"ASK ME ANYTHING" (AMA) CONCEPT

PROJECT: EDUCATION SYSTEM CHANGE WITH EU-Accession (EdAccession)

Project name:	Education System Change with EU-Accession
Project acronym:	EdAccession
Project number:	101139414 — EdAccession — ERASMUS-EDU-2023-VIRT-EXCH
Call:	ERASMUS-EDU-2023-VIRT-EXCH
Topic:	ERASMUS-EDU-2023-VIRT-EXCH
Type of action:	ERASMUS Lump Sum Grants Granting authority: European Education and Culture Executive Agency Grant managed through EU Funding & Tenders
Project starting date:	fixed date: 1 February 2024
Project end date:	31 January 2027
Project duration:	36 months

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

The "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) concept is an innovative approach designed to directly address the questions and concerns of students regarding the EU accession and its impact on their education and future careers. Recognizing the significance of informed and interactive engagement, this initiative aims to create a dynamic platform where students can freely inquire about various aspects related to EU educational opportunities, employment prospects, and the challenges associated with EU integration.

As Ukraine and Moldova prepare for EU accession, students from these countries face numerous uncertainties and seek clarity on how this transition will affect their academic and professional trajectories. The AMA sessions provide a structured yet flexible environment for students to pose their questions to a diverse panel of experts, academic advisors, industry professionals, EU students and alumni who have experienced EU education and mobility programs firsthand.

This concept is grounded in the principles of accessibility, inclusivity, and continuous improvement. By offering regular, focused sessions that cater to specific topics of interest, the AMA initiative ensures that students receive detailed and relevant information. The inclusion of a pre-session question collection and a voting system for prioritizing questions guarantees that the most pressing issues are addressed, while real-time interaction during live sessions fosters a personalized and engaging experience.

Furthermore, the AMA concept emphasizes post-session follow-up, with comprehensive summaries and additional educational resources provided to ensure that the information shared is easily accessible and beneficial in the long term. Feedback from participants is actively sought to refine and adapt the sessions, ensuring they remain effective and aligned with students' evolving needs.

In summary, the "Ask Me Anything" concept represents a proactive and student-centric approach to facilitating knowledge exchange and supporting students through the complex process of EU accession. By leveraging technology and expert insights, this initiative aims to empower students with the information they need to make informed decisions and successfully navigate their educational and career paths within the EU framework.

Platform Selection and Setup

Online Platform. Choosing the right platform for the AMA (Ask Me Anything) sessions is critical for ensuring accessibility and engagement. The chosen platform should allow for threaded conversations, upvoting questions, and provide notifications for new responses. Additionally, the platform must be easily accessible to all students, including those with disabilities, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards.

Technical Support. Technical support is essential for the smooth operation of AMA sessions. This includes ensuring the platform can handle high traffic, particularly during live sessions when many students might be online simultaneously. The technical setup should also prioritize data security, protecting personal information and ensuring privacy. Regular maintenance and updates will be necessary to keep the platform running smoothly and to incorporate new features based on user feedback. A dedicated technical support team should be available to address any issues promptly, ensuring minimal disruption to the sessions.

Expert Panel Composition

Diverse Expertise. The expert panel should consist of a diverse group of individuals who can address the wide range of questions students might have. This includes academic advisors who can speak to the educational implications, industry professionals who can discuss employment opportunities and trends, EU students and alumni who have firsthand experience with EU education and mobility programs. This diversity ensures that all aspects of students' concerns can be addressed comprehensively.

Regular Participation. Scheduling regular participation from these experts is crucial to maintain consistent engagement. Experts should be available for each AMA session, and their availability should be well-publicized in advance. This regular participation helps build a sense of trust and reliability among students, knowing that their questions will be addressed by knowledgeable individuals. Additionally, having a consistent roster of experts helps in building rapport between students and the experts, fostering a more open and engaging discussion environment.

Student Engagement and Promotion

Awareness Campaign. An effective awareness campaign is essential to inform students about the AMA sessions. This can include email newsletters, social media posts, announcements on university websites, and postings on student forums. The campaign should highlight the benefits of participating in the AMA sessions, such as gaining valuable insights, getting their questions answered by experts, and connecting with peers. Visual content like posters and videos can also be used to capture students' attention and generate interest.

Incentives for Participation. To encourage participation, incentives can be offered. These might include certificates of participation, which can be useful for students' resumes, extra credit points for certain courses, or entries into raffles for educational resources like textbooks or online course subscriptions. These incentives not only boost participation but also add value to the students' academic and professional development.

Session Scheduling and Topics

Regular Sessions. Scheduling AMA sessions at regular intervals, such as monthly or once a quarter, ensures ongoing engagement and provides students with multiple opportunities to participate. The schedule should be published well in advance so students can plan accordingly. Regular sessions help maintain momentum and keep the AMA concept fresh in students' minds. However, such sessions should not be too frequent, for example every week. Since online sessions will be held during the educational process and students have their own academic workload, and Ukrainian students face constant power outages, frequent sessions are not an effective solution and will not be able to provide a sufficient target audience. Also, due to the identified risks, we plan to record each online session held in order to expand the target audience and students who were unable to attend could do so later.

