.5   An initiative to facilitate the creation of new career opportunities for students at their final stage prior to graduation, and to young researchers in the area of media development, the Association will post advertisements of job vacancies made available by the media industry on its website.

3.7.3.4   Registration and Administrative Charges

Following the Faculties Network Conference, a request was submitted to the Project Consortium for a financial contribution towards the legal and court costs of setting up and registering the Association.

This was agreed to, and the Association, with the official title "Bulgarian Association of Journalistic Education" (BAOJ), was formally established on 03 November 2005 at a meeting at the premises of the Faculty of Journalism, following which the necessary documentation for legal registration were lodged with the relevant court. The first Chairman of the Association is Prof Milko Petrov of the FJMC Sofia.

3.7.3.5   Internet and Intranet Website

In order to support the activities and the work of the newly-established Association, the BBC WS Trust has undertaken to provide the Association with a tailor-made Internet and Intranet website. The two part of the site will have two distinct functions:
- The *Internet* part will be bi-lingual and of course publicly accessible; it will enable the Association to publicise its own and its member institutions' activities, to advertise events which are organised by the Association or its member institutions, to provide documents and other information relevant either to the general public or to particular interest groups (potential students, either domestic or foreign; the media; etc), and it will also have the facility to provide a "job market" where media outlets will be able to advertise job vacancies and job seekers (for example, students from any of the member faculties) will be able to place advertisements seeking media-related work. It will in addition have the facility to provide internet links to related institutions (such as journalism faculties, etc) and associations on an international level.
- The *Intranet* part of the site will be password-protected and therefore not accessible to the general public; it is designed to help facilitate the exchange of information between members of the Association (either institutions or individuals). It will be up to the Association to decide how its members wish to use this internal part or restricted part; however the specifications foresee a number of document repository areas, a news and events area, etc. In addition, there will be facility for alphabetical listing (for example, of lecturers and of students), as well as a message board / discussion forum facility.
The BBC WS Trust has offered to develop and host this site free-of-charge to the Association on one of its own servers; however, should the Association at some point in the future decide to host the site on one of its own servers, it will be possible to easily migrate the site to a different server.
At the time of writing this Report, the site is still under construction and is available only as a pilot site; it is expected that full functionality will be achieved within three to six weeks.

4.0   METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

4.1   General Comments

The present document draws heavily on the findings and recommendations of reports submitted by the beneficiaries of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, an analysis of the survey of CSI participants, and various discussions and consultations with Faculty members, Sofia University officials, local and international experts, and students. It also refers back to the findings and recommendations of the Key Expert in his **Curriculum Modernisation: Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.**

It also strives to reflect the local realities and sensitivities, the political and socio-economic conditions in Bulgaria itself, as well as to respond to likely developments in the media industry in general, and in the region in particular.

It has to be said at the outset that the part of the project relating to the improvement of journalism teaching at Sofia University was defined by the **original** Terms of Reference within a framework and timescale which could only see partial and incomplete results. **The timeframe of 11 months** was immediately found to be severely **limiting** by both the Contractor and the Beneficiaries. It is no wonder that there was a **request for an extension** straight at the outset of the project rather than towards the end, as is the more common occurrence. This created **delays and structural difficulties**, until a project extension of 12 months was eventually approved.

The extension allowed the Contractor to successfully **achieve all the outcomes** relating to Curriculum Modernisation and Improvement in Teaching envisaged in the Terms of Reference. The original time-compression factor made it much more difficult to carry out the constituent parts of the teaching modernization project in a coherent fashion in the first stage of the project.

The timeframe extension allowed for the necessary level of reflection, consultation and exchange of information, improving in turn the climate of cooperation in the project. That had an immediate positive impact on the delivery of the desired outcomes, as can be seen from the schedule of performed activities, which grew in intensity towards the end of the project. The extension facilitated the execution of the rest of the project in a **systematic and logical sequence, and with sustained momentum,** as well as with continuity and professionalism.

Given the above, the present document makes a central assumption that the objectives set in the Terms of Reference need to be seen as **seminal** in the overall process of curriculum modernization and raising the standards of teaching of journalism, and that the achieved outcomes should be seen as the **necessary groundwork** in improving teaching and instituting real change. The reasons for this assumption are as follows:

- The development and modernisation of a curriculum is a **phased process** introduced over a period of at least **several years**. Given that an undergraduate programme on average takes three years to four years, the results of introducing a new curriculum can be tested and evaluated only after one student cycle has gone through the system.

- It can take up to a year to **review** an existing curriculum, and then, depending on a whole range of factor, perhaps another year to have a new one **validated** or approved by relevant bodies.
- This basically means that a typical curriculum modernisation plan takes about **five years** to execute fully.
- A comprehensive faculty-wide project to take in post-graduate courses as well needs to extend even further in time, and can probably be properly installed, tested and evaluated over a period of about **seven years**, even if performed as an ongoing, self-updating procedure.

Therefore it would not be helpful to accept the idea that the Curriculum Modernisation project at Sofia University is a **complete and self-contained entity**. It is rather an **open-ended process**, the continuity of which and its eventual success requires **sustained support and monitoring, as well extra resources.** The Terms of Reference envisage the implementation of the outcomes **"beyond the end date of the project"**, but it is difficult to see that without further outside support for the Faculty, its members could bring the process to a successful conclusion on their own. This would be wishful thinking, while ending the institutional support at the cut-off date of the Project would verge on abandonment.

The present document makes several recommendations how to **secure the long-term future of the modernisation process** as a continuation of the Project without extra financial outlays and on the basis of self-supporting processes at the Faculty.

One of the severe and troubling shortcomings identified in the Participatory Assessment Report and the subsequent interim report on modernisation recommendations was the **deficiency and lack of technical equipment** at the Faculty. And yet, the Terms of Reference clearly stated that no equipment was to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority as part of the service contract or transferred at the end of the contract.

The Terms of Reference did not state, however, whether it would be useful to carry out **an initial assessment** of what were the most urgent needs of the Faculty as far as **technical equipment** was concerned. We consider it necessary and helpful to identify some of these needs and therefore attempt to make a – at least cursory – assessment of the most pressing shortages that should be immediately addressed to secure the implementation of the Teaching Modernisation process. **It must be stated that it is difficult to envisage certain important practice areas being capable of delivery without investment in computers and other technology.**

4.2   General Assumptions

Before any recommendations, strategy or action plan can be designed and adopted for the Faculty, a set of assumptions and parameters need to be compiled to form a preferred model that best reflects the needs and the realities of the Sofia University Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications. The present document makes a set of assumptions deemed to be best suited to the Faculty's circumstances, external and internal, and based on the Experts' findings and also on recommendations by Faculty members themselves. The following assumptions are used to inform the strategy and recommendations of this document:

- The preferred ratio between theory and practice in the curriculum should be **50-50**, but the split should not be based on a mechanical division of contact hours, but be a logical consequence of the structure of particular modules.

- Priority to be given to the practical component of the curriculum, based on the philosophy that **practical/skill-oriented/vocational/creative components** of the curriculum should be informed by the **theoretical/academic/analytic/reflective portion of the curriculum**. The current tendency at the Faculty is to use the practical components to illustrate or to help assimilate the theoretical academic knowledge. This is thought to have limited value in teaching the journalistic profession in the Bulgarian context.

- **Practical teaching to become equal** in the educational process at the Faculty, and should be informed by theory.

- **Teaching to become a central activity** at the Faculty, with academic research becoming a constituent part underpinning the teaching process. The tradition of using teaching and students as adjuncts to the academic research process becomes obsolete and is abandoned.

- A **strictly modular approach** with a realistic credit system to be put in place and to fully comply with the Bologna Agreement.

- Modules to be arranged around a core of practice and theoretical subjects. **Optional modules** to ensure choice and flexibility, as well as diversification and specialisation.

- **Simulation and role-playing**, peer teaching-learning to be at the core of teaching techniques provision with a **project-based approach**, and an introduction of students' non-linear progress.

- Preference for **workshop-type activities, group activities with differentiated tasks** and roles, diversified time-structuring of learning activities.

- The philosophy of **continuing assessment**, the principle of **individualised student assessment**, and the introduction of assessment based on the evaluation of **students' work portfolios**.

- The degree award to be based on a **cumulative approach**, where the constituent part of the degree award, preferably at the rate of 50%, should be the continuous assessment of a student's work, which will reflect attendance, commitment and active participation by a student in a range of work inside and outside the lecture room over the years of the degree.

- The culmination of the degree course still to be a **proper academic written dissertation** based on the student's own research to show ability to work critically and reflectively, and with autonomy.

- The recognition that **practical activities** in the course of the study are a fully legitimate part of the learning process and **feed into the intellectual effort** to jointly create the preferred type of graduate commonly described as a **"reflective practitioner".**

- The assumption of the **strand approach**, where the practical/vocational path runs **parallel** to the theoretical/academic path in roughly equal proportions throughout the course.

