



WP1. Scoping and Analysis of Quality Assurance in Azerbaijan Universities

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University



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Introduction

Azerbaijan Tourism Institute was founded with the Presidential Decree No. 925 dated 25 August, 2005 and Decision No. 45 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated February 13, 2006. ATI began teaching activities with 200 students 1 faculty and 3 specialties on 15 September 2006.

The university has mobilized all its resources to realize high-level training of personnel in accordance with the position set during the past period and achieved the considerable successes. Efforts have been made to ensure the principles of innovation and internationality and maximum transparency in the educational process. Unlike other higher education institutions in the country, ATMU students have the opportunity to strengthen their theoretical knowledge with 8-20 week internship. ATMU's achievements over ten years have created a solid foundation for the new, more stringent success.

ATMU, in terms of both in academically or management areas has aimed to achieve its development with the principles of planned and sustainable development and is closely linked to these goals from the time of ATI. In the light of these targets the first strategic plan covering the years of 2008-2016 was prepared for a 6-year period, but the second plan was formed for 4 years (2016-2020) taking into consideration the rapid and dynamic changes both in internal and in the external environment.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1. ATMU's decision-making process is independent and under the control of the rector. Along with Rectorate other supreme decision making body is Academic board and mainly concerns with academic activities. In accordance with the regulations dealing with the board of Rector (Rectorate) of ATMU approved by the Rector, the Board holds its meetings once a week in order to conduct the work of board management.
2. ATMU's Educational-Methodical Board is the driving-advisory body which serves to raise the quality of educational-teaching process and its scientific and methodological provision. Educational-Methodical Board is established by ATMU rector's order. It includes the vice rectors, deans, department heads, heads of scientific and methodological structures, highly qualified teachers and professionals possessing definite pedagogical and scientific-methodical work experience. Educational-Methodical Board is headed by the pro-rector for academic affairs, as a rule.

Education process is carried out in 3 faculties

1. **The faculty of tourism and hospitality;**
2. **The faculty of Business Administration;**

3. The faculty of Engineering services.

Vision and mission statement of the university

Mission of ATMU- to grow staff with creative and diverse thinking skills, promoting their own profession, knowledge and skills all over the world, promoting their creative and diverse thinking skills, to expand the horizons of education, science and culture in the country, and to contribute to their well-being in society and to the continuous development of the creative young generation.

Vision of ATMU- to become an area leader in the field of tourism and management, becoming a pride of the employees and educators, becoming avanguard of change and innovation, internationally recognized and sustainable, a university band.

Strategic Planning Documents and Their Content

Strategic planning documents of the ATMU are strategic plan of the university in which implemented by all body units of the university.

Relevance of the Strategy and Its Coherence with Vision and Mission

In 2007 ATMU's first strategic plan was prepared covering the period of 2008-2016. In this plan were reflected important targets such as to meet the needs for human resources of tourism sector by building qualified, honest and transparent education, to implement teacher and student mobility by strengthening international relations, to conduct sustainable scientific research in the field of tourism, to implement various projects, to build effective links between business and education, to create e-university, an electronic library database, as a whole, to develop educational infrastructure and realized their performance. However there is also problems with implementation of the strategic plans in different structural units due to weak relationships among them and should be considered as area of improvement. Another improvement area is not existence of quality indicators and realization, monitoring of strategic plan`s expectations.

3. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Formation, development, and improvement of the professor-teacher staff are one of the main priorities of ATMU. Selection of teachers is carried out by the relevant chairs. Bachelor's degree, Master's Degree, Experience, and Language Skills are taken into account when they are employed. IELTS certification is required from teachers who teach English.

Since the university was newly created, teachers were formed mainly from their graduates however according to survey results there is lack of experience

among the teachers and students are complain about this issue and should be considered as an improvement area.

