Appendix A
Field trip (UK)

Trainings for Azerbaijan HEI's representatives on February 11 – 15, 2019, MUHEC, Middlesex University, London, UK.

Day 1

Session title: Training Programme Overview

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Explain the training programme activities

Reflections: The training programme was planned prior to the visit of the partners but it was deemed important to revisit each section in order to determine any priorities or anticipations from each partner.

Future recommendations: It is essential for PCIs to follow a similar process for determining training agenda items and also reflect on the delivery of training continuously. It is imperative to communicate training needs even during the delivery of training sessions in order to make training more relevant and increase effectiveness for each training activity delivered.

Session title: National Qualification Framework

Activity type: Workshop

Session objective: Provide a practical assessment on the national qualification framework

Reflections: The national quality framework that is in place in the UK was presented. The focus was on identifying how it relates to ESG and whether there are certain areas that are relevant to local PCIs.

Future recommendations: PCIs need to continuously check quality frameworks that may prove useful for the adaptation of ESGs in Azerbaijan. The adoption of ESG will require a lengthy transition period and any temporary amendments should not be decided in an ad hoc manner. It is important for the EQAC PCIs to remain in communication and assess whether they can identify how certain QA practices can be introduced in their operations. Ideally there should be based on findings from pilot across different faculties.

Session title: Overview of Quality

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Explain core aspects of quality

Reflections: This session provided an interesting range of topics covering aspects of quality from both strategic and operational perspectives. The sessions triggered debates and discussions between senior managements and QA staff present.

Future recommendations: It is necessary for PCIs to ensure that when organising re-training events all stakeholder groups participate in discussions. It is evident that there are

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varying views on QA priorities and also a difference of opinion that can be based on individual perceptions of quality. Having EU experts as coordinators in such events would facilitate subordinates to challenge the status quo and senior managers to be more receptive of ideas and suggestions that challenge practices that are in place for years.
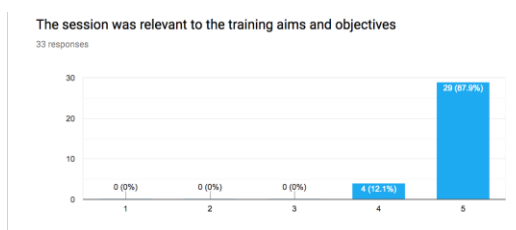
Session title: Academic Development, Validation and Review

Activity type: Present state of the art in course design and delivery

Session objective: Offer training in key areas for the design and delivery of EQAC courses

Reflections: The full range of operations and practices was presented to the participants. Emphasis was given on how the process is in line with the national QA standards and recommended practices. Furthermore, the role of documentation and consistency were emphasised. There was also discussion of the audit process that exists in the UK and how it ensures that certain standards are applied across the sector.

Future recommendations: The concept of auditing QA provision is not necessarily new to PCIs as the MoE has in place regular checks across the education sector. The implementation of international standards and consistent QA practices is though, an area that further efforts are required at national level.

The session was relevant to the training aims and objectives
33 responses

0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (12.1%)	29 (87.9%)
1	2	3	4	5

Session title: Generic and Professional Competencies/Skills

Activity type: Workshop

Session objective: Provide a practical session on study programmes

Reflections: The workshop helped participant to engage in discussions on how competencies can be developed but also assessed as part of the university curricula. The practical session demonstrated how study programmes were designed and how to monitor their delivery, as well as evaluate them against certain criteria. This was a useful session on sharing good practice from EU partners but also enabling PCIs to share opinions and their own practices.

Future recommendations: Workshop-style training is essential for the future development of the sector. The re-trainings must be based on brief demonstrations of good practice followed by open workshops where participants share their own practices. This will help disseminating in a constructive way good practice, as well as seek advice and brainstorm issues relating to the application of ideas in different settings.

Session title: Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement

Activity type: Workshop

Session objective: Perform a stakeholder analysis in educational Quality Assurance

Reflections: This workshop enabled to determine whether all PCIs had a full picture of who

will be affected by the deployment of the QACs at institutional level. The session also focused on how external stakeholders may affect the institutional policy and its implementation across faculties. The role of the MoE was discussed, as well as the strategic priorities dictated by senior management.

Future recommendations: Local partners need to organise continuous awareness meetings between QAC staff and faculty management to ensure that all academics appreciate the wide range of roles that are involved in QA. The stakeholder analysis at institutional level must result from a workshop where all identified stakeholder groups participate and different management layers are involved to ensure that the map is as complete as possible.

Session title: Project Management Meeting

Activity type: Brief presentation for each WP and associated deliverables coordinated by Project Coordinator

Session objective: Review of progress so far and decide actions

Reflections: The project consortium discussed project progress and focused on activities for each WP.

