

## **Introduction**

The Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica is a higher education institution of the Islamic Community in BiH and a member of the University of Zenica. The Faculty continued the work of the Islamic Pedagogical Academy in Zenica, which was founded in 1993 out of a need for education of staff for professional and qualified teaching of Islamic education in public schools, and it is the first educational institution of that level and character in our country.

For the last 20 years from its founding, the faculty has become a respectable and fairly developed institution. The educational process includes 63 teachers and associates (39 Doctors of Sciences, 17 assistants with Master's degrees and 7 teaching assistants). Thirteen employees are engaged in administrative and technical jobs.

## **The Study Programs**

Educational plans and programs at the Faculty are in accordance with ECTS standards and are occasionally innovated and adjusted to new pedagogical experiences and scientific achievements. All courses and fields of education are carried out in accordance with contemporary developments, which is supported by constant enrichment of the library with new materials, by teaching with a help of a technical equipment, by contemporary methods and the use of the Internet, print and electronic media.

At the University of Zenica, the Faculty has four parent chairs: The Chair for Social Pedagogy, the Chair for Islamic Thought and Civilisation, the Chair for Religious Sciences and the Chair for Oriental Languages and Literature.

Students of the Faculty can have regular, regular (self-financing) and part-time status. The Departments of Islamic Education and Preschool Education have 3+2+3 concept of study, whereas the Departments of Social Pedagogy and Arabic Language and Literature have 4+1+3 concept of study.

After completing the first cycle of study, graduates of the Department of Islamic Education acquire a title of *Bachelor of Islamic Education (a Teacher of Islamic Education)*, graduates of the Department of Social Pedagogy acquire a title of *Bachelor of Science in Social Pedagogy*, graduates of the Department of Preschool Education acquire a title of *Bachelor of Preschool Education (a Teacher of Preschool Education)*, whereas graduates of the Department of Arabic Language and Literature acquire a title of *Bachelor of Arabic Language and Literature (a Teacher of Arabic Language and Literature)*.

At the Department of Islamic Education students acquire knowledge based on an educational plan and program which encompasses courses related to general, religious, linguistic and pedagogical-psychological education.

The Programme and the courses at the Department of Social Pedagogy include contemporary scientific pedagogical and psychological disciplines, but they also create a specific paradigm for social-pedagogical problems from a perspective of Islamic spirituality. The graduates, with their special professional competencies, are qualified to work in education, healthcare, social care, police, judiciary, non-governmental sector and science institutions.

Students of the Department of Preschool Education acquire competencies for educational work with children from infancy to school years. The program consists of: pedagogical-psychological

courses, methodological courses, general courses, and courses that are a professional and scientific basis for their future job, courses that qualify students for scientific research, and courses with a religious component.

The Study of Arabic Language and Literature is based on contemporary European and World demands and standards of foreign language teaching in early and later school ages. The study enables students to acquire competencies of broad professional and scientific applicability in various domains of cultural and public life, such as: educational institutions, libraries, museums, embassies, consulates and representative bodies, media and communication, oil and water industry, international finances and law, foreign languages centres and centres for interpretation, and fast growing tourism.

### **Scientific Research Work**

Apart from educational, the Faculty deals with scientific research work. A significant number of researches have been carried out, a scientific-professional gathering “What kind of religious education do we need in schools” (1996) has been held, as well as three scientific conferences with international participation “System of prevention of social exclusion of the youth” (2006, 2007, 2010) and a scientific conference with international participation “Theory and practice of early education” (2012). A great number of books and publications of teachers and associates of the Faculty have been published, as well as ten issues of the Proceedings, which are published annually.

### **Students’ Practice**

The special focus is put on practical education of students for their vocation. The Department of Islamic Education pays attention to pedagogical, didactical and methodical readiness of students. Pedagogical, didactical and methodical practice is held in primary schools that are selected by specific criteria and standards. The Department of Social Pedagogy provides practice for work in the following institutions: schools, centres for mental health, KPZ (Zenica Prison), special primary and secondary schools, homes for the elderly and children in need, correctional centres for minors, communes for drug addicts, sports club of their choice. Every form of students’ practical work is accompanied by a half-structured observation protocol and by professional mentorship.

At the Department of Preschool Education students are engaged in pedagogical practice, methodical practice within a framework of methodologies of educational work, and individual methodical practice.

### **Historical Retrospective**

2002- public interest in financing the Academy was determined by the act of the Assembly of Zenica-Doboj Canton

2004- the contract of joining the Academy to the University of Zenica was signed

2005- the decision on transforming a two-year into a three-year study at the Department of Islamic Education was brought by the Council of the Islamic Community in BiH

2005- the decision on a previous agreement for an Educational plan and program of the Department of Social Pedagogy was brought by the Senate of the University of Zenica. So in 2005/06 the Department of Social Pedagogy began its work by the decision of the Assembly of Zenica-Doboj Canton.

2006- the decision on changing the name of *the Islamic Pedagogical Academy in Zenica* to the *Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica* was brought by the Council of the Islamic Community in BiH

2008- the first generation of students of Preschool Education was enrolled

2009- the postgraduate Masters study “Quality management in religious education” was initiated at the Department of Islamic Education  
2010- postgraduate MA studies were initiated at the Department of Social Pedagogy  
2012- the Department of Arabic Language and Literature was founded. Classes will start in acad. 2013/2014.

From its foundation until today, 2716 students has enrolled in the Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica. In acad. 2012/13, 566 students (regular and part-time) enrolled in all of three departments. Until today, the Faculty numbers the following graduates: 403 primary school teachers and 318 high-school teachers of Islamic education, 146 social pedagogues and 64 teachers of Preschool education. The postgraduate study at the Department of Islamic Education numbers 3 postgraduates with Master’s degrees.