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Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



## **SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Sumgayit State University**

**SSU**

**Sumgayit 2018**

## Introduction

Sumgayit State University (SSU) was established on the base of Azerbaijan Industrial Institute on June 13, 2000. Rector of SSU is Professor E.B. Huseynov. SSU has 7 faculties:

1. Economy and Management
2. Engineering
3. Mathematics
4. Physics and Electro-energy
5. Chemistry and Biology
6. History and Geography
7. Philology

SSU has 27 chairs, 5 research laboratories, about 15 departments, 2 libraries and 5 Centres.

6000 bachelors, 256 masters, 36 PhD students and 57 researchers study in our university.

6 members of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, 40 doctors of science and professors; 92 PhD, associated professors, 200 senior lecturers, teachers and 402 assistants are working in SSU.

Journal of “Scientific News” are published in 2 directions: natural and technical sciences and humanities. The articles are published in 3 languages: Azerbaijani, Russian and English.

web page of Sumgayit State University is in 3 languages: Azerbaijan, English, Russian. However, some information regarding TEMPUS project is in German and in French, too. [www.sdu.az](http://www.sdu.az)

One of the main departments of SSU is International Cooperation Department. This department was established in 2001. SSU cooperates with Turkey, Russia, Iran, Georgia, Poland, UK, The USA, Italy, Spain, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Holland, Germany, Greece, Finland, Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Korea, Israel and other world country universities.

SSU has been participating at the international projects since 2002. 7 TEMPUS projects are successful completed, 3 ERASMUS + projects are active.

3 new ERASMUS+ (LPEB coordinator – France; ERASMUS + PETRA – coordinator – Spain; and ERASMUS+ EQAC –coordinator – Azerbaijan) projects are active.

## PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT AREAS OF SSU

### 1. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

#### a. Strategic Management Process of the university

The supreme governing body of the University is the Scientific Council. The Scientific council is the elective body. The Ministry of Education of Republic of Azerbaijan and the charter itself regulates its activities. The Rector leads the activities of the University. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan assigns and dismisses the Rector of the university. Vice-rectors of University are appointed by the Minister of Education among candidates recommended by the rector of the University. Faculty is academic, scientific and administrative unit of the University. The Scientific Council carries out general management of the university faculties.

#### b. Vision and Mission statement of the university

The University Scientific Council determines vision and mission of the university. The Vision of the university is to become a leading research institution in social – humanitarian fields in the region and competitive with world universities. The Mission of the University is to prepare skilled specialists for the Azerbaijani marketplace who satisfy the market’s demand.

#### c. Strategic Planning Documents and Their Content

Strategic planning documents of the university are Statute of the university and the Strategic Plan. The Statutes is the foundation document of the university, which defines all strategic aspects, and limitations of the university's activities. University Strategy plan is based on State Strategy on the Development of the Education approved by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 24 October 2013 and Action Plan on Implementation of Strategy due to the decree of the president of Azerbaijan Republic on 19 January of 2015.

**d. Relevance of the Strategy and its Coherence with Vision and Mission**

Sumgayit State University develops its strategic plans in 10 years for 2015-2025. Every faculty administration decides a ten-year roadmap roundly and proposes it to the university authority for final decision. The authority raises the proposed plan in the monthly university academic board for vote. If approved the plan is permitted for implementation. The short term and medium term goals are clearly stated in the strategic plan and they are to be consistently applied under supervision of the faculty administrative board periodically.

**Implementation of the strategy**

The assigned delegates by the rector regularly control the steps of the Strategic Plan. Besides, by the end of the year all faculty Deans and Head of Departments have to present their yearly report to the Scientific Council. The report is monitored by the Council members and is open to comments. At length, the report is proposed for vote.

**2. UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

**a. University organizational management structure**

The Rector as advised by the University Scientific council approves the Structure of the University. The Rector assigns heads of the administrative units (with the exception of branches) of the University. The system consists of the Rector, Vice-rectors, Faculty and Departments, Administrative Departments, Centers, and Student Unions. All departments and faculties are represented in University Scientific Council.

**The Effectiveness of Decision-making**

Since decisions pertaining to the development of the university units are discussed in the Scientific Council, the decision making process is relatively effective at SSU. The Council members approve new teaching materials, PhD dissertation topics and supervisions, budget allocation issues.

