MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISOR’S ACTIVITY AT BAC LIEU UNIVERSITY MEETS REQUIREMENTS FOR INNOVATION IN EDUCATION - TRAINING

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<th>Article info</th>
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<td>Received: 18/6/2023</td>
<td>Academic advisors play an important role in helping students to adapt and promote their competence in the learning environment. Many universities have organized conferences and seminars to discuss the position and role of academic advisors as well as solutions to improve the effectiveness of this work; however, there have not been many articles that have mentioned deeply to the management of Academic advisors’ activity in the Vietnamese university environment yet. This activity has been applied and gained achievements thanks to the cooperation of the departments at BacLieu University. Yet, the management of Academic advisor’s activity is still facing some difficulties. Based on an analysis of the situation of academic advisor activity, the article suggests recommendations to overcome difficulties, improve the efficiency of academic advisors at BacLieu University in the future, and meet requirements for innovation in education - and training.</td>
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**Keywords**
Academic advisor, management of academic advisors activity, BacLieu University, credit system, innovation in education - training.
QUẢN LÝ HOẠT ĐỘNG CƠ VĂN HỌC TẬP Ở TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC BẠC LIÊU ĐÁP ỨNG YÊU CẦU ĐỞI MỚI GIÁO DỤC - ĐÀO TẠO

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1. Introduction

University education plays a particularly important role on the road to turning Vietnam into a developed country. The problem of converting training methods from an annual to a credit system in education is an inevitable and objective step of the University education system of Vietnam in the trend of regional and international integration. Along with the studies on training methods according to the credit system, the research on the management of academic advisor activity in universities and colleges is also gradually interesting. In training the credit system, the academic advisor plays an important role, affecting the success of learning and training of students. Many universities have held conferences and seminars to discuss the position and role of academic advisors as well as solutions to improve the management of academic advisors’ activity in the university environment. Vietnamese studies have not had many articles mentioned. Within the scope of the article, by the method of synthesizing documents from the Faculties, the Department of Political Affairs - Student Management, the authors have assessed the situation of management of academic advisors activity at Bac Lieu University (BLU) for the academic year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, thereby proposing measures to improve the management of academic advisors activity at BLU to meet requirements for innovation in education - training.
relevant articles, documents, and reports summarizing the academic advising work of the Faculty, and the Department at BLU in the academic years of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Methods of analysis and synthesis: are performed to process data sources to access valuable and relevant information and judgments relevant to the research problem.

SWOT method: assess the current situation, analyze the strengths and weaknesses in the work of the academic advisor and management of academic advisor activity, and find out the causes of the limitations that need to be solved, thereby proposing measures to manage the work at the school, and to meet requirements for innovation in education - training.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Overview of research works on the Academic advisor and management of Academic advisor’s activity

The academic advisor’s activity in training the credit system can be understood as a process of interaction between the academic advisor, students and faculties, and departments, in which the academic advisor uses some skills to conduct consulting and guiding activities, assist students in studying, practicing, and living at school effectively, achieving training goals [1]. Through the academic advisor, students will better understand the functional parts of the University, administrative procedures, social movement activities, policies, rights, and duties of students. An academic advisor is also one who encourages, motivates - and helps students develop their capacity to be able to solve personal problems on their own during their studies at the school.

Research on academic advisors has become one of the important fields that many scholars around the world have been doing. The United States has relied on many different points of view and theories, but the most common point among these theories is based on the individual characteristics of learners, respecting The difference of each individual in the acquisition of knowledge is also the new teaching perspective: “Students are the center”. In the late 1970s, student counseling gained a great deal of trust from students and was considered a profession. One of the most important events of this time was the formation of the National Advisory Association (NACADA) in the US in 1979 [2].

