

REPORT ON THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CURRENT QA SYSTEM IN AZERBAIJAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
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1. Introduction

Issue as identified by ESG	Conformity	Non Conformity	Areas for improvement
1. <i>Policy for quality assurance</i>	There is a QA policy in place and it is periodically updated	None	Institutional leadership shows a strong commitment and dedication to advance on generating a QA culture in the University. The Evaluator congratulates the institution for a comprehensive policy on QA and continuous updated but advises to progress further on involving students in the future update of the policy. This will be particularly important in the development of the 5-year new Strategic Plan for the institution
2. <i>Design and approval of programmes</i>	A clear process is described in line with national regulations as well as incorporating some international practices in the field of QA as pilot practices.	None	A crucial area for improvement in academic programme development processes of the institution will come via ensuring students involvement in programme design. The evaluator understands that programme design is very limited for national regulations but also notices that institutions have some flexibility to accommodate students input. Additionally, the institution should not neglect progressing further on factoring employers input in programme design as well.

<i>3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment</i>	It is a priority for the University acknowledging that it is gradual and long-term process which will take time to be fully executed at the institutions.	None	The evaluator appreciates the commitment of the institution to fully develop student-centred approaches to all their activities (i.e. success to adapt to online teaching as result of the pandemic) but also acknowledges that, for example, Teaching Monitoring Commission, Academic Board and/or Appeals Commission should facilitate more student participation apart from surveys distribution, collection and analysis from the students.
<i>4. Teaching staff</i>	There are procedures in place as well as initiatives to advance on improving institution performance in this domain. Some awards are established as incentives towards adaption of innovative teaching and research methodologies.	None	Evaluator notices the sustained effort of the institution to enhance teaching capacities of its staff. While UTECA recognizes that is a weakness of the institution, it has devised an all-encompassing training plan (Including virtual delivery) to improve the capacities of its staff on language capacities, problem-solving skills, research experience and pedagogic competences. Evaluator recommends to assess and monitor the impact of the programme to learn how to scale-up this action.
<i>5. Information management</i>	There is a consistent data management system led by Quality Assurance Department to monitor teaching, research and learning across the whole institution.	None	Evaluator states as a strong point that the institution has centralized a comprehensive data system managed by the Quality Assurance Department to guarantee effective management of the information (student surveys, SERs evaluations at Faculty level, etc.). Evaluator encourages to improve the system by adding new metrics and indicators to evaluate performance consistently as well as incorporating other

			stakeholders (mainly students) into the data management process.
6. <i>Public information</i>	The institution maintains a satisfactory level of transparency and accountability in the publication of their institutional policies and decisions.	None	Evaluator observes that institution publicizes QA related information in their website and social media and also translate the majority of these documents into English. Evaluator advises to continue this action in order to ensure international outreach on QA policy development.
7. <i>On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes</i>	Institution has recently merged audit and quality assurance departments to ensure a more centralized monitoring and periodic review of their QA actions across the whole institution.	None	Evaluator notices the effort to update QA policy and other framework documents throughout the duration of the EQAC project. Institution should ensure that resources are allocated in the long-term to ensure sustainability of these actions.

2. General recommendation

UTECA created its Quality Assurance Department (QAD) during the EQAC project and was subsequently merged with the Audit department. It depends directly from the Rector and its responsible for developing QA culture focusing on student-centred teaching and learning, developing close links between academic programming and labour market, implementing modern and teaching technologies and methodologies as well as ensuring autonomy and self-governance of the different bodies and units of the university. QAD counts with the involvement of 3 specialists together with the head of the department and reports directly to the Academic Board, overseeing the work of each Faculty at the institution.

1. Policy for quality assurance

There is a specific and comprehensive document policy on QA policy at institutional level which outline all strategic priorities of the institution in the field of QA. The document has been recently updated reflecting the merge of the Audit services with the QAD. It is also fully translated into English. The institution is in the process of further operationalize their QA policy in 5-year strategic plan.

In this last endeavor, it will become pivotal to advance on QA policy to factor student's voices in the definition and execution of QA procedures and policy at the institution. The concrete definition of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that provide a realistic framework to measure QA services performance will be instrumental to enable advancement on the inception of QA culture at institutional level. The Vice rector acknowledges that *"Paths to summits start*

from valleys” in order to illustrate the room for improvement in the generation of true QA culture at the institution. This humble approach to QA policy programming is a huge strength for the institution which is committed in the long-term to gradually advance in the progress towards achieving QA international indicators as well as implementing practices adapted to their own context.