- It is thought that in the Bulgarian academic and political/economic context, there should be **a third parallel strand** – most preferably a foreign language. The Faculty should investigate the possibility of students taking up placements in universities abroad to improve language skills, using the EU's various programmes, such as ERASMUS and TEMPUS.

- Adequate provision for **on-line delivery** of some of the teaching.

- Adequate **technical and technological support** for teaching and learning activities.

The subsequent recommendations and the strategy and action plan found in this document build upon the above initial assumptions, and are contextualised in detail below.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGY

5.1 Main Strategic Recommendations

5.1.1 Follow-up implementation

The present document expresses the view that all efforts and available measures need to be taken to **retain the momentum for change** at the Faculty achieved throughout the Project. To ensure the continuity of the modernisation process **immediate action is necessary** in order not to waste the outcomes of the project arrived at in spite of so many difficulties. It is felt strongly that the instituted changes cannot be sustained alone by the members of staff at the Faculty who have personally benefited from the CSI. A dissipation of benefits from the project is a real danger at the Faculty if the modernisation process is not properly supported and continued. It is believed that external support will be still necessary for some time.

➔ **We strongly recommend** the setting up of a **post-project follow-up implementation team**.

It should consist mainly of Faculty members and local experts, assisted on a periodic, or on-call, basis by an international expert: an experienced, innovative teacher/trainer in journalism with an academic background. In ideal circumstances, funding permitting, a secondment position should be created at the Faculty for such a consulting/monitoring job as the most efficient strategy of securing transition to a self-sustained change process at the Faculty.

An analysis of the reports submitted by the recipients of the CSI shows their high level of commitment to change and a strong sense of responsibility towards their Faculty. At the same time, however, there is a pervasive feeling of powerlessness to address the institutional and systemic limitations at the university (and wider. in the educational system). This is a clear indication that the Faculty should not be left to its own resources in the modernisation process, and still needs a degree of outside help.

It is felt that a **minimum period** of such supported transition should be **12 months** from the cut-off date of the present project. During that time, the external expert (or expert on secondment) would not only **oversee the transition period**, but also address one of the obvious problems at the Faculty: that of staff members' lack of close familiarity with **modern, interactive teaching techniques**. This external expert would be able to deliver on-the-spot short, intensive courses in modern teaching techniques. These would be supplied on an ad hoc basis as the need for them emerges during the transition period.

Such a post-project strategy is fully in line with modern trends in consultancy and project management, where commercial consulting firms make sure that members of the team responsible for recommendations and an action plan also see these through, and are possibly also judged by results. Such an approach – based on accountability – is not possible within the timeframe of this project, but can still be achieved, if the post-project implementation recommendation is followed through.

While it is true that the Project has achieved all the desired (and required) outcomes, we see them, in a **wider context,** as only partial results, which can easily become undone without the suggested strategy. A follow-up post-project implementation team is seen as the most efficient way to fully institute most of the measures achieved by the Project on a scale and to a degree guaranteeing sufficient impact on the

educational component in Bulgaria, and in due course on the media market itself. Without such an approach, the clear achievements of the present Project may be eroded and become peripheral to the developments in the industry.

5.1.2 Curriculum Review and Validation

As the pivotal element in the delivery of the Teaching Modernisation Project, the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative has produced a group of committed modernisers, whose acquired knowledge and expertise needs to be employed and put to more formalised use.

➔   **We strongly recommend** that the Working Group at the Faculty, and the most active participants in the CSI, be organised into the **Curriculum Review Committee**, which will spearhead the modernisation process and see its successful implementation.

This aspiration was aptly expressed by one of the CSI beneficiaries:

"I think that it will be particularly useful to organise roundtable talks at the Faculty at which the lecturers, having taken part in the Curriculum Development Initiative, should present their observations and ideas that they consider relevant for the improvement of the educational process."

The added importance of establishing and formalizing the **Curriculum Review Committee** is that there is no substantive accrediting or validating body, with specialist knowledge of journalism, for the new curricula, unlike in Britain and other countries, where professional bodies lend their formal support to syllabuses developed at individual universities teaching journalism. In other countries a very formal process of review and validation exists, relies heavily on professional practitioners and external, often foreign, academic experts in journalism. In the absence of such accreditation formulae in Bulgaria, the Curriculum Review Committee would perform the function of validating within the Faculty, bringing in outside industry and academic experts. It is hoped other universities may want to undergo a similar procedure on a voluntary basis.

The establishment of the Curriculum Review Committee is essential also for the institutionalisation of most of the recommended modernisation processes, if its members agree to oversee and lead their particular aspects, such as continuous assessment, student portfolio development, module construction and design, tutorial and mentoring system, top-up learning, or management of special projects.

5.1.3 Flexible employment policies

The University's rigid employment structure hampers the establishment of more flexible hiring policies, essential in **attracting practitioners from the industry** to boost the practical, skill-based teaching at the Faculty. One of the ways of improving the teaching provision before such a flexibility is achieved is to offer Faculty members appropriate re-training to bring their teaching methods in line with modern requirements – an issue dealt with in more detail in the next section.

A number of CSI recipients spoke strongly in favour of attracting people from the industry:

"I found in-house training courses of particular usefulness and importance for the improvement of students' practical skills. Our department should attract more practising journalists to assist in such in-house training process."

➔ **We strongly recommend** the establishment of **visiting professorships** for leading practitioners from the industry, even if they hold no relevant academic qualifications.

Formal titles could be awarded on an honorary basis for a period of time to address the traditional attachment to formality at the University. The visiting professorships themselves should be contractually awarded for the period of between one term to one academic year. In many countries, it has been shown that seasoned practitioners would be interested in taking up such positions on an interim basis without demanding high salaries. In turn, such gestures – clearly in the educational interest of the Faculty – will engender offers of **work placements and internships** for students within the industry, as well as work and training opportunities outside for Faculty staff members and students. This has already happened at one private university in Bulgaria, and in time such a practice will attract the best students, leaving state educational provision as being seen as second best unless they are able to provide similar arrangements

Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the Faculty to invite **outside contributors**, particularly practitioners from the industry to supplement the teaching provision. It is regrettable that in many cases, they are expected to substitute the lecturer and supply the same type of teaching, which many of them – having come from the practical or experiential sphere – simply cannot deliver. They can deliver either practical or concrete ingredients, and appropriate arrangements need to be made to facilitate that. Such an approach will also serve to institutionalise **links with the industry**, which currently are mainly cultivated on an informal basis only.

5.1.4 Teacher training and re-training

The introduction of new modules, new courses and subjects as well as modernised programmes is practically meaningless and may only remain a modernisation on paper, if it is not accompanied by modern teaching techniques and methods. These cannot be effectively delivered, if there is no appropriate programme of **re-training teaching staff**. Faculty members may feel justified in resisting elements of modernisation without a guarantee that they will be offered appropriate training.

➔ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty develops and offers a coordinated in-house training programme for Faculty members.

Such **investment in staff training** needs to be a constituent part of the curriculum modernisation, and calls for the establishment of the **in-house training coordinator** – a function that can initially be fulfilled by the external / international expert as part of the main recommendation to set up a follow-up implementation project. As a matter of urgency, Faculty **staff** need to be surveyed for their immediate **training needs** to assist them in introducing modernised teaching in the curriculum.

Further more, **it is recommended** that **CSI participants** will design and organise an in-house curriculum training programme for all staff members, part of which can be delivered on-line. This training programme is to be seen as the initiation of the **continuous in-house training** and re-training programme for Faculty members. It is becoming increasingly common for new staff at universities around Europe to have to undertake formal courses in education. In some British universities it is compulsory for

new teaching staff to undertake a part time Post graduate diploma in higher education teaching.

5.1.5 Foreign Language Teaching

There is strong rationale for combining journalism courses with an **aggressive foreign language teaching policy** at the Faculty.   The need for that has been identified by one of the CSI participants in these words:

"The Faculty should not consider Bulgaria as the only target for employment of its graduates, and look at the European Union as a whole. The Bulgarian media market with eight million people as the audience is too small to be significant both economically, including the media, advertising and PR. The country's industry cannot offer enough career prospects, or sufficient salary levels. A lot of students are interested in working abroad, and this aspiration should be appropriately addressed. Courses in English, French and German should be designed and put in place."

➔   **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty explores all available options to add language teaching to its journalism courses, and offers such courses to students as quickly as possible.

A number of West European universities have opted for joint degrees with journalism and another subject. In the Bulgarian context, a joint journalism and language degree should be offered as an option to students. The example of many Dutch, Swedish or German journalists getting successfully into the English-language job market could be quoted. Bulgaria's impending membership of the European Union will increase such opportunities.

A further reason to include language courses is that research indicates that understanding of a second or even third language improves one's general use of language and makes a student more aware of language. Language and story telling is at the heart of all journalism regardless of technologies. Language training makes all journalists better journalists.