In Vietnam, in the period 2001-2009, there was no research on the academic advisor. In recent years, activities to evaluate the role of academic advisors in credit training have begun to be implemented by universities, and several articles written on academic activities have also started appearing in scientific journals. According to Nguyen Van Van (2009), “The curriculum is both a bridge between students and the school, as well as a consultant, so the curriculum needs to provide students with important information, and it is necessary to report information from students to the school. However, the consulting team is still not professional, has not fully promoted the role of mentoring for learners, and has no skills in performing their tasks”. Luu Thi Thuy (2013) researched “The current situation of managing the academic staff at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City” and proposed solutions to the management of the academic staff to improve the quality of the school’s academic activities, including 6 solution group. The solution groups have a dialectical relationship with each other to create a system of management solutions that affect the process of the administrative team [4].

“Through the reality of credit system training at universities in recent years, it has been shown that the implementation tasks of the academic advisor in general are not effective due to many different subjective and objective reasons, the academic advisor activities are still confused and limited. Some officials are not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, so the activities of the academic advisor have not been evaluated effectively, the academic advisor activities for students are still inadequate, the leaders have not built methods of management and evaluating the effectiveness of the support activities of the academic
advisor. Many academic advisors have not fulfilled their roles, leading to many students being forced to drop out of school.” [2].

Nguyen Thi Loan (2013) studies fostering lecturer academic advisors at Thai Nguyen University of Medicine and Pharmacy, focusing on assessing the capacity of the academic advisor and proposing measures to improve their capacity [5].

The Institute of Education Research - Ho Chi Minh City University of Education (2014) held a workshop on the role of academic advisors in credit system training at Vietnamese universities and colleges. The reports and opinions discussed and contributed revolved around the following main contents: The situation of academic advisor activity at universities and colleges: the academic advisor activity has not been effective yet because he is a lecturer, concurrently an academic advisor, so not investment for work, there is no reasonable salary and bonus regime, etc; Students are not satisfied and haven’t believed in the academic advisor, etc; Analysis of the role of academic advisor: Not only understand the training program, learning methods, and scientific research, but also know the training regulations and documents of the Ministry and the University clearly, and understand the activities of the students, etc; Proposing solutions to strengthen and promote the role of academic advisor, improve management efficiency and training quality: 1) issuing documents specifying the tasks, responsibilities and powers of academic advisors; fostering consulting capacity; 2) issuing a clear salary and bonus regulation, criteria for assigning advisors; 3) having criteria and standards for inspection and evaluation of consulting work; 4) building support tools for academic advisors… and some other solutions [6].

The management of academic advisor activity is the impact of the management subject through the implementation of management functions that affect the elements in the academic advisor activity to achieve the educational goals. Research on the management of academic advisors in the world and in Vietnam has been carried out from many different angles: Fostering and improving the capacity of academic advisors; Team development… In 2013, the Faculty of Education, University of Science and Technology organized a scientific conference “Sharing experience in teaching and managing students”, in which many articles were sharing about experiences in academic advisors’ activities. However, so far, there has been no research paper on the management of academic advisors at BLU.

3.2. Actual situation of managing academic advisors’ activities at Bac Lieu University

BLU is a public university, a multi-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary educational institution, and a university training institution in the Ca Mau Peninsula. On October 25, 2016, the Rector of the University of Science and Technology issued Decision No. 556/QD-DHBL promulgating the Regulation on training at university and college degrees according to the credit system. One of the biggest difficulties when converting from an annual system to a credit is that students are used to passively following schedules from high school levels, but when training according to the credit system, the training plan must be determined by the learner’s selection, by individual abilities, interests, and plans. To help students adapt and become independent in the university environment and study orientation each semester, and each academic year, academic advisors are considered an integral part, of ensuring the credit training system effectively. The organization of academic advisor activities in universities is a right, appropriate, and necessary policy. Aware of the importance of academic literature, BLU has made efforts to promote and enhance the role of academic advisors through the issuance of Decision No. 322/QD-DHBL on July 3rd, 2020 at BLU [7]. Management of academic advisors activity is an activity of a manager that has an oriented impact on the academic advisor’s system to effectively implement the educational and training objectives. The management of academic advisor activities at BLU includes:

**Managing the assignment of tasks for the academic advisor**

The process of assigning a lecturer to work as an academic advisor at BLU is as follows:

Step 1: At the beginning of each academic year, the Department assigns a lecturer to work as an academic advisor and sends the list to the Department of Political Affairs and Student Management.
Step 2: The Department of Political Affairs and Student Management decides on recognition of academic advisor vitae and submits it to the Rector for approval.