2. Design and approval of programmes

Academic programming at the institution is severely limited by the national regulations and guidance from Ministry of Education. However, within the different grade of flexibility that the institution has in place for programming. Student's voices as well as strong connection with the labour market should be developed. An optimal strategy to ensure advancement on QA policy for the institution will encompass the device of mechanism to include these stakeholders, enabling Deans and Heads of the Faculties to better design their academic programmes responding to the needs of their students and the labour market. This actions should be specifically implemented in the 17 subject which will be updated in accordance with ESG standards and labour market needs, including a comprehensive intervention in learning outcomes and competences definition.

3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

QAD is conducting an awareness-raising campaign among the teaching staff and student community which involves workshops and trainings to progressively adapt teaching methodologies to students needs and switch from professor-centred delivery of the teaching towards the student. This is also a long-term process in which the QAD should engage with multiple stakeholders to monitor and provide counseling to guide concrete adaptation to each subject and discipline.

A useful tool to check real progress on this task is the roll-out and distribution of feedback surveys for students evaluating the changes in teaching methodologies that the academic staff applies as a result of these workshops. Scaling-up these trainings action and awareness-raising campaigns instrumented via the QAD should be a priority for the institution.

4. Teaching staff

The Institution recognizes that its staff has room for improvement. As such, it promotes training and formation among its staff, specifically directed towards acquisition of English language command but also modern teaching methodologies. It is important to praise that this training actions among teaching have continued in virtual modality during the pandemic, opening potential avenues for collaboration with international experts in the field to work directly with the institutions in these issues.

The institution also incentivizes innovation in teaching and research with salary complements and annual awards. Potential areas for improvement are related with increasing collaboration with the private sector and international partnerships to advance on QA issues by transversal capacity building action with teaching staff. The scope and magnitude of the training programme is not clear and most probably should be scaled-up in order to reach up to the whole institution and enhance QA capacities among teaching staff

5. Information management

QAD manages a comprehensive information management system with a good level of penetration of data collection among students and academic staff by mainly collecting key data on student characteristics, academic performance, dropout, teaching feedback evaluation and the SERs conducted by the Faculties every year.

The institution should consider further improvement of the system increasing the resources allocated to this purpose augmenting the penetration of the data collection strategy as well as the metrics monitored. Pioneering a scaling up of the information management for QA will become very influential in the creation of a QA culture in the institution as well as Azerbaijan in general.

6. Public information

Evaluator notices that institution makes a strong effort to publicize in the website and social media all QA related information. The institution should maintain its commitment to transparency and accountability to its main stakeholders via publication of the information. It will be become very beneficial as well to continue translating QA information into English to ensure engagement with international partners and review of compliance with international standards.

7. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

The institution must continuously review commitment and sustainable support to the QAD tasks of advancing QA culture within the institution. QAD should champion continuous review of the main QA policy instruments to adequate them to the needs of the institution and its stakeholders. In that front, the institution should progress further on including all stakeholders in the process review (incorporating students, labour market representatives as well as the staff from institution). Constant adaptation of this policy frameworks will become influential in order to ensure engagement and validation from all stakeholders.

QAD should also work with the faculties in order to ensure that annual Self Evaluation Reports conducted at Faculty level are conducted involving all necessary stakeholders (including students and labour market representatives) as well as maintain consistency across all Faculties in the methodologies and metrics used to elaborate these reports.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The institution during the interview and monitoring process provided evidences of the implementation of EQAC project actions and its direct impact on the development of full-fledged QA system at institutional level. Whereas this system still is incipient and with much room for improvement, it proves the commitment of the institution to continuously advance on the generation of QA at institutional level.

Existence of the documents

QA policy	Verified
QA strategy	Partially developed in QA policy statement, should be further operationalised in the 5-year Strategic Plan
Statue of QA Centre	Verified
QA staff job description	Verified
Stakeholder mapping	Verified
QA action plan	Verified
QA reports	Verified

Monitoring questions:

The evaluator acknowledges the outstanding level of compliance and support showcased by the AZERBAIJAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY throughout the whole monitoring process. Specifically during the interview, AZERBAIJAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY facilitated the participation of high representatives of management together with representatives from the academic staff and QAD as well as ensuring detailed provision of documental evidence to back-up the claims made during the reports and interviews.