5.1.6 The Faculty and Business

It is absolutely essential for the Faculty to start thinking of itself as a going **business concern**, which needs to secure its future interests on the educational market place to stave off competition from private educational provision. Private journalism teaching in Bulgaria may be limited, and limiting, in its academic offer, but tends to be far more efficient by exploiting weaknesses of the state institutions and by acting in a 'parasitic' fashion in relation to them.

It can be expected that private educational providers will exploit Bulgaria upon EU entry. A number of concerns have already expressed interest, and some of them provide journalism degrees.

The practice of individual staff members of state universities teaching or "moonlighting" at private journalism courses need not and cannot be stopped, as it supplements their modest state salaries; but it needs to be done in a way that is not damaging to the Faculty itself, and does not create a conflict of interest. This can only be done through open constructive competition, or competitive co-operation, and not

through covert activities, which lead to a further weakening of the Faculty as an educational business on the market, and which play into the hands of the private sector.

➔ **We strongly recommended** that Faculty members **register their outside employment interests** with either the Dean of the Faculty or an appointed member of the Faculty, to make sure that their activities are in the interest of the University. Alternatively, they should either seek permission, or demonstrate in what way their activities are benefiting the Faculty as a whole.

The Faculty would benefit greatly from the establishment of a **business manager** who would explore possibilities of new teaching provision on the open market, giving the teaching staff incentives to increase their salaries in-house, rather than seeking outside supplementary employment. The business manager, or alternatively, **the Faculty Strategy Coordinator**, would help forge the Faculty's Business and Strategy Plan that would combine academic and research aspirations with economic and market realities.

Several CSI recipients have recommended in discussions and in their reports the necessity of having a **projects manager** selected from amongst the staff to explore all activities that might benefit the future of the Faculty and which would facilitate information flows, staff mobility, exchanges, new projects, co-operative enterprises, and similar schemes.

It has to be stressed at this point that although **we support such a recommendation**, it must not be seen as a core activity of the Faculty but as a self-supportive element of the core activities, which are the educational and research provision. Most CSI recipients have pointed out that the possibilities of introducing new initiatives and ideas, creating more activities and bringing new business to the Faculty, are severely constrained by the University regulations and current legislation.

But this should not prevent the Faculty designing and developing its own autonomous, integrated and unified Faculty Business and Strategy Plan.

5.1.7   Technical Equipment and Technology

While the PHARE BBC Project had no budget or terms of reference that allowed for the provision of equipment, it would be remiss not to comment on the state of equipment, as it impinges hugely on the ability of the staff to deliver some courses. The state of equipment available to students and staff is **highly unsatisfactory**. While some improvements have been made over the period of the project's life, with the provision of new studio space as part of a general renovation of the Faculty building, the equipment position is such that it is impossible to see how some courses can be taught.

➔ **We consider that** there is an **overriding need** to provide **a newsroom environment** for the delivery of some of the modern courses.

The current facilities with either non-working or un-networked computers, and no continuously available, high-speed and direct access to the Internet, are seen as simply useless. A teaching space emulating a "newsroom" – the most common working environment of a journalist – needs to be set up as **priority** within a university setting. It would require about 30 net-worked computers, all linked to the internet, and

with layout and design software installed, in order to teach journalism practice. The newsroom could also be used by students to prepare work for publication.

If radio editing and web design software is installed, the newsroom would be a flexible teaching facility catering for print, radio and on-line journalism practice classes, and also give students some autonomy as they could use it in their own time to prepare projects and other work.

A number of Faculty staff that took part in the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative visited such newsrooms at Western universities. They all agree that it is a necessary provision, but point out the lack of available funds:

"International standards in journalism schools require up-to-date software and technical environment for the students. The schools I have visited are all well equipped and meet the requirements of the industry for professional standards of students' abilities. Most Bulgarian high schools lack technical equipment and do not meet the requirements of the media industry for both the journalistic profession and PR. State university budgets are not enough to update the equipment and software."

These financial problems are compounded by little evidence of clear strategic thinking or the necessary know-how on the part of the authorities how to update and modernise the teaching on the technological / technical side. **We believe it would be a grave miscalculation** on the part of the Faculty to wait and count on the University-wide modernisation project to provide new hardware, software and networking to the Faculty in the near future.

Instead, **urgent steps need to be taken now**, if the Faculty does not want to be further seen as marginal in the eyes of the professional community because of its poor technical provision.

➔ **We strongly recommend** that the need for a computer-networked environment with Internet access should be addressed by an innovative approach which would require very little, if any, financial outlay:

Repeated visits to the Faculty premises appear to indicate a relatively poor utilisation of available office and other space by Western standards. This means that with some modest space-optimisation measures, a lot more office or teaching space can be made available. In order to quickly provide all day access to up-to-date computers and computing, as well as internet access for all students of the Faculty, a tender should be put out for an **outside contractor** to provide **Internet café facilities** within the building. Such a contract would offer free premises for the outside contractor and would have to clearly spell out equipment specifications and networking requirements, the necessary number of work stations and other technical facilities.

Students will be entitled to limited free usage of the facilities in exchange for tokens received from the Faculty, or on the basis of their account credit. A credit clearing system would need to be installed to give the contractor remuneration on a pro-rata, or other, basis. In exchange, the contractor may receive sole catering rights on the premises, and may charge for extra usage beyond student credits. A careful business plan will establish how much capital outlay of the faculty budget (if necessary) can go towards remunerating the contractor against the projected costs of supplying computers, cabling, servers and software.

Such a solution by-passes the need to provide a large sum of money in the way of initial or start-up investment to fund a Faculty-internal newsroom, and may be also more efficient in the area of technical support and maintenance. This recommendation is in the spirit of **Private and Public sector finance initiatives**, used Europe-wide to bridge the capital and technological gaps in the public sector in exchange for advantageous conditions for a private contractor. It is an interim solution, to be taken in the face of no obvious prospect of funding in sight to cover the cost of equipment update and modernisation at the Faculty.

It might also be feasible to approach computer firms and seek their sponsorship in setting up a newsroom.

5.1.8   Radio and Television at the Faculty

The Faculty justifiably prides itself on its university radio station, Alma Mater. Some CSI participants have, however, pointed out that it may be of limited use for teaching purposes:

"I will create a new momentum in my teaching by offering students professional broadcasting simulation. It is difficult because at Sofia University, there is no functioning radio station, open for students."

The Faculty ought to make sure that there is full access and a range of possibilities for students to contribute to the radio, without restrictions. It is a matter of urgency to open the existing radio station to students for **live broadcasting on a regular basis**. Students should be rostered to **supply news and current affairs** for Radio Alma Mater, which is gathered and processed under the highest professional and ethical standards, and so offer students experience and serve as an example of good journalism for all listeners.

A problematic situation appears to hold for the **Faculty television studio**, where layout and equipment suggest little genuine activity.

The Faculty is also in dire need of acquiring portable sound equipment, and hand-held cameras, together with relevant editing software. These urgent equipment needs could be addressed by seeking innovative ideas similar to the suggested proposal with regards to Internet access and minimal newsroom-type technical provision.

5.1.9   Forward Thinking

The Faculty needs **to look forward to identify** the likely shifts on the media scene, the evolving industry needs, trends and projected international developments. Therefore, it needs to identify events, problems and issues facing Bulgarian society, and the region. It needs to adequately plan for the future in its educational offer. As one of the CSI recipients put it, this would give the Faculty a chance for a quantum leap in offering **new courses** before anyone else does, either in Bulgaria, in the region, or in Europe. If they manage to create and adequately shape a course(or courses) unique to the faculty, they may attract a fair number of foreign students and engender further exchanges and international programmes. This will also remove a perception that universities in developing or transitional countries simply copy and emulate Western educational programmes and curricula.

➔ **An immediate recommendation** for the Faculty is to work on the required expertise in reporting the European integration and enlargement processes and implications.

This expertise will be in growing demand in the next five years, and the Faculty is in a **unique position** to look forward to this projected demand on the media market and immediately institute appropriate modules to train journalists specialising in the European Union issues.

➔ **We strongly recommend** that an expert journalist be employed on an ad-hoc or short-term basis to help design practical modules related to this aspect of journalism.

Given that the media generally applies short-term employment strategies, and starts training people only after a need for them arises for reporting and coverage purposes, the **Faculty can have a clear edge over other competitors** in providing this type of training and expertise. This may require hiring staff from outside, but would be a prudent investment.

Another clear area of specialisation which is expected to be in short supply over the next five to ten years across Europe is expertise in **Turkish issues**. Given the historical precedence and regional and cultural proximity of Bulgaria, the **Faculty is again in pole position** to train and provide journalist expertise in this area, by combining journalist training with relevant background and specialist knowledge.

This should immediately be looked into and pursued in conjunction with other faculties at the University.

5.10 Additional Business

5.10.1 It is remarkable that a number of recipients of the CSI have had clear thoughts on the long-term future of the Faculty, and the need to plan ahead. Several spotted outside opportunities which they thought were too good to miss and which should be explored for the benefit of the Faculty:

"[The Faculty should] work quickly towards acquiring a significant position on the training market in Bulgaria and the region, as well as reach out to the Middle East, by offering short qualification courses for journalists from the practice and a range of courses in the English language for foreign students."