Step 3: The Department of Political Affairs and Student Management informs the approved decision to the Faculty/Department and relevant individuals.

Table 1: Assignment of academic advisors by Faculty/Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>596/QD-DHBL 06/11/2020</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2021-2022</td>
<td>409/QD-DHBL 04/11/2021</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of construction and training of Academic advisor

Usually, the academic advisors at BLU are the lecturers. To achieve good results in mentoring, BLU has developed a set of documents: the Academic Advisor Handbook and the Student Handbook, and organized training courses to improve the management and counseling skills of academic advisors.

Table 2: Training Materials for Academic Advisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File name</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advisor Handbook</td>
<td>188/QD-DHBL 09/3/2022</td>
<td>Help the Academic Advisor to understand clearly the regulations on OL work such as tasks, powers, working regime, reporting according to Decision 322; fully understand the regulations of university-college training under the HCTC, regulations on final exams, regulations on implementation of graduation theses and graduation modules for university students according to the credit system, regulations on assessment Evaluation of training results for university-college students, regulations on consideration and granting of incentive scholarships, sponsored scholarships, rewards and discipline for students...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Handbook</td>
<td>189/QD-DHBL 09/3/2022</td>
<td>Help students understand the school, its rules and regulations on training and student work. This is also a set of documents to help students understand the rules and regulations to guide, advise, and support students in the learning and training process.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Manage content, and activity plan of academic advisor

At the beginning of the academic year, each academic advisor prepares an activity plan. The plan is built based on determining the goals of the work including the resources, the arrangement of resources to ensure the implementation of those goals, and must set the targets, and specific solutions.

Every month, the academic advisor organizes a class meeting to capture information about the class and the activity “Study and follow Ho Chi Minh’s thought, morality and style”; At the end of the semester and the year, the academic advisor considers students’ training scores. All reports on class meetings, activities, review of training scores, etc are submitted to the Department of Political Affairs and Student Management. Through these reports, the Faculty/Department leaders and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction grasp the general situation of the classes to promptly adjust and impact management to better support the teaching and learning activities.

Managing the inspection and supervision of the work efficiency of the academic advisor

This activity takes place continuously in every stage of the management of academic advisors’ activity. Typically, assess the progress and quality of the activities performed to what extent compared to the plan, set targets, shortcomings, causes, and problems
arising during the implementation process to handle them, management and learn from experience for future management or to adjust the plan when necessary.

Leaders of the Faculty/Department check and evaluate the academic advisor through regulatory compliance at the time of monthly academic meetings with faculty leaders, class meetings, and reporting regimes as prescribed in Article 7 chapter III of Decision 322.

Every year, the Student Affairs and Management Department organizes a Student Dialogue Conference with school leaders and functional departments. This is an opportunity for the Board of Directors, administrators, faculty leaders, and academic advisors to grasp the thoughts and aspirations of students, and promptly answer questions, suggestions, and recommendations of students about training and work, students, academic activities, policies for students, and issues related to learning and training. This is also an activity to promote the implementation of the regulation on democracy in teaching and learning activities, contributing to improving the management efficiency of the University.

Manage appropriate evaluation, reward, and discipline for academic advisor

The management of academic advisor activities at BLU is the purposeful and planned impact of the management system on the activities of academic advisors and related forces to maximize the effectiveness of the activities to students, helping them to understand the regulations, regulations, study programs, learning methods, etc, from which to select the program, develop a study plan suitable to the learning capacity and personal conditions, contributing to limiting the risks in learning, improving the quality of training in schools.