Future recommendations: N/A

Day 2

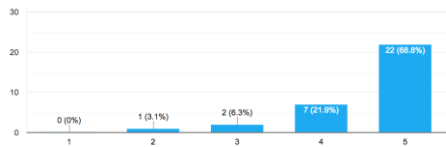| |
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| **Session title**: How to engage with industry to identify Competences and build a Competence Matrix

Activity type: Workshop

Session objective: Create a professional and personal skillset map

Reflections: The workshop enabled individuals to consider how academic programmes need to be aligned to the employability opportunities of the relevant sectors. This was a session that helped participants to realise the role of industrial boards in shaping academic provision in higher education.

Future recommendations: The EQAC partners need to introduce mechanisms for liaising with industry so they can identify relevant skillsets that must be developed in theior academic programmes. |
| **Session title**: Linking Competences and Learning Outcomes

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Focus on the alignment of between course learning outcomes and competences

Reflections: This session provided in-depth analysis of how learning outcomes need to be described accurately at the appropriate level (e.g. difference between level and level 7 descriptors) in order to reflect the extent certain competences are developed in an academic programme.

Future recommendations: The participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must ensure that they have in place detailed documentation describing how programme and module learning outcomes are created. Emphasis should be given on the level descriptors and how academics can select appropriate verbs to explain the competences developed through learning. |
| **Session title**: How to write Learning Outcomes using Kennedy's approach

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Offer guidance for creating learning outcomes

Reflections: This session focused on a specific approach used for creating learning outcomes.

Future recommendations: EQAC partners must continuously research methods and approaches for learning outcome creation. There are different conceptual models and frameworks that can be applied, which must be evaluated with regards to whether they are feasible to apply, considering the experience and capabilities of teaching staff. |

The session was relevant to the training aims and objectives

32 responses

Session title: Linking learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment methods

Activity type: Practical assignment

Session objective: Create learning, teaching and assessment methods in line with learning outcomes

Reflections: This activity enabled participants to practice their learning from previous sessions. Emphasis was given to form groups where different stakeholders could discuss how the creation of learning outcomes may affect learning delivery, as well as QA outcomes when evaluating teaching and learning practices.

Future recommendations: The EQAC partners should use such sessions in their re-training to ensure that all academics develop the necessary skills for creating correct learning outcomes. Furthermore, this session can be really enlightening for non-teaching QA staff in order to contextualise the way QA evaluation and monitoring is implemented.

Session title: Project Management Meeting

Activity type: Discussion on interim report requirements including finance/administration documentation coordinated by Project Coordinator

Session objective: Identify what is required from each partner

Reflections: This session helped all partners to reflect on current activities and how the project progress is documented.

Future recommendations: N/A

Session title: Project Management Meeting

Activity type: Discussion on next actions from consortium partners including travel and deliverable deadlines coordinated by Project Coordinator

Session objective: Decide meeting dates, WP processes and deliverables

Reflections: This session involved planning of the activities for the next project period.

Future recommendations: N/A

Day 3

Session title: Parallel Session 1

Activity type: External Examiner Induction

Session objective: Shadow External Examiner induction sessions

Reflections: This session was perceived to be one of the most useful experiences, as it was not a simulated training but an observation of an actual induction programme involving the institution's external examiners. The session enabled participants to realise the critical role of the external examiner in UK HEIs, as well as the depth of the training required to familiarise with the necessary procedures and associated paperwork.

Future recommendations: PCIs need to consider whether the role of external examiner can be introduced formally in higher education programmes. The role should have concrete responsibilities and would require full transparency of internal processes. The institutions would have to consider whether this would be creating any issues with senior management and how it would be aligned to MoE directives.

Attention – Session limited to 15 participants only

10:15 – 10:30 Tea & Coffee

10:30 – 10:45 Welcome to Middlesex

10:45 – 11:05 Overview of the External Examiner Process at Middlesex

11:05 – 11:50 The Assessment Process

Reflections: The session provided an overview of the assessment process and how it could be evaluated by external stakeholders. Emphasis was given on how assessment may involve a wide range of practices and also the mechanisms used for assessment, feedback, as well as the distinctions between formative and summative assessment.

Future recommendations: PCIs should have in place a clear plan on how assessment is aligned to teaching and learning at module and programme level. The use of assessment criteria, deployment of assessment grids and rubrics, as well as establishing systems for selecting appropriate assessment weights for different levels are some of the key areas that PCIs need to investigate.