5.10.2 The present Report fully endorses these aspirations, even though they run somewhat against the initial context-setting observations in the Project's Terms of Reference quoted below:

"76% [of the Bulgarian mid-career practicing journalists] admit that they have received no professional qualification after university graduation. The same survey confirms that some 80% of practicing journalists articulate the need for further professional qualification. The lack of on-the-job training also leads many journalists to disillusionment with the profession and also contributes to a high level of turnover. Efforts to undertake curriculum modernisation are not likely to have any effect on this target group. They have specific training needs that need to be addressed in order to strengthen the professional standards of media. Areas which have been identified as needing support are reporting skills, investigative journalism, working with sources, ethnic minorities reporting, EU accession, etc."

We consider this limiting statement encapsulated in the above sentence "*Efforts to undertake curriculum modernisation are not likely to have any effect on this target group*" as running particularly against the grain of ambitions expressed by some of the Faculty members, and not in the spirit of recommendations from all quarters to open up business at the Faculty for working journalists, and to enrich the educational offer to include adult and mature learners, as well as post-graduate qualifications.

The statement referred to above is obviously true within the initial timeframe of the overall project. But if applied in the long-term, it would deprive the Faculty of a valuable student base in the future, and consequently of a substantial amount of business derived from offering **adult**, **lifelong and continuous learning**, **top-up courses** and **post-graduate** as well as **specialist qualifications**.

Attracting practising and mid-career journalists into the Faculty with well-targeted training and courses, and calibrated to respond to the media industry expectations would have a doubly positive effect:

- The deficit of skills among practising journalists in Bulgaria, perceived as acute in the Terms of Reference, and addressed through <u>Sub-Project 3</u> ("*To deliver a professional training programme to mid-career journalists*"), could be targeted on a systematic basis on the local level in the near future, without waiting several years, until the University starts producing graduates who have gone through the modernised programme. In this way, adult and top-up educational provision can start having a qualitative impact on the Bulgarian media within a much shorter timeframe.
- Extra business and expansion, with more secure jobs and extra remuneration for staff, creating and exploiting a potentially lucrative student base. Such opportunities would in turn discourage Faculty staff from seeking outside employment, and enrich their teaching experience in the realm of more-peer based education.

The overall objective stated in the Terms of Reference, to improve the standards of journalism in Bulgaria by targeting, among other things, journalism teaching at Sofia University, could be only fully in evidence over a long period of time, since the Faculty's graduates in journalism taught through a fully modernised curriculum would reach positions of editorial and business prominence several years after graduation. It is strongly felt that extending modernisation and an educational offer to include practising journalists would speed up the overall improvement in journalistic standards.

➔ **We strongly recommend** that ad-hoc training, specialist courses, part-time, and week-end only formats be inserted into the future patterns of teaching at the Faculty.

We believe that that targeting mid-career journalists as adult students is a strategy which can bring a speedy impact on the quality and ethos of the media marketplace. A rounded academic offer of this kind is something that ad-hoc and remedial training extended by foreign donor bodies and aid organisations cannot achieve in a systematic way. A more profitable strategy would be for them to lock into that offer by providing valuable ingredients of the Faculty courses, thus boosting the Faculty's position on the training and educational market.

Such an approach could result in setting up **a training centre** for practising journalists based at the Faculty, where both members of staff, as well as outside trainers, could work.

A further benefit from this strategy is that practicing journalists would be visiting the faculty frequently and would become more aware of and familiar with its work. It will also provide the Faculty with a pool of talent from which it can draw visiting lecturers and professors

5.10.3 Another substantial area of possible expansion has been identified by several members of the CSI in the area of foreign student provision:

"Foreign students, mostly from Turkey, Greece, other Balkan countries, but also from Arab countries and China should be targeted. The major incentive for them to study at Sofia University would be to gain degrees recognised in other Western countries, but at a much lower cost. Lower tuition fees and the lower cost of living are powerful incentives, but have to be combined with high quality of teaching. It will require improving the programme at the Faculty to meet demands of foreign students: better organisation of study, teaching in English, and modern facilities and infrastructure."

While this is obviously a longer-term aspiration, the concept itself needs to be already looked into by forming part of the Faculty's **Business and Strategy Plan**, elements of which should be addressed immediately. These are already included in other parts of the recommended strategy and include: modernising teaching through in-house teacher training, development of specialist expertise, unique and desirable modules, and aggressive foreign language teaching policies. Other considerations must include careful calibration of competitive foreign student tuition fees, and competitive provision of facilities.

➔ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty starts to explore the option of targeting foreign students, within the framework of the Faculty's Business and Strategy Plan, as soon as possible.

5.11   On-line Provision and Distance Learning

5.11.1 The Faculty can bypass some of the institutional and financial difficulties likely to hamper a dynamic and wholesale approach to modernisation, if more **concerted efforts go towards establishing the provision of some of the teaching and training on-line**. While updating technical equipment such as portable recording equipment, or cameras may require significant financial investment, and take some time, on-line courses and distance learning solutions may offer both economic and efficient ways of providing modern curriculum solutions. Some of the CSI recipients spoke enthusiastically about on-line learning as one of the ways of modernising the teaching:

"It was the first time for me that I got involved with different practices in distance and on-line learning. On-line university learning does not have much practice at our university, and we should explore the possibility of offering such courses to students."

5.11.2 Nothing can replace the face-to-face contact in the teaching process, and the climate of an academic establishment also enhances the quality of learning, but on-line provision is a valuable form of training in the modern multi-media context, where

the Internet has become an organic element of the journalistic process. The Faculty has already at its disposal a number of initial possibilities, including the use of several BBC training websites and courses, and should look into the option of adapting them and enriching them with its own content.

5.12   Leadership

The **high level of commitment to the modernisation process displayed by the CSI Scholarship Recipients and various other members of the Faculty** requires a certain level of formalisation to give it institutional support, and also to make everybody aware of which areas of modernisation process are of particular interest to individual Staff members. The recommendation to transform the Faculty Curriculum Working Group into the Curriculum Review Committee, enlarged by leading members of the CSI, is meant not only to secure the continuity to the progress of modernisation, but also to establish leadership roles in the process.

➔   **We strongly recommend** that the following **roles be established with in the Curriculum Review Committee** with the view to oversee, inspire, coordinate and advise on particular elements of the modernisation process:

- Continuous assessment schemes and quality assurance co-ordinator
- Post-graduate, adult learning, top-up courses, specialist training manager
- Module design advisor
- Curriculum integration leader
- New modules and experimental courses co-ordinator
- New media and on-line learning advisor
- Student portfolio development leader
- Foreign students strategic planner
- New developments advisor
- Business plan developer

More than one person can assume any of the roles, and similarly, one person may take up more than one role on the CRC. The concept is to establish clear reference points in the process so that Faculty members know who to turn to with particular issues and problems. The content of particular leadership roles is explained in more detail, where deemed necessary, in the section on Faculty Implementation Strategies.

6.0   Faculty Implementation Strategy

6.1   Introduction

Following the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, the Faculty now has a core of lecturers who are familiar with curriculum developments in Western Europe in the context of the Bologna Agreement. They are also aware of how syllabus documents should be laid out and what must be contained in them in order for students to see what they will be taught, what they will know at the end of a module, and what skills they will have acquired.

What appears to be still missing is the ability to put all the elements of the Modernisation Programme together, and to infuse the process with the necessary drive and dynamism, which will carry the changes through in a relatively short period of time.

➔   **We strongly recommend that on the internal Faculty level, the steps listed below are taken in there entirely rather than on a 'pick-and-mix' basis.**

6.2   Overhaul of Undergraduate Programmes

➔   **We recommend** that the Faculty Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), once it is formed and settles down, concentrates **first** on developing a **new curriculum for the undergraduate programme** before undertaking an overhaul of the MA programmes.

MA programmes typically tend to be an extension of the BA courses. Following approval, the undergraduate module combinations should be implemented one year at a time, starting with the first year.

There is evidence, however, that modernising changes have already been introduced by some of the staff members as the consequence of their scholarships, and more are being implemented at this time. It is highly laudable, and **this process should continue**.

Wherever gaps are identified in terms of modern requirements in the Years 2, 3, 4, and at MA level, newly designed modules should be used to fill them, even if at this stage the requirement of full cohesion and logical progression is not fully met. Such an approach will ensure that the updating process is not interrupted, and whatever asymmetries emerge, they will be rebalanced as the process progresses further.

As a result of such a strategy, a new curriculum will be introduced for new students as quickly as within one to two years, while students already in situ will benefit from improvements being made at the same time.

6.3   Optionality

"The system of courses at the Faculty should become more flexible and should allow students to choose subjects. At present Hobson's choice of compulsory studies prevails and they are firmly fixed within the academic year. There

should be no more than two compulsory courses per semester, while other modules should be optional."