**b. Student involvement in institutional governance**

Student Union, Student Scientific Union, Student Sport Union enroll in university activities. Heads of these Unions have to report their yearlong activities at the University Scientific Council. The faculty administration considers student complaints about teaching and examination procedure. However, a routine survey of student satisfaction is not implemented within the university. Based on the last survey among the students, student involvement in decision-making of the university is low. Students argue that their arguments are not considered while preparing the study programs.

**3. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**a. Selection, appointment, promotion and dismissal of academic and administrative staff**

Selection, appointment, promotion and dismissal of academic and administrative staff are implemented by the approval of the Rector. Centre for Human Capital Management is in charge of recruitment and dismissal procedures in the university. In special cases the selection and

dismissal decisions are consulted in the University Scientific Council. All the procedures are coherent with the Labor Code of Azerbaijan Republic. Trainings for the staff are not organized by HR.

#### **b. Staff and students development**

SSU prioritizes personnel development and training activity. SSU signed memorandum with International projects and training Center. Due to this MOM trainers come to our university and trains our students and staff. Additionally we should mention that, SSU joined to ERASMUS+PETRA project in 2016. Teaching and training center was established the frame of this project Career Center. The main goal and objectives of this center is to provide training for university teachers and students. The centers functions under the strategy of the university. Successful specialists are regularly (once a month) invited to the university to deliver Master Classes to students and staff.

However, according to the survey results among the university staff, employees are not satisfied with these activities and complain about the lack of dissemination of trainings among staff.

#### **c. Remuneration (awards) of work and motivation of staff**

Remuneration is implemented according to the state legislations and Labor Code of the Azerbaijan Republic. Beginning from 2017 a new remuneration strategy has been approved which highlights differentiation in staff salaries based on individual performance (40% Teaching performance, 40% Academic performance, 20 % Self-development). The performance evaluation of academic staff was held in 2016-2017 and results were announced. Certificates, honor diplomas are also presented to the university staff for their successful works and research activity.

However, monetary incentives have not been introduced yet because of budget constraints. Based on survey results, the university has not succeeded to implement successful remuneration program of staff. Since the infrastructure needs renovation an evaluation of the administration is not organized, it means that the staff feels isolation from the administration.

#### **d. Staff satisfaction**

Currently, staff satisfaction is evaluated through faculty meetings. Individual faculty member applications for betterment, complaints and open discussion meetings are main methods for measuring staff performance. However, we do not conduct anonymous staff satisfaction surveys.

#### **e. Participation of staff in international cooperation projects and mobility programs**

SSU supports international cooperation in academic field. The university has international cooperation with world universities, agreements, and exchange programs with foreign higher education institutions. Academic staffs of the university participate in mobility activities and visit partner institutions in the frame of the projects. After the mobility, staff must share their experience and thoughts with the faculty members and students. They are encouraged to apply newly adapted skills and knowledge during teaching and research activities. Currently no special treatment is considered for the exchange staff and students. However, these faculty members generally have privilege in promotion processes. Five (5) teaching staff members participated in Mevlana (Turkey) mobility program. 1 student participated in Mevlana Exchange program. Due to the lack of English speaking students and teachers we do not make exchange in ERASMUS+ KA 1 programs.

### **4. EVALUATION AND QUALITY CONTROL SECTOR**

In order to bring the Azerbaijan Education System to European standards, Sumgait State University has been assigned new functions for new structures. So, new sections have been set up to implement these functions. The section "Evaluation and quality control" was

established on 02.10.2015 under the "Regulations on Structural Changes". The main function of the department is preparation for the academic year, the activities of faculties and chairs, the development of subject programs taught on specialties, syllabus, teaching methodology and textbooks, intermediate exams, and control teachers and students during their lessons.

- Collects information from the departments on conducting open lessons during each semester, overseeing and reporting on the lessons with the methodological council.

Unfortunately, below mentioned sections are not reliable. There is not a Quality Assurance Center at SSU. It is only sector. SSU has not Quality plan forms.

## **5. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **Procedures for Initiating, Monitoring and Periodic Review of the Programs and Activities**

The Faculty professors and staff, as well as the university administration initiate the University programs and activities. All lecture materials and programs need to be approved by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and the Academic Committee who are members of the Scientific Council of the university. Unfortunately, periodical review and update of study materials are not common. Discussions over renewal of study materials are not held frequently and no other parts (stakeholders) are involved in the process. Another issue is a fixed study program standards determined by the Ministry of Education, which are not eligible for any change.

#### **a. Renewing of the study programs considering student oriented studies**

Rector of the university periodically assigns delegates to monitor and evaluate faculty performance and lecture materials. However, study programs are not easily renewed due to government standards determined by Ministry of Education.