Staff development

ATMU employees are actively participating in major research projects, training and education in the competition within Erasmus Mundus, Mevlana programs studying in foreign universities. Until now, more than 50 ATMU employees have taken advantage of this opportunity. Also, the ATMU staff actively participates in 3 EU projects implemented within the framework of the TEMPUS program. According to the survey results among the academic staff teachers are complain about dissemination of training activities and are not satisfied with involvement rules of staff development programs.

Staff satisfaction

Personnel-related work is centrally organized by the Human resources in the area of responsibility of the head of the department. The department provides support in all fields of personnel work. Each head of a structural unit is responsible for organizing operations that support smooth and productive work and legally correct procedures.

The functions of academic staff are detailed in the job descriptions of academic staff and the requirements applicable to the qualification and experience of academic staff are governed by the requirements for teaching and research staff. However based on survey results university has not succeeded to implement successful remuneration program of staff. To promote self-improvement, it is planned to adopt techniques that support the development of managerial staff along with research staff and it is also planned to implement further projects for the mentioned issue.

4. THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY

The concept of quality became a well-established topic and the concept of quality assurance and quality enhancement are widely used in the higher education institutions.

High quality in education is dependent upon a learning environment that stresses updated knowledge in all disciplines and the will to achieve quality in teaching. Evaluation and the interpretation of evaluation measures are important preconditions for quality development. At the university of Management and Tourism, quality assurance of education and research is the part of the ongoing academic activities.

Quality assurance and accreditation department was first established on January of 2018. The department has own rules of the regulation defining department's responsibilities and duties based on Ministry of Tourism and culture and university's regulations.

Quality Assurance Department – regulates teaching loads, divides among departments, arranges guiding and production internship. It prepares educational standards and curricula in accordance with the direction of ATMU's activities. It monitors implementation of the Academic calendar of ATMU. It carries out students' enrollment at ATMU and statistic analyses related to them, prepares reports on academic year and references on bases of dean's office reports. It determines annual teaching load and submits to the dean's offices. It coordinates students' all documentation, carries out current control on teaching, analyses results of examination sessions, submits reports to the Ministry of Education and arranges to hand out diplomas to alumni. However according to the international experience the responsibilities of Quality assurance department is not well defined and its duties are not fulfill the requirements of the standards and guidelines of EQA.

Teaching and Learning Process

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 lack of student-centered approach which actively engages self-directed learning and self-assessment in which allowing them to plan learning process and learning experience which framed by the standard programs approved by the Ministry of Education according to the each specialization.

5. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student handbook-At the beginning of each year at the university students are provided "Bachelor's guidebook".

Training Center – organizes vocational training courses for a total of 133 people in " **Tour Guiding**", "Tour operator and tour agent" and "Register / Front office **operations**" areas. The training Center manages the certification of the country's **tourist** guide courses, as well as meets the training needs of different organizations on request.

Language Center – was created as a qualified division of the Library-Information Center with the support of the German International Cooperation (GIZ) in 2014. In the center with the support of GIZ 154 books in English, 140 in Spanish, 123 in French and 10 in Arabic with the total of 604 books have been collected for teachers and students to use. The center is provided with the appropriate equipment.

Student Youth Organization (SYO) – has been operating since October 19, 2007 at ATMU. The basic principle of the functioning of SYO is to ensure organizing students and young people, more active participation in their social life and state forming. SYO participates in cultural events, conferences and a number of official

meetings. "Conversation Club" is operating at ATMU and various competitions, conferences and questionnaires are conducted. The activities of SYO is not limited to the framework of the university. The organization is working on joint projects of other higher education institutions with SYO and is actively involved in the activities of regional and republican scale. While operating at ATMU SYO has implemented a number of important measures. As an illustration of this, the round table discussion with members of parliament, the conference with the chairman of the Coordinating Council of World Azerbaijanis dedicated to resolve Azerbaijani youth's problems, an event dedicated to the anniversary of Khojaly genocide, the events of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and others can be shown. SYO membership is based on the principle of voluntarism. SYO's activity is directed by the Chairperson elected by the Board of Directors. SYO's structure consists of 5 departments (International Relations, Human Resources, Science and Education, Projects and work with Clubs). The main activities of SYO can be found on the university web page.