The above comment, which could be seen as somewhat extreme, does not come from an external source, but from within the Faculty itself. It should be followed by the Faculty in the construction of the new curriculum. In its first step, core elements, or indispensable subjects, should be identified, after which other modules will be added on the optional basis. For example, media law, media ethics, and shorthand are seen in a number of countries as essential elements of the journalism curriculum. The rest of the programme should be built up around them. The CRC will need to identify and define the indispensable subjects in the Bulgarian context, and then add other modules, preferably on the optional level.

➔ **We recommend** that the CRC immediately starts a process of identifying **essential core elements**, to be supplemented by **optional modules**.

6.4 Fewer modules -- more choice

It may sound counterintuitive, but a curriculum with fewer modules offers more choice to students, by decreasing compulsory subjects and increasing the optional offer. The faculty needs to apply such a strategy by slimming down the obligatory provision, and enriching the optional one. On balance, it will most probably involve just as many subjects and modules as in the traditional curriculum, but will give the Faculty more flexibility. Unpopular optional modules can be speedily pulled, and replaced with new, or different ones. The old, rigid system would not allow this type of almost ad-hoc culling.

6.5 Balance between Theory and Practice

In the course of the present Project, more and more CSI recipients came to consider the concept of a more or less even split between theory and practice in the curriculum as the most suitable philosophy for the Bulgarian circumstances:

"Sofia University DJMC needs to continue to seek the appropriate balance between theory and practice in teaching journalism, putting more emphasis on the organisation and assessment of practical classes and on the students' presentations skills."

➔ **We recommend** a preferred 50-50 division between theory and practice in the curriculum.

This should not be based on a mechanical division of contact hours, but ought to be a logical consequence of the structure of particular modules. Close attention needs to be paid to the way particular types of teaching activities are defined in the module descriptions. In the module descriptions supplied, it is a common practice for teachers to use the term "practical" for activities which differ little from the traditional lecture-type delivery.

It would serve no useful purpose to attempt to cover up the fact that little or no adjustment has been made in the methods of teaching, and that modernisation changes have been made on paper, but do not relate to reality. For many modules, in which the words "seminar" or even "workshop" have been used as the practical ingredient of a given course, the actual delivery method and the subject matter are still

strictly theoretical. Adding the word "practical" just for the sake of achieving the required balance on paper is meaningless. There is little evidence of role-play, simulation, or creative components in much of the teaching, and the project-based tasks are not used often enough in the teaching process.

6.6   First Things First

In the construction of the modernised teaching programme, the Faculty ought to give priority to the practical component of the curriculum, based on the philosophy that **practical/skill-oriented/vocational/creative components** of the curriculum should be informed by the **theoretical/academic/analytic/reflective portion of the curriculum**. The current tendency at the Faculty is to use the practical components to illustrate or to help assimilate the theoretical academic knowledge. This is thought to have limited value in teaching the journalistic profession in the Bulgarian context.

In order to implement this shift of emphasis, it has to be recognised first that **practical activities, or learning by doing,** in the course of the study are a fully legitimate part of the learning process and **feed into the intellectual effort** to jointly create the preferred type of graduate commonly described as a **"reflective practitioner"**. This implies that practical modules are not secondary, or ancillary, elements, to be run by junior staff members without awarding them sufficient prominence in terms of the number of credits. If the Faculty sees one of its roles as improving Bulgarian journalists it must produce good practitioners. Journalists can only offer an alternative to current practice if they fully understand it and can do it themselves.

6.7   Bologna and Modularity

There has been uniform understanding of the need to implement the Bologna Agreement among the Faculty staff. In fact, Bulgaria was one of the original signatories to the Agreement in June 1999. We found, however, insufficient evidence of a curriculum fully conforming to Bologna, and to the attendant Quality Assurance criteria, or the principles of modularity to underpin the ideas of equivalence and student mobility. CSI Scholarship Recipients noted this perceived deficiency themselves:

 "It is both desirable and useful for all, including students and teachers, to synchronise the ingredients of the curriculum to a greater degree in compliance with Bologna agreement."

➔   **We recommend** that a **modular system** be applied in the Curriculum to **comply fully** with the Bologna Agreement.

This should be seen in terms of enriching the education on offer, with a number of obligatory modules, indicating particular pathways (journalism, public relations, etc.), surrounded by an array of **optional modules** allowing a large degree of choice and flexibility, as well as diversification and specialisation.

A radical culling of out-of-date modules will have to take place, to be replaced with modern, relevant and practical subjects. Implementing Bologna can be quite a shock to faculties, in that while it offers students flexibility and choice it can be a very different experience for faculty members. The process limits the number of modules that can be taken by students, based on a five credit per module system, with 60 credits per year, or 30 per semester. Year-long modules are an exception, and half-

modules are discouraged, which are not self-contained in their scope, and consequently in the number of credit awards.

6.8 Pilot Modules / Dummy Courses

One useful, efficient and relatively speedy way to introduce the testing of new modules is the concept of "dummy" or pilot modules. These are designed to run on a non-credit, experimental basis with willing and curious groups of students, to try out new ideas, teaching techniques and elements. '**Dummy' or pilot courses** are a standard approach in a number of universities, and are used to test modules as well as offer something new to students. It also shows a university's willingness to change and experiment, which can also attract good students. Such pilot or trial modules also reduce risks associated with introducing untested subject matter. Tested new modules are also more easily pushed through the approval process with the university authorities.

➔ **We recommend** that the Faculty, through the CRC, fully and urgently explores the practicalities of introducing a number of curriculum-relevant pilot courses.
.

6.9 Central Role of Teaching

"The main conclusion from my scholarship is that there is no difference in teaching journalism between Western universities and Bulgaria in terms of content. The differences are in presenting this content to students and making them work in a practical fashion on the teaching matter."

The above statement from one of the CSI Scholarship recipients underlines the essence of the gap between modern and outdated ways of delivering subject matter.

This is often characterised as moving from a teaching model to a learning one, one that puts the student at the centre of the learning experience. Students, we now know, respond to a "learning by doing" environment rather than what has often be called a "chalk and talk" method of teaching. As is the case in many journalism schools around the world, **teaching must become a central activity** at the Faculty, with academic research becoming a constituent part underpinning the teaching process. The tradition of using teaching and students as adjuncts to the academic research process becomes obsolete and should be abandoned. The objective of using teaching as a way of elevating the quality of the subject matter requires modern approaches to the ways students are taught.

6.10 Modern Teaching and Training Techniques and Formats

Many of the CSI recipients noticed very quickly during their scholarship the qualitative difference between the teaching practised at leading institutions in journalism education and other establishments:

"In terms of content the teaching materials are very similar, […] [but] the teaching methods are quite different not only in terms of the ratio between theory and practice, but also in the way classes are organised. The requirements of self-reflection on the part of the students, and the maximum objectivity of assessment are truly remarkable aspects of teaching here."

The specific techniques of **real-life simulation and role-playing** are very common in modern teaching of journalism. They are based on the principles of **peer teaching-learning and team-work**, where the lecturer/academic assumes the roles of a **team-leader, editor, or advisor**. The hierarchical distance between lecturers and students is reduced to engender creative atmosphere.

The emphasis on practice entails a **project-based approach**, preference for **workshop-type activities,** and **group activities with differentiated tasks** and roles, as well as diversified time-structuring of learning activities. The difference in achieved results was easily noticed by the Faculty members during their scholarships:

"Real-life environment is simulated, and students participate in what amounts to a real media process, while still remaining in the academic world. Although many of their Bulgarian colleagues have a chance to work for different media organisations, the skills they acquire through that experience are often not up to the required professional standards. In fact, in many cases the practical experience of the Bulgarian students contradicts the theoretical knowledge acquired at Sofia University. This in turn de-motivates students and causes low attendance rates at the Faculty."

One of the CSI recipients was impressed by what can be achieved through a modern approach to teaching even with seemingly difficult and unwieldy material, when students were asked to write a feature article:

.

"The workshop was largely based on individual work with the students. In short, the feature article had to link large, seemingly nebulous concepts and government policies with people's lives. I witnessed a brilliant example of integrating theory and practice in international journalism."

➔ **This strongly points to the urgent need to retrain teachers in modern and innovative teaching techniques – one of the key strategic recommendations of the document.**

6.11   Flexibility in teaching

In analysing the results of the CSI Scholarship Reports and their recommendations and conclusions, we felt that the overall impact could have been stronger in the area of modern teaching, not only in terms of teaching methods and techniques, but we also noticed a degree of rigidity and formality of approach. Some CSI Scholarship Recipients designed their modules in a way that adhered to the old ways of delivery primarily through lectures and theoretical formats, with little practical work or application on the part of the students.   In a number of cases, the division into practical and theoretical components was a mechanistic split of contact hours into lectures and seminars or workshops, without specifying what was so practical about them. In practice, it meant little generic difference between them, apart from teaching "practical" classes in smaller groups, and devoting some time to checking the students' level of acquired knowledge. For many of the modules, this artificial mechanistic approach needs to be abolished, and

➔ **We recommend** that a process be initiated to make objective and systematic decisions on what the best ways are of delivering the subject matter.