#### **b. Academic support**

All faculties have faculty library facilities supported by the University Main Library. University lecturers have consulting hours where they meet students for further discussion of the lecture topics. All students are eligible for excellence and academic achievement stipends. The university authority provides financial support (stipends) for students based on their semester final grades. Successful students are paid stipends on monthly basis for the following five months (one semester).

#### **c. Evaluation and recognition of prior learning achievements**

Students attending international mobility programs and those are moving from another university apply for recognition of their prior transcript credits. SSU participates in Bologna Educational Process and recognizes international credit mobility grades.

#### **d. The system of observing graduate employment and career and its usage for improvement of studies**

Department of Alumni and Career is in charge for internships of the students in partner industries and they collaborate with regional businesses and industries to recruit university graduates. The department organizes career exhibitions every year with the aim of uniting industries and graduate students. Many students get jobs. However, there is no systematic tracking program of the alumni employment.

**e. Collaboration with academic, social and business partners and their influence on University studies**

SSU cooperates with local and international higher education institutions and organizes joint events, field trips, and academic student and staff mobility with the partners. Besides, SSU faculties prioritize collaboration with local and national industries to foster quality of graduates. Based on the agreement with the industries, SSU faculties benefit from the laboratories and field trips to the production areas. Authentic learning environment provides a better learning outcome for the students. Research results are disseminated through co-organized seminars, roundtables or conferences. However students are not actively involved in the research process.

**f. Dynamics of Lecturers and Students' International Mobility and Its Influence on University activity**

Currently SSU cooperates with more than 40 international institutions. University Lecturers and students have participated in Mevlana and Erasmus+KA2 international mobility programs. The participants of the mobility programs become more motivated. They are encouraged to share their knowledge with students and staff. However, there is no specific performance measuring tool for the mobility effectiveness. Unfortunately SSU does not participate in KA1, ICM programs. As SSU does not have English section inter-institutional agreements in the frame of KA1 is not possible.

**g. Current regional and national labor-market situation**

Azerbaijan situates on the transit roads from east to west and north to south. The country's oil and gas reserves have contributed to recover from poverty and war disaster in 1990s. Currently Azerbaijan runs policy to change oil dependent economy to diversified one based on human capital. The situation requires experts and engineers mostly. Unfortunately, majority of such kind experts are expats. The government encourages institutions to prepare skillful graduates to fulfill the vacancies in non-oil sectors. Labor market has high demand for engineers in different fields.

**h. Use of educational technology in teaching and learning**

SSU lecturers use projectors and white boards in their lectures. There is only one smart board in the university. Lecture materials and selected books are being uploaded to the electronic system of university library. However, they are not accessible online for now.

**i. Ensuring the competitiveness of graduates**

To ensure the quality and competitiveness of the graduates, senior students are sent to internships to partner industries. Career center is responsible for this issue. Optional training is available for mastering specific topics. According to the latest survey results, academic programs and curriculum in the university should be modernized and updated.

**j. Student involvement in research activities**

University students take part in laboratory researches. It is relevant for Biology and chemistry, Physics and Power Engineering faculties. However, they are less likely to be employed in research projects. Successful senior students are encouraged to apply for the faculty vacancies. Occasionally, they are employed as teaching assistant rather than research assistants.

However, successful graduates are encouraged to continue their education on master and doctoral programs at SSU. Weak university research facility is another reason for lower participation.

#### **k. Level of Satisfaction of Students in Relation to Personal and Professional Development provided by the University**

SSU administration tries to do its best to ensure students and staff satisfaction. According to the recent survey held among the university students, majority of the correspondents are relatively satisfied with the university's performance. However, they are less satisfied with the library (up-to-date materials) and research facilities, lecture syllabus, and consideration of student opinion in building lecture programs.

#### **l. Monitoring and supporting students' academic progress**

There is no specific methodology or procedure for monitoring student academic progress. At the end of each semester faculty discusses the results of student achievements. However this is general statistical review of faculty performance based on student achievements. Students are not invited to discussions. Student academic progress is supported through extra reading materials plus frequent meetings with practitioners.

#### **m. Student assessment**

Students' academic progress is monitored and evaluated throughout the semester activities. 50% of the final grade derives from students' semester performance (attendance, class assignments). Another 50 % comes from final exam. Examinations are conducted on lab work, in the written form. At the beginning of the term every student begin to write their individual works. They should complete them till the end of the term. 5 topics are given by teachers of the chairs.