The session was relevant to the training aims and objectives
25 responses
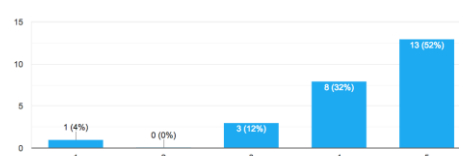
Session title: Parallel Session 2 – Demonstrations of assessment practices

Activity type: Demonstrate state of the art in assessment with focus on Quality Assurance planning

Session objective: Reflect on assessment methods and appropriate Quality Assurance approach

Reflections: The demonstrations provided a wide range of assessment practices enabling institutions to reflect how these could be adopted or adapted for their own academic provision. The participants could determine how QA monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to have sufficient flexibility in order to accommodate the various assessment forms present in a HEI.

Future recommendations: EQAC partners should consider how their QAC would put in place QA plans that would be able to monitor different assessment methods. They should enable open communication between QA staff and academics in order to jointly come up with the most appropriate QA plans.

Session title: Annual monitoring

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Explain the annual monitoring process

Reflections: The presentation focused on explaining how UK institutions conduct annual monitoring on a wide range of areas such as assessment, progression rates, dealing with issues such as plagiarism or absenteeism, as well as academic planning.

Future recommendations: EQAC partners should consider how to combine certain evaluation and monitoring activities in an integrated monitoring process that can serve as a framework for self-evaluation in a regular basis. The annual monitoring process should be aligned to concrete actions planned as a response to the reported findings.

Session title: Towards a QA framework for assessment

Activity type: Forum

Session objective: Exchange experiences from parallel sessions and attempt to establish an assessment Quality Assurance framework

Reflections: The session enabled all participants to discuss the various QA aspects that could be combined to a single framework applicable to institutions in Azerbaijan. Emphasis was given on sharing experiences with EU partners participating as well as good practice from MUHEC.

Future recommendations: The PCIs should consider how such a framework could be developed at institutional level to ensure that QAC operations are aligned to academic provision and work in synergy with faculties.

Day 4

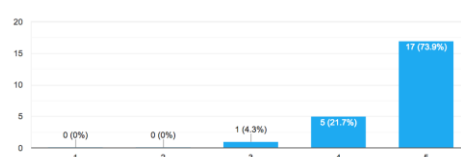| |
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| **Session title**: A Director's perspective of Quality Assurance

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Explain how Quality Assurance is implemented at programme level

Reflections: This session focused on sharing the perspectives of an academic director at faculty level with emphasis on how to meet QA targets at departmental level. Furthermore, the session helped to determine how Directors of Programmes are responsible for QA of academic programmes and ensure consistent delivery of modules (courses).

Future recommendations: The PCIs should determine academic roles that could work in partnership with QAC staff. Furthermore, the EQAC consortium should consider whether QAC could liaise with certain academic roles in order to ensure that QA initiatives could be deployed consistently at department level. |
| **Session title**: The importance of Quality in registry

Activity type: Presentation

Session objective: Explain the role quality plays for an institution's registry

Reflections: The session was focused on the role of the University registry. Emphasis was given on how registry directives affect QA at institutional level, as well as the way policies and procedures are adopted by different faculties.

Future recommendations: Local partners have similar roles at institutional level. It is necessary to determine how policies are implemented across the university and whether there are sufficient measures in place to monitor QA implementation.

The session was relevant to the training aims and objectives
23 responses |
| **Session title**: The impact of Quality Assurance for academic departments

Activity type: Panel

Session objective: Explain how Quality Assurance impacts academic departments

Reflections: The panel session helped to openly discuss how different institutional roles perceive the impact of QA on academic departments. The debate between QA and academic roles enabled to see how QA implementation priorities differ.

Future recommendations: PCIs need to reflect on the impact QA has on academic departments and ensure that QAC staff are aware of the impact QA initiatives and process may have before they finalise them. |

Day 5

Session title: Exploring quality aspects of the Teaching Excellence Framework
Activity type: Presentation
Session objective: Explain the Teaching Excellence Framework and how Quality Assurance is part of an institution's TEF ranking
Reflections: The session explained the newly introduced TEF aiming at providing a standard for evaluating teaching provision of universities across the UK.
Future recommendations: PCIs should liaise with the MoE and start discussions on whether the education sector in Azerbaijan would be ready in the future for the deployment of a framework similar to TEF.

Session title: The impact of Quality Assurance in running an academic department
Activity type: Presentation
Session objective: Discuss the different strategies, policies and operations affected by institutional Quality Assurance at departmental level
Reflections: The session provided an opportunity to share experiences of a Head of Department with QA. Emphasis was given on how QA directives were applied and the mechanisms used to monitor QA aspects of teaching, research and administrative tasks.
Future recommendations: PCIs should reflect whether the current state of their QA monitoring and evaluation would change dramatically in the future and the impact this would have on the way academic departments are managed.

The session was relevant to the training aims and objectives
20 responses