If it is found, for instance, that the lecture is the only necessary format, it should be stated so in the curriculum. On the other hand, if there are subjects for which only genuinely practical formats are most suitable, there is no need to provide any lecture-type delivery.

Another aspect of flexibility in teaching is the time-differentiation of formats. Most modules continue to use only one-hour or two-hour building blocks, irrespective of what type of teaching technique is deployed.

➔ **We recommend** to utilise a **block-teaching / training approach** for many of the modules, based on projects or workshops requiring continuous, uninterrupted work.

Therefore, half-a-day or full-day projects, or even projects running over several days, need to be designed in the overall temporal structure of the curriculum. This can only be achieved with in-built flexibility of the curriculum. Such flexibility does not as yet exist, with rigid structuring of teaching hours to suit the teaching staff routines and schedules rather than to reflect students' genuine needs.

6.12   The Two-Strand Philosophy

The common perception that the Bologna Agreement implies a degree of randomisation in the construction of curricula is misconstrued. Modularisation actually means the opposite: the initial deconstruction of the teaching programmes into separate building blocks serves to create more flexibility, and subsequently allows more logical and sophisticated options in the creation of a curriculum. One of the central principles used in constructing curricula is the **strand approach.**

In the case of journalism, **Journalism Practice** and **Journalism Theory** constitute two separate and parallel strands, which act like masts on a sailing ship. All the tackling is attached to them in a way which allows smooth sailing, and gives the sailors immediate flexibility to change most of the parameters to reflect changing weather conditions. Unfortunately, in many transitional countries this lean and mean concept of education is quite foreign, and preference for over-structuring and rigidity still prevails.

The "two masts" or "two strands" approach assumes the equal height of both strands, meaning that Journalism Practice (the practical / vocational path) runs **parallel** to Journalism Theory (the theoretical / academic path) in roughly equal proportions throughout the course.

Several members of the Faculty staff have expressed preference for a different model, where the first years are treated as Foundation Courses in journalism, giving students a theoretical and general platform, from which they move on in Year Three (and Year Four for the four-year courses) to the applied sphere of the knowledge they acquired.

There is no room in the present document to discuss the philosophical disadvantages of such an approach. Suffice it to say that such an approach widens the gap between the theory and practice elements of the programme, with students confused as to the relevance of the theory. If the two go hand in hand, then the purpose of the theory and its relationship to the practice can be emphasised. Excessive theorising in a profession largely perceived as an applied and vocational activity can also drive students away from the central objective of becoming journalists, rather than commentators on journalists' activities and their work.

There is also an approach where the ratio of practical teaching increases together with the growing extent of specialisation – traditionally divided into print, radio and television, with more recently added on-line journalism as a fourth field. But given the extent of the convergence in the media, we advocate preference for multi-skilling in the teaching of journalism. Students should be given the flavour, or tasters, in all aspects of journalistic activity in the first two years, with specialisation, if necessary at all, towards the end of the programme.

6.13   A Three-Masted Ship

After an analysis of the Bulgarian academic and political / economic context, it is believed that the Faculty could profitably follow the model of **three parallel strands**, adopted by a number of universities in Western Europe: they combine Journalism with another realm of knowledge, such as Political History, Law, or Modern Languages, to award joint degrees.

Given Bulgaria's political circumstances, the adoption of **Foreign Languages** as the third strand appears to be the optimum solution. The language strand should also run parallel to the other two strands. It is assumed that foreign languages would be taught in that language, and that students be given some introduction to the media in the language area they are studying. When looking for placements abroad it is advisable to choose journalism schools rather than language schools, to ensure that students receive a different view of the media and how it is produced. Staff from the Faculty would also benefit from any staff exchanges included in the exchange schemes.

6.14   Continuous Assessment

Most CSI participants realised the importance of assessment in the teaching process. With falling levels of attendance at the Faculty and the University, many of the CSI participants were relieved to discover the principles and methods of Continuous Assessment as effective instruments to motivate students and re-energise the teaching process:

"Sofia University has had a problem with students' attendance since some of the classes, particularly lectures, were made optional. This problem is even more pronounced at the Faculty of Journalism and Media, where many students undertake employment in the course of their studies. There is no doubt that a system of continuous assessment – once put in place – would successfully address this problem and increase the involvement of students in their coursework."

One of the CSI participants had this recommendation how to address the problem:

"A new system of assessment needs to be developed and put in place, which will test the quality of disciplines taught, and the degree of absorption by students, as well as the applicability of the knowledge acquired to real working conditions."

One of the central assumptions of the modern assessment methods is that students need to be assessed continuously – a concept captured in the words of one CSI particpant:

"Students' performance needs to be assessed in the course of their modules, and not only at the end. To this end, three tests on the separate parts of the course need to be combined with the preparation of the final paper and/or discussion. This will increase the motivation and levels of attendance and involvement of the students in lectures and seminars"

The introduction of optional classes has exposed that fact that compulsory attendance had little to do with the levels of knowledge or skills acquired by students. One of the CSI participants has stressed that compulsory classes will not help engage the students better, while new assessment methods will:

"The study of literature on assessment methods, analyses of academic documentation on assessment and my consultations with experts, proved particularly important in furthering my research into how to turn assessment into a stimulus for students to be more active and involved in the educational process."

➔ **The sub-section below deals briefly with how the Faculty can use the constituent elements of Continuing Assessment to bring students closer to the teaching:**

6.14.1 Elements of Continuing Assessment

(i) Individualised student assessment

Most CSI contributions dealt with assessment within a particular module or subject. Few have commented on the need for a comprehensive approach of student assessment across a range of classes and throughout the course. But one of the recipients noted the need to **individualise assessment** in order to boost the quality of teaching. Such an approach enhances unique talents and predispositions of the student, and at the same time identifies areas of special concern:

"I firmly believe now that assessment should not only consist of several components, but also closely reflect individual students' intellectual ability, their unique talents and predispositions and the level of their commitment and involvement."

Such an approach requires the **introduction of students' non-linear progress**. It means that students are not assessed against each other, but against **benchmarks** in skills and competence. This requires measurement of progress not within one given task or project, but over a range of projects and tasks, and over a longer period of time.

(ii) Benchmarks

The development of quality assurance and continuing assessment methods at the Faculty should over a period of time produce a list of benchmarks, against which students' skills and competence can be objectively measured, without comparisons to other students.
The **benchmark list** should not be subject-specific, but formulated in a way that can be used throughout the Faculty for a range of modules.
The systematic use of well defined benchmarks should in the end be developed into an **interim system of undergraduate assessment**, which can increasingly reflect requirements set by professional or vocational bodies in the industry.

➜   **We strongly recommend** the early introduction of such a benchmark system.

(iii)   Student Portfolio Development

➜   **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty sets up the position of a **student portfolio developer** who will oversee the process of creating and integrating individual students' portfolios as a constituent part of the degree award process.

There is a clear process of degree inflation in many transitional as well as West European countries, caused by upgrading many tertiary educational establishments to university level or by setting up private establishments without proper academic tradition and support. Bulgaria is also a victim in this process, and journalism standards appear to have suffered as a result. What it means in practice is that a degree alone is increasingly not enough to secure a job. While a formal requirement with many employers, it is less significant for jobs requiring specific skills and experience. Journalism is one such area.

In order to address this, the Faculty has a unique chance to impact the job market in the future both nationally and abroad, if degrees are augmented by the **student and graduate portfolio development strategy.**

A candidate for a job with a strong portfolio of autonomous professional work will have an edge against a candidate short-listed purely on the strength of the degree. Such candidates can also compete successfully against competitors with actual work experience. Student portfolios can even out any deficit of proven practical skills.

This requires setting up a programme of **student portfolio development** and a coordinator for this project who will make all members of the faculty aware of the necessity to build individual students' portfolio of coursework.

(iv)   Cumulative Degree Awards

➜   **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty moves away from the tradition of awarding degrees almost solely on the basis of the final piece of work.

The degree award should be based on a **cumulative approach**, where the constituent part of the degree award, preferably at the rate of 50%, should be the evaluation of the student's portfolio of work and projects accumulated in the course of study which will reflect attendance, commitment and active participation.

The culmination of the degree course should still be a **proper academic dissertation** based on the student's own research to show ability to work critically and reflectively and with autonomy.

(v)   Tutorial and Mentoring System

The methods of continuing assessment and an individualised approach to students presuppose the introduction of **modern tutorship and mentoring processes**, whereby each student has an appointed **mentor** or **tutor**, who will look and assist in their academic development. CSI participants thought such a system should not be difficult to introduce throughout the Faculty:

Curriculum Modernisation: Strategy and Action Plan   **Page - 45 -**
Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism Bulgaria
EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG: November 2005

"Tutorials are individual face-to-face consultations which allow lecturers to monitor the progress of individual students. In turn, students have a better chance to ask questions relating to their particular assignments. Such tutorials can be introduced easily and immediately."