#### **n. Feedback from graduates**

Currently, SSU does not have graduate feedback mechanism to self-evaluate its performance. A graduate track database and periodical contact with graduates is needed for a better contribution for the community. It is on the responsibility of Career Center, as well.

### **6. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

#### **a. Student handbook**

SSU brochures are available for the newcomers. However, student handbooks are not foreseen for current students. Freshmen get small leaflets in their first arrival explaining the educational system, students' rights and responsibilities at SSU. University administration also organizes orientation programs for new comers at the beginning of each educational year.

#### **b. Career center for students**

SSU lecturers and administrative staff are open for consultations by the students. In the faculty plan there exists student consulting hours for every student, however, it is mostly applied for master's degree supervisions. Career center provides trainings for the 7 faculty students. 6 trainings in 2017-2018 education year. More than 15 agreements signed with enterprises in education and medical fields, institutions of ANAS. SSU joined to Experience and exchange program of SOCAR. 25 students of our university participated at this program. As a region

university it is hard to attract prestige companies and trainers to the university. Weakness of self – capacity building of the students and self-confidence it is hard to attract them to the trainings and seminars.

#### **c. Supporting international mobility of students**

SSU sometimes support mobility of the students. But we should mention that only the duration of the participation will be 5 – 7 days. It means that participation at the international conferences can be supported by the university. But not study visit for 6-12 months.

#### **d. Student clubs**

There are Student Trade Union, Student Scientific Organizations, and Student Sport organizations in the university. The activities are supported by the university authority. Different clubs such as music, art, start-ups are common. SSU has Sport Complex with minor equipment and is open to students only on class hours. SSU has volleyball, football team which participates at the competitions.

#### **e. Library and Information Resources**

SSU libraries are serving the students during 6 days in a week. All electronic versions of the lectures of the teachers had been replaced in the library. Currently, there are not centralized information services in the university. SSU is just working on e-education system, which is planned to be launched from next academic year. So, IT Center collect all data about staff and students electronically.

### **7. SUMMARY**

#### **a. Strengths**

SSU administration open for innovation ideas and support all staff members and creative students in any productive activities. We have access to Tomson Reuter data base. University paid 50 thousand euro for access. SSU has the council of dissertation defense given by the Ministry of Education. SSU managed to build strong cooperation with industries.

#### **b. Areas of improvement**

Currently the university does not have Quality Assurance Center, but has sector on Evaluation and Quality Control. The university's library is not accessible electronically. Additionally, the university laboratory and infrastructure should be renovated. Student and staff satisfaction surveys should be implemented periodically. SSU is a 55 year old university in Sumgayit city and unique university in the city. Quality Assurance Center may improve educational and administrative operations quality. University's infrastructure and classrooms should be repaired. Curriculum programs need to be updated.

#### **c. Weaknesses and threats**

The average age of professors is high. SSU needs substantial update of course materials and lecture contents. Besides, no specialization provides degree courses in English. Students with higher admission marks chose to study in capital universities. One of the main objectives of all institutions is to contribute to the surrounding community and region. Sumgayit is not a crowded city and fewer job opportunities exist for graduates. In comparison to Baku universities, graduate employment in SSU is low.

**d. The SWOT analysis of SSU.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSU administration open for innovation ideas and support all staff members and creative students in any productive activities.</li> <li>- We have access to Tomson Reuter data base. University paid 50 thousand euro for access.</li> <li>- SSU has the council of dissertation defense given by the Ministry of Education.</li> <li>- Not fully one profiled Being university, SSU is profiled in technical and humanitarian directions.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of English speaking staff and students</li> <li>- not having distant education</li> <li>- not having e-learning</li> <li>- lack of number of exchange programs international students</li> <li>- not having hostel and Guest House</li> <li>- not having Quality Assurance Center.</li> <li>- lack of modern technologies</li> <li>- lack of internationalization</li> <li>- not having project developers, authors</li> <li>- being of regional university</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having Career Center, It Center, Department of MS and PhD, Training Center for International students, Linguistics Center and other centers</li> <li>- Being unique high education institution in Sumgayit city.</li> <li>- Participation at the international projects as a partner gives us an opportunity to cooperate with world universities.</li> <li>- Web page of SSU is in 3 languages.</li> <li>- Having partly e-library</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No specialization provides degree courses in English, which limits admission of international students.</li> <li>- Students with higher admission marks (higher IQ) chose to study in capital universities.</li> <li>- Lack of younger teaching staff in technical specializations puts.</li> </ul>