Faculty leaders regularly monitor and urge the academic advisor to report and properly perform their assigned functions and tasks. Every month, the leadership of the faculty in charge of the curriculum organizes a meeting of the curriculum to understand the difficult situation of each academic institution in the process of performing its tasks, as well as to summarize and evaluate the aspects that have been done and have not been able to learn from experience.

At the end of each academic year, the Department of Information Technology-Management Students organizes a Conference to summarize the activities of academic advisors, to reward time for effective work, to adjust the ineffective work and even to discipline those who fail to complete their tasks or allow mistakes to occur. The Board of Management decided to reward 11 academic advisors with achievements in the curriculum work at the Conference to summarize the academic advisor work in the academic year 2021 - 2022, and 9 academic advisors in the academic year 2022 - 2023. The conference was also an opportunity for the Board of Directors to listen. listen to the exchange of ideas and suggestions from the academic institutions and the faculties on the regulations and processes related to the academic advisor activity, and propose solutions to improve the effectiveness of the academic advisors’ work for the new academic year.

3.3. Evaluation of the results of academic advisor work in the academic year of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022

To objectively evaluate the results of the management of the academic advisor activity at BLU, the authors conducted a survey based on the Summary report on the results of academic advising of the units in the academic year of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 [8], [9] specifically:

### Table 3. Total number of students and consulting contents in the academic year of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Number of students consulted/Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Learning activities</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Scientific research activities</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.3.1. Positive results

According to Table 3, in general, the total number of students are consulted on learning contents; scientific research, regimes, policies, rewards, discipline, scholarships; vocational guidance and employment; Psychology, health, and other contents in each faculty in the academic year 2021-2022 all increase compared to the school year 2020-2021. The academic advisor has fully performed the responsibilities of the academic advisor according to Decision No. 322/QD-DHBL dated July 3, 2020:

+ 100% of academic advisors planning to be implemented for the whole school year;

+ 100% of the survey collects student information in the class from the beginning of the school year, so it is convenient for statistics and reporting, especially when necessary for communication with students and families.

+ On political and ideological work: Monthly class meeting, combining Ho Chi Minh ideological activities on practical topics; Propagating ideas, helping students always feel proud to be a member of BLU, directing students to cultivate ethics, have a professional working style, bring cultural values and brand of BLU to the market labor; Promptly correct and review students who have deviant thoughts, poor communication thinking, and disrespect for teachers.

+ About study work

Closely monitor the learning situation by discussing with the subject teachers through taking care of the class schedule, promptly surveying the learning situation of the modules, grasping the advantages and disadvantages of students promptly discussing with subject teachers to best support students in the process of acquiring knowledge of the course.

In the context of the Covid-19 epidemic and learning through LMS, academic advisor has grasped the online teaching and learning situation of students, quickly found a way to promote good points and handle limitations in the teaching and learning process; Cheering and encouraging quite good students, motivating students to study and have a progressive spirit, striving to receive scholarships from the school.

Establishing a group of study counseling, career counseling, finding internships, and still keeping in touch so that members can share about employment situations, share vacancies; Review scholarships to encourage open and transparent learning.

+ About movement and training activities: Paying attention and remind students to practice “school etiquette”, participate in community activities, activities of clubs, and mass organizations to support skills training, and help students have an environment for exchange and development.

+ Other work: Timely implementation of documents, scholarship policies, tuition fee exemption, and reduction regimes, regulations on reward, student discipline, regulations on boarding, outpatient, regulations on library center, health care, health insurance, party development among students, scientific research, academic warnings, preferential loans for students..., announcements, learning issues, incoming movements Students, reminding and monitoring,
giving specific advice on how to evaluate learning and training points; guide to make a study plan in stages and have an appropriate study plan; disseminate the school’s regulations, regimes, reward, and discipline policies to each student through the following forms: dissemination in class, sending documents to the class’s data archive, especially popular in-depth to the staff members, timely support when students have information needs.

Communicate with the class regularly via group zalo, have class meetings to promptly grasp the learning as well as psychology and health to advise and answer students’ questions about many issues related to processes and procedures administrative.