➔ **We strongly recommend** that such a tutorial and mentoring system be integrated into the overall strategy of individualised assessment at the Faculty.

6.15   Student Surveys

We note with a degree of regret that the process of Curriculum Modernisation at the Faculty has only minimally involved the **students** so far. The **consultation process** on modernising teaching also needs to originate from students themselves. The social and psychological distance between teachers at the Faculty and students is felt to be immense, augmented further by the institutionalised hierarchical structures of the University.

Needless to say, some of the Faculty students are already practising journalists or media workers, and the above mentioned artificial distance should be neutralised to bring out a more creative and dynamic relationship, based more on a peer approach.

➔ **We recommend as a matter of urgency** that a **relevant student survey** be designed and conducted.

Such a survey should cover a fully representative sample of students and should be carried out as soon as possible, in order to identify areas of perceived weaknesses in the teaching provision and in curriculum and teaching methods, as well as the most acute areas of equipment shortages. It will also assist in identifying quickly those modules which should be culled or radically changed first.

Disregarding the students' input into the modernisation process would be a self-defeating strategy. Students' needs should be at the heart of the educational provision, while teaching itself is not an adjunct or subordinate part of academic research.

6.16   On-line delivery and technical support

Recommendations concerning making adequate provision for on-line delivery of some of the teaching, and on the urgent need to seek ways of addressing acute equipment shortages have already been made in the Key Strategic Recommendations section.

7.0 Immediate Practical Measures

CSI participants have already identified a number of modernising measures and initiatives which can be introduced at the Faculty immediately without formal approval or review process. Several of these are quoted below for illustrative purposes, to demonstrate that teaching improvements can be made at the grass roots level.

7.1 Student publications.

This is a hugely important area for the development of students. Journalism students need to publish their work in the same way as music students need to perform, or art students need to exhibit. It is not simply a way of emulating the world of work, but of being judged by an audience wider than teachers and fellow students, of gaining professional confidence, and of integrating theory and practice. Such publications, produced as part of a class, and assessed as part of the overall degree, also offer models of good journalism. It ensures students develop good practice and sound ethical judgement and decision making.. A number of journalism schools have developed publications or broadcasts for a general public, rather than a student body. The London College of Communications, part of the University of the Arts in London, has a weekly community newspapers, while the Dublin Institute of Technology, Department of Journalism, has a monthly community newspaper. Both serve a genuine community need and are judged by readers as professionally produced newspapers, without any allowance made for the student status of the journalists. There are similar projects in a number of US schools as well.

7.1.1 A Student Magazine

Setting up a student magazine, even only in an electronic form, can be an effective way of testing and improving a whole range of skills and competencies, including reporting, editing, desktop publishing, graphic design, web design, and many others – a teaching opportunity identified by one of the CSI particpants:

 "I will use my experience to create a student magazine which gives students a chance to integrate theory with practice. This is a state that each student of journalism must reach before employment."

7.1.2 Student-led Radio Station

The Faculty prides itself on its radio station, Alma Mater, which can be further used to improve the students' journalistic skills. Speech-based broadcasts should be increased, and the news content upgraded to allow for proper news output, reporting and live broadcasting, an aspiration expressed by one of the CSI participants:

"I will do my best to enable my students to research, write and present stories for broadcast, to operate portable recording equipment, to edit sound packages using digital software, to achieve an acceptable level of competence in voice work and presentation, and to perform the functions of reporter, newsreader, presenter and editor."

7.1.3 Weekly TV Bulletins on CD ROM

Despite the fact that the shortage of television equipment and the technical weaknesses of the television facilities at the Faculty are considered serious problems, students can still produce weekly TV information bulletins for dissemination on the Internet, or on CD ROM.

7.1.4 Web-casting and other novel dissemination formats

Students should be encouraged to experiment with new formats of information dissemination and broadcasting, including pod-casting, blogs, and mobile phone text and visual delivery. These should be integrated into the teaching and used as bona fide ingredients of the education process. Such an approach may help to bypass some of the equipment and under-funding problems.

7.2 Practical Aspects of Module Construction

The Faculty now has a core of lecturers who are familiar with curriculum developments in Western Europe in the context of Bologna. They are also aware of how syllabus documents should be laid out and what must be contained in them, in order for students to see what they will be taught, what they will know at the end of a module and what skills they will have acquired. Most CSI participants have acquired substantial knowledge in this area, but some admit to deficiencies in their approach:

"Comparing the Bulgarian curricula and the British way of designing them, I could see that some of my Bulgarian colleagues are drawing up their modules for their own sake, rather than for the students' sake. It's almost like they want to show off how good and extensive their knowledge is without proving any practical application for it. I am afraid I am no exception here."

To address these concerns, the Project has already started work on self-educating procedures in constructing modules within the Faculty. Local experts together with leading Faculty members have undertaken work to create unified templates for module design, along the model on the following page:

[Unified Template for Module Design]

- **Module Author**

> *Person(s) responsible for writing the module*

- **Module Description**

> *In this section a brief description of the general subject of the module. Statements about how the module is structured into Knowledge (breadth, kind, range), Know-how and skill (range and selectivity) and Competence (context, role, learning to learn, insight). Structure should map onto the learning outcomes.*

- **Module Aim**

> *The aim of this module is to …*

- **Learning Outcomes**

> *On completion of this module, the learner will be able to …*

- **Learning and Teaching Methods**

> *When designing the module, tutors should consider the variety of learning methods, which may be used to achieve the module learning outcomes. This section should state these processes for the module. For example: lectures, discussion, role-play, case study, problem-solving exercises, video, film, work-based learning, readings, project work, self-directed learning, dissertation, computer-based learning, ODL, correspondence, or a combination of methods.*

- **Module Content:**

> *Description of syllabus content covered in module.*

- **Module Assessment**

Statement on the methods of assessment to be used to measure the stated learning outcomes of the module.
Statements on proportion of marks allocated to each element of assessment in the Module (Practical, Theory, Continuous Assessment etc).
Statements on performance requirements in individual elements of Module, if any: e.g.- minimum performance threshold.

- **Essential Reading:** **(author, date, title, publisher)**
- **Supplemental Reading:** **(author, date, title, publisher)**
- **Web references, journals and other:**

- **Further Details:** *e.g. class size, contact hours. To be delivered in one semester, or year- long.*

These unified templates with explanatory notes will be available on an identified website for use throughout the Faculty, as well as in a programme document available in the library. The modules created in this way will form the basis for a future unified course curriculum database at the Faculty.

7.3 Curriculum Building

It is felt that a lot more work still needs to be done in the area of the construction, examination and testing of the **overall curriculum**. We are confident that the Faculty is now in a position to produce a series of well-written individual syllabus documents, but more care and support needs to be given to make sure that they cohere into a well designed and properly thought-out curriculum. The overall curriculum should reflect **the Faculty's statement on what its overall objectives are,** as well as its philosophy.

On the following page, there is an example of what the Faculty should be aiming to produce, both as a statement of intent, but also one that can stand up to scrutiny. This should only be treated as a guide, on the basis of which the Faculty needs to formulate its own statement.

The purpose of such a document is to give guidelines against which the overall curriculum is constructed, and to concentrate and focus on what the faculty is about and what it is producing: good professional journalists who can not only do their job well, but bring improvements to the media in Bulgaria.

Consequently it can ensure that the curriculum has a guide against which to judge individual modules: do they add to the aims of the programme, or are they too esoteric, or of no consequence to the training and educating of future journalists?

[Course Aims and Objectives]

Course aims:

To provide a high quality education in the practical, theoretical, and critical issues of both journalism and language studies.

To provide a high standard of professional training and education to enable students to achieve their full potential and acquire a range of transferable skills, which are relevant to employment in journalism and related fields or to post graduate study.

To produce journalists who are multi-skilled, critically aware, and have a sophisticated understanding of the place, effect, cultural context and importance of journalism in society.

To instill an understanding of the ethical issues facing journalists, and to encourage and foster professional standards in preparation for the demands of the labor market.

To promote understanding of how newer technologies are shaping and redefining journalistic practice, and to equip students with strategies to adapt to a rapidly changing workplace.

Objectives:

Further to the aims outlined in the individual course modules, students should:

1. be professionally competent to take up employment in a newspaper, radio, television or on-line news environments.
2. be able to work as reporters and sub-editors, have acquired the required skills, and write fluently in a number of genres.
3. be able to evaluate complex material, understand and use different research tools and methods.
4. know how to use the basic technologies for newspaper, radio, television and on-line production.
5. have the ability to transfer skills to different tasks and technologies.
6. be able to read, research, interview and broadcast fluently in a second language.
7. be able to act as facilitators between their own and other cultures.