Focused Topics. Each session should have a focused topic to streamline the discussion and provide in-depth insights. Topics can include scholarships, credit transfer, language requirements, employment opportunities, and more. Also, the basis for selecting topics for online sessions will be a document that was created as a result of an analysis of the interests and needs of students in Moldova and Ukraine CATALOG OF NEEDS WISHES AND DESIRES. This document outlines the main topics that are most interesting to students. Based on these topics, a plan for the conduct and topics of

the sessions will be created. By focusing on specific areas, the sessions can provide more detailed and valuable information, ensuring that students' questions are addressed thoroughly.

Question Collection and Prioritization

Pre-Session Question Collection. Allowing students to submit questions in advance gives experts time to prepare detailed responses. This can be done through an online form or a dedicated thread on the AMA platform. Pre-collection of questions helps in organizing the session more efficiently and ensures that the most relevant and common questions are prioritized. Thus, it is planned to use a dual approach, namely the use of the already conducted analysis of student needs (CATALOG OF NEEDS WISHES AND DESIRES), as well as the collection of questions that is constantly ongoing during the project.

Voting System. Implementing a voting system where students can upvote questions they find most relevant helps in prioritizing the most pressing issues. This democratic approach ensures that the session addresses the topics of greatest concern to the majority of students. It also encourages engagement as students feel their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

Live Session Management

Moderator Role. A moderator is essential for facilitating the AMA sessions, ensuring smooth communication, and managing the flow of questions and answers. The moderator's responsibilities include introducing the session, presenting the experts, guiding the discussion, and addressing any technical issues that arise. A good moderator can keep the session engaging, maintain order, and ensure that all questions are answered in a timely manner.

Real-Time Interaction. Encouraging real-time interaction during live sessions fosters a dynamic and engaging discussion environment. Students should be able to ask follow-up questions, seek clarifications, and interact directly with the experts. This interaction helps in creating a more personalized experience and ensures that students' concerns are addressed comprehensively.

Post-Session Follow-Up

Summary and Documentation. After each session, a summary should be compiled and published, including the questions asked and the detailed answers provided. This summary, along with the video recordings of the sessions, should be accessible to students who could not attend the live session. Documentation of the sessions ensures that the valuable information shared is preserved and can be referenced in the future.

Feedback Collection. Collecting feedback from participants helps in continually improving the format and content of future sessions. Feedback can be gathered through online surveys, comment sections, or direct emails. Understanding students' experiences and suggestions can help in refining the AMA sessions, making them more effective and relevant.

Integration with Educational Resources

Resource Linking. Integrating the AMA sessions with educational resources, such as articles, guides, and official documentation related to the discussed topics, enhances the value of the sessions.

Providing links to these resources helps students further explore the topics of interest and gain a deeper understanding.

Learning Modules. Developing supplementary learning modules based on frequently asked questions can address recurring themes and common concerns comprehensively. These modules can be part of an online learning platform or provided as downloadable resources, offering additional support to students.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation

Monitor Engagement. Tracking student engagement and participation metrics is essential to identify trends and areas for improvement. Monitoring how many students participate, which questions are most popular, and the overall satisfaction levels helps in understanding the effectiveness of the sessions.

Adapt Strategies. Based on feedback and participation data, strategies can be adapted to ensure the AMA sessions remain relevant and beneficial. This might include changing the frequency of sessions, introducing new topics, or altering the format to better meet students' needs. Continuous improvement ensures that the AMA concept evolves to better serve the student community.

CONCLUSIONS

The "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) concept serves as a vital tool in bridging the knowledge gap for students navigating the complexities of EU accession. Through its structured yet flexible format, the AMA initiative addresses the diverse and evolving needs of students from Ukraine and Moldova, providing them with direct access to expert insights on EU educational opportunities, employment prospects, and the associated challenges.

By fostering an environment of open dialogue and real-time interaction, the AMA sessions empower students to seek clarity on critical issues, thereby enhancing their understanding and preparedness for future academic and professional endeavors within the EU. The inclusion of a diverse expert panel ensures that all aspects of EU integration are covered comprehensively, while the pre-session question collection and voting system ensure that the most pertinent and pressing questions are prioritized and addressed.

Post-session follow-ups and the provision of additional educational resources ensure that the knowledge shared during the sessions is accessible and beneficial in the long term. The continuous collection of feedback and adaptation of strategies further guarantee that the AMA concept remains relevant and effective in meeting students' needs.

In essence, the AMA concept is not just a platform for answering questions but a proactive, student-centric approach that equips students with the information and confidence they need to successfully navigate the EU accession process. It exemplifies the commitment to supporting students through this significant transition, ensuring they are well-informed and prepared to seize the opportunities that come with EU membership. As Ukraine and Moldova move closer to EU integration, the AMA initiative stands as a testament to the importance of informed, engaged, and empowered students in shaping a successful future.