- To the students

+ Students attend school relatively regularly, have a serious spirit of learning and solidarity in studying and implement the school’s rules and regulations, pay the tuition fee in full, take the final exam seriously; understand the rules and regulations on study and exam form; know how to use the LMS system to submit assignments and download study materials; know how to use training management software to view learning and training scores; well implement the documents deployed by the curriculum to the class, meeting regularly every month. Most students have a good cooperative spirit in studying and performing assigned tasks.

+ Students actively participate in movement activities, sports, and other community activities organized by schools, faculties, and mass organizations; Activities of the clubs support many skills for students and are an academic environment that helps students have a team-giving environment, development, and high solidarity.

+ 100% of students participated in thoroughly grasping the Party’s resolutions and the State’s legal policies with a serious attitude; 100% participated in health insurance; In the school year 2020-2021, and 2021-2022, no students are violating the disciplinary level.

+ Students are provided with all conditions by the school to study, practice practice, research, and movement activities. Students receive encouragement scholarships from schools, companies, enterprises, domestic and international organizations...

Most of the academic staff have enthusiasm and experience in the work of academic literature, which has created a bridge between students and the faculty and functional departments and units in the university. In general, the academic records at BLU have shown an important role in the management of the credit training system, each curriculum is a key factor in the school-student relationship and is a consultant on learning, training programs, scientific research, training, career orientation, as well as emotional counseling for students during their study and life at the school. The curriculum is considered an integral part and ensures the smooth and efficient operation of the education-training process under the credit training system so that the student work has achieved many positive results as described above.

3.3.2. Limitations

- Academic Advisor

+ There are still some incomplete or sketchy academic advisor documents.

+ A part of the academic advisor is still indifferent to the consulting work, and not interested in the class. Therefore, the issue of implementation and implementation of some guiding documents is still slow or not as required, the participation in activities is sometimes delayed, and not 100% guaranteed.

- Student

+ Regarding study: The situation of absenteeism from class meetings and absences from school is still quite a lot, mainly in the case of some individual students, often absent from school; Some students have not focused on studying, are not aware of their professional skills and are not passionate about their chosen profession; The academic results of some students are still low, there is still a debt of subjects, and scientific research among students is still limited; Many students have not paid tuition fees on time.

+ Regarding training: There is still a situation where students violate the uniform regulations when going to school such as not wearing nameplates, or wearing slippers on Mondays; Some students have not actively participated in movement activities that affect the collective activities.

3.3.3. Cause

- Academic Advisor

Most of the academic advisors carry out many jobs at the same time: teaching, scientific research,
union work, etc., so it is difficult to achieve the highest efficiency.

Many changes have been applied, especially to training regulations and student work regulations, some academic advisors have not responded to students in time because they do not understand the regulations and have not actively contacted functional units to be supported.

- **Student**

  + Because the school’s training regulations do not prohibit exams, students, despite being reminded many times, still miss school; Some individual students are not interested in learning, as well as announcements, documents, and class activities. Some students are too lazy to access information, although there are many information channels to support students, they do not actively follow the announcements of the school and are not conscious of carrying out their learning and training tasks. to yourself and your family. The academic advisor has reminded me many times but the situation has not improved.

  + In some cases, the family is also less interested in the student’s learning, although the academic advisor relates and mobilizes the family to cooperate in reminding.

  + Students participate in part-time jobs, so the time for studying and scientific research is limited.

The results of the analysis of the actual situation of the management of the academic advisor’s activities, the actual status of the academic advisor’s activities, and the assessment of students show that: Most of the academic advisors are aware of the importance of the academic advisor’s activities. The results of the collection of opinions from the faculties have shown the influencing factors, the existing limitations, and the basic causes of the management of the academic advisor activities and the quality of the academic advisor activities. That is the basis for the authors to propose intervention solutions.