Graduates will:
- be able to critically evaluate the media and the cultural context in which it operates
- understand contemporary issues and be skilled in decision making and in how to apply high standards of professional practice
- be aware of the many functions of the media in society and have an ability to articulate their views on the media

7.4   Student Coursebooks

The Faculty has already undertaken preparatory work to produce **Student Coursebooks** – an important document reflecting the quality of the educational offer, and a basic showcase meant to attract prospective students.

7.5   Additional Measures

To complement the recommendations aimed at modernising the curriculum at the Faculty, additional measures are suggested to cement and underpin the necessary changes. Although not essential, these recommendations serve to augment and facilitate achieving the objectives of the modernisation process.

7.5.1   Team bonding and building

The Faculty needs training in the area of modern and creative **group dynamics, management change, innovative and creative thinking, basic business acumen, business and institutional synergies**. This is not a recommendation of primary importance in the short or medium term, but essential for the success of the faculty in the long term.

One of the elements of such training should be away-days for staff, where the main ingredient of such gatherings would be reinforcing synergies among individual staff members rather than discussing specific academic or institutional issues.

7.5.2   Increasing Visibility

The Faculty should explore all available channels **to increase its visibility** on the educational market and in the media industry, as part of its business and strategy plan.

It is not enough for the Faculty to rely on its existing position as a traditional academic giant in Bulgaria as far as media and journalism is concerned. The Faculty is facing a very real threat from leaner and meaner competitors on the private market, which will skilfully attempt to bite off chunks of the educational territory controlled by the Faculty and gradually erode its position on the market. This has happened in other transitional countries. The faculty is a fund of expertise in the media area. All **staff should be encouraged to write and appear in the media**, commentating on the media, its performance, its ownership and other issues.
Staff who do such work should identify themselves as being members of the faculty and so enhance the visibility of the **Faculty as a place of experts** willing to act as public intellectuals.
The Faculty should in addition **establish open days** to allow future students to visit the faculty and be told what it means to be a journalist and how to become one. The purpose of this is again to increase the visibility of the faculty and allow it to set the agenda for journalism education in Bulgaria.

8.0 Other Observations: Student Placements and Internships

It appears clear that many students of Journalism begin working in the media industry relatively early during their course of study. Faculty members tend to see this as potentially harmful to the academic process.

From the information available, the fears of Faculty staff would appear to be not unfounded. The BBC / Phare Project was based on the premise that large parts of the Bulgarian media have low professional skills; so the worry must be that students working such long periods in the media rather than attending lectures are learning bad work practices (and are losing out on their academic education in the process).

Work placement or internship schemes should be put in place on a controlled basis. Students should be **assessed** on the placement, and should be required to produce a journal based on their experience, as well as **evidence of the journalism produced**, whether written or broadcast. Students should be encouraged to **critically evaluate** the work practices of the workplace as well as produce journalistic work.

Media organisations should be encouraged to appoint a member of staff to be in charge of placements. This person should be briefed by the Faculty as to what the university wants from the placement, and as to what the media organisation might get from such placements. This would have the duel effect of forging an alliance with media organisations as well as improving the learning experience of students on a placement.

Finally, students who have been working in the relevant field should be rewarded for their initiative and enterprising spirit. A **new placement system** can be built on present practice. Students should be encouraged to **register their work interests** with the Faculty so that after an appropriate assessment by their Tutor, this can be counted as part of their credit and go into building their portfolios, if seen as relevant. It is in the interest of the Faculty to bring out into the open such activities and utilise them in the teaching process. Contact can be made with such media organisations that are currently employing students as the **basis for a more formal arrangement**.

All media should be approached and be included in the placement scheme, including tabloid and other more popular forms of journalism.

9.0   ACTION PLAN

9.1   Initial remarks

The following **Action Plan** is a direct transposition of the Strategy recommended in the present document, with timelines attached to particular **action points**. To avoid unnecessary repetition, it uses simplified references to concepts and ideas discussed and presented at length in the Strategy part of the document, and as such should be read in conjunction with the Strategy recommendations.

9.2   Short-Term Action Plan (between now and over the next 12 months)

- **Curriculum Review Committee set up**
- **Leadership structure of the Committee in place**
- **Roles and functions within the Committee assigned**
- **Module construction template and procedure agreed and explained**
- **Student Coursebook written up for the present year and posted on-line or printed and distributed.**
- **Student Coursebooks published for academic year 2006-2007**
- **Faculty staff surveyed for their immediate training needs to assist them in introducing modernised teaching into the curriculum**
- **Pilot courses for newly proposed modules identified**
- **In-house teacher training coordinator appointed**
- **Faculty Strategy and Business Plan drawn up**
- **Outdated and irrelevant Subjects and modules identified for culling**
- **Core elements of the new curriculum identified**
- **Student radio revamped**
- **Student magazine launched**
- **Faculty website operative**
- **Faculty Internet Café option explored**
- **Association of Journalism Educators well established and operating**

It is strongly recommended that an expert trainer / journalist / expert be employed on an ad-hoc or short-term basis to help coordinate and implement the above as part of the post-Project follow-up implementation strategy.

9.3   Medium Term Action Plan (1 to 3 years)

- **Technical and equipment shortages fully addressed**
- **Student Newsroom set up and operative**
- **Television studios modernised and in full active student use**
- **Undergraduate programme overhauled**
- **Outdated modules dropped**
- **Range of new modules in place**
- **New undergraduate curriculum tested, reviewed and in place**
- **Full modularity based on the Bologna process in place**
- **Continuous assessment system fully implemented**
- **Curriculum documents published annually in compliance with Bologna**
- **In-house teacher retraining programme introduced**

- **Modern teaching techniques and formats introduced**
- **Student portfolio development system in place**
- **Modern tutorial and mentoring system in place**
- **Foreign language provision augmented**
- **Project and business management introduced**
- **Student surveys introduced**
- **On-line and distance learning developed**
- **Faculty Strategy and Business Plan developed**

9.4 Long-term Action Plan (3 to 5 years and beyond)

- **Benchmarks list in place**
- **Cumulative degree award system established**
- **Faculty training centre established**
- **Adult, continuous learning and post-graduate provision established**
- **Ad-hoc and specialist courses offered**
- **Links with industry forged**
- **Foreign students opportunities explored**
- **New internship system developed**
- **Visiting professorships formally adopted**
- **Third strand strategy considered and possibly adopted**
- **Student exchange links with foreign universities forged**
- **Long-term foreign student-placements developed**

Curriculum Modernisation: Strategy and Action Plan **Page - 56 -**

Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism Bulgaria
EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG: November 2005

10.0   CONCLUSIONS

10.1   The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University has the potential to build on its traditional leading position in Bulgaria and continue to be an important and influential body in Bulgarian higher education and on the Bulgaria media market in the years to come. In order to maintain this position and to make further gains, the Faculty needs to apply all its human and institutional resources with drive and commitment to implement fully a comprehensive modernisation programme within, and an expansionist policy, inspired by a long-term vision, outside.

10.2   The Faculty has to forge a relationship with the media industry and be recognised as the major educator of entry level journalists. It must include as part of its mission the necessity to improve media standards in Bulgaria, and in order to do this must modernise its own teaching and learning systems.

10.3   The Faculty has to apply a modernisation processes in a coherent and concerted fashion; it should be produced on the basis of the Strategy and Action Plan recommended in the document.

10.4   Once the Faculty starts seeing itself as the leader and as a pioneer, both on the academic level and on the media industry level, in terms of educational vision, it can become more aggressive and outward looking. Such a mindset change will make the Faculty actively seek links with other universities, and will pursue active cooperation and information exchanges. This will impact on the attitudes of other universities.

10.5   A more expansionist and active Faculty will ensure that it is in a strong position to protect itself and the standards of journalism education within a changing environment, and especially in the face of increasing competition from private teaching institutions. The Faculty's strong position will enable it to shape and dictate the conditions of cooperation and exchanges with the private sector. This in turn entails the potential for the Faculty to achieve a dominant position on the market in many areas of academic and training provision. This is an important factor in Bulgaria's democratic process, in as much as access to working in the media for people of different social classes, gender and ethnics groups is important to a healthy media - private colleges tend to attract the wealthy with little concern for issues such as diversity in the newsroom.

10.6   Achieving a position of influence and respect will open the doors to institutional channels in the form of funding, new projects and co-operation with affluent business enterprises, including large media organisations.

10.7   This Project aimed to improve standards in Bulgarian journalism by separately targeting mid-career journalists with training courses in some of the most important areas, and in another strand of activity aimed to modernise university teaching. This apparent asymmetry or imbalance on the media market could be summarised as follows: undergraduate students need more practice to be recognised on the job market, while practising journalists need more theory-based knowledge to do their jobs better. Both these perceived inadequacies can be addressed simultaneously through the strategy and action plan proposed here.

10.8   The new Association for Bulgarian journalism educators is one of the optimistic developments to result from this Project. It has the potential to encourage debate and discussion, and to give a voice to lecturers at every level of the academic pecking order. It will also allow the exchange of concepts, ideas, knowledge and expertise through regular conferences and seminars, both on a national and an international level.