3.4. **Some measures to manage academic advisor activities at Bac Lieu University**

Firstly, raising awareness for staff, lecturers, and students about training according to the credit system and academic advisor activity

- For managers, academic advisor

Student management is a coordination work between the Board of Directors - functional departments - specialized faculties and the academic staff. Therefore, it is necessary to thoroughly understand the knowledge that the work of academic literature is not the job of the advisor alone, but all managers, experts, and lecturers, when students need to exchange, have the responsibility to listen and answer.

Raise awareness based on motivating and encouraging individuals and collectives to learn, research, and master the regulations and regulations of training;

Raise awareness about the functions and tasks of the academic advisors, the contents of the consultant to be implemented, and the need to conduct the academic advisor activities in the training according to the financial system; promote the active and creative role of the subjects in the assigned work.

Help the school curriculum to understand the process and skills of conducting effective teaching activities for students; Clearly define the qualities and skills required of the academic advisors.

- For students

In the management of academic advisor activity, students are the object of indirect influence of the management subject. This effect does not occur only once, but continuously many times. Therefore, for the above management measures to be effective, it is impossible to ignore the propaganda so that students have the correct awareness of the role of the academic advisor, as well as the rights and responsibilities of students in the training according to the standards of the credit training system. From there, students will have close and timely coordination with the academic advisor in individual and collective activities.

**Second, organize training to improve the capacity of academic advisors**

- Determining the capacity of the academic advisors as a basis for organizing training;

- Managers and academic advisors must be properly aware of the meaning of fostering academic advising capacity, thereby actively participating in training activities to improve their mentoring capacity.
The content and training program must derive from actual needs and have practical effects on teachers performing the task of supporting students.

- Create motivation, and create an environment for the curriculum to improve the capacity of academic counseling for students through policies and regimes for teachers.

Third, strengthen the direction, supervision, and evaluation of academic advisor activities

- Strengthen inspection and supervision of infrastructure activities to accurately identify the current status of quality and efficiency of work, considering the level of achievement with the expected goals and the entire set of plans, from there, there are correct orientations for work, sanctions for handling individuals who do not complete tasks.

  (1) Supervising the academic advisors in planning;
  (2) Supervising the academic advisors in organizing and implementing the action plan

  Conditions for taking action:
  - There is the consensus, leadership, and timely direction of the Board of Directors;
  - There is consensus of departments and faculties in the University and close coordination in the management of academic advisor activity.

  - The examiner and the subject of the assessment are properly aware of the purpose of the assessment, not done in a loose manner or formality. There is coordination with functional departments, faculties, and training service units to organize academic advisor activity.

Fourthly, perfecting regimes and policies for civil service workers

The policy regime is one of the factors affecting the operation of the academic advisor. Good implementation of policies and regimes for academic advisors will create a force to promote academic advisor activities. Therefore, at BLU, besides the current norm for calculating the number of hours of academic work, which is 37.5 periods/class/school year, the Board of Education needs to study additional support and allowance regimes according to internal spending regulations to academic advisors is assured to complete the task.

Timely encouragement for outstanding achievements, commending outstanding individuals.

4. Conclusion

The academic advisor at the university in training according to the financial system has an extremely important role, directly affecting the learning quality of students. Academic advisor activities are carried out according to their assigned functions and tasks to advise and support students in making study plans and learning methods to learn according to their capacity and learn according to their needs. Management of academic advisor activities at BLU is performed according to management functions including planning, consulting, organizing, directing the implementation of consulting activities, and inspecting and evaluating the achieved results of the activities.

The article has systematically researched the management of academic advisor activities, assessed the current situation, analyzed the strengths and weaknesses in the academic advisor’s activities managed the activities of the archivist, and found out the causes of the necessary limitations. Thereby proposing 4 measures to manage the curriculum work at BLU to meet the requirements of education and training reform in the coming time.

  - Measure 1: Raise awareness among staff, lecturers, and students about training under the credit system and the academic advisor activities.
  - Measure 2: Organize training to improve the capacity of the academic advisors.
  - Measure 3: Strengthening direction, monitoring, and evaluation of academic advisor activities.
  - Measure 4: Completing regimes and policies for academic advisors.

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