Student Academic Society (SAS) started its activity on November 13, 2006. The main direction of activity of the society is to attract students to scientific research and direct their activities in this field. SAS's Board of Directors is composed of selected representatives from groups. The SAS is headed by a Chair elected by the Board of Directors and approved by the Academic Board of the ATMU. Each student who intends to contribute to the ATMU's scientific activities can be a member of the SAS. The chairperson of the SAS reports to the staff once in the academic year and the Board of Directors is elected.

Library- Information Center (LIC) – is a center having a rich **collection** in tourism and management field. It began to serve readers from April 10, 2007 with 29 books with 28 titles in the field of tourism by Heydar Aliyev Foundation, 420 units with 83 titles by the National Academy of Sciences. Currently there are 16564 information carriers, including 11002 literature published in Latin fonts, 9667 books, 3208 fiction, 1960 books, 97 maps, 24 abstracts, 601 audio-video materials and so on in the **collection** of mass media. Constantly renewed **collection** of **LIC** is enriched from day to day with the books and audio materials granted by various structures and organizations, such as **Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Republic**, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan National Library named after M.F. Akhundov, IMC Krems University of Applied Sciences of Austria, Turkey **Bogazici** University, Embassies of Germany, Israel, Portugal, the US and other countries in Azerbaijan, Representative of the UN in Azerbaijan, World Tourism Organization, the Council of Baku tour and the Excursion, political and scientific figures, authors and readers, as well as **publications** of the university's teaching staff, and with the funds of the university. The center is supplied with İRBİS-64 Automated Library-Information System with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and connected to a variety of electronic library networks. The **collection** in the balance of the **LIC** along with **library information center**, are at use of readers in Language Center set up at the university by the CIM organization of Germany and in the library in the second building of ATMU.

WHO also is a member of the Library and Information Consortium of Azerbaijan. The Center serves university professors, students and employees as well as external readers 5 days a week from 08: 30 to 17: 30. Within the university (in both buildings) students have the opportunity to use electronic library of the World Tourism Organization and electronic resources of EPSCO publishing house.

6. ALUMNI

ATMU was one of the first educational institutions in the Bologna process. The organization of the teaching on these principles creates conditions for free cooperation with European educational institutions. Thus, ATMU successfully carries out a binary (dual) diploma program with Austrian IMC Krems University of Applied Sciences in the field of bachelor and master's degree. So far, 155 students (142 bachelors and 13 masters) have received ATMU diploma as well as diploma from Austrian IMC Krems University of Applied Sciences. Up to now 1600 bachelors and 106 masters have graduated from the University. They have created their own organizations - the Association of Alumni of Azerbaijani Tourism Institutes (ATIMA) and have registered it as a non-governmental organization.

Since 2015, ATMU has begun to work with graduates on the basis of modern requirements.

7. SUMMARY

STRENGTHS

1. Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University has a very good reputation in Azerbaijan.

The university's employees value the opportunity to work for the ATMU. The prominence and good reputation of ATMU in Azerbaijan are attested by the Ministry of Education and the fact that university is listed in local university rankings.

2. The employment rate among ATMU graduates is high.

The university's graduates predominantly content with their choice with the specialization and university.

3. International cooperation is strong.

ATMU employees and students actively participate in international study projects and mobility programmes.

4. The development of teaching and learning at the university is goal-oriented and supported.

The achievement of educational goals is assessed regularly as the part of the quality assurance system for the ensuring academic quality.

5. Academic staff community is international.

Education and teaching process is held by with cooperation local and international experts in particularly at mobility programs.

6. **As the part of the international community, university firstly implemented double diploma with partnership AMC Krems university.**

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Key problems that impact the efficacy of various activities, including management and research.

1. The principles for making strategic decisions have been articulated but many strategic decisions are yet to be made and are on the level. It has been the norm to interpret the rights and responsibilities given to decision-making bodies in a convenient manner and to avoid making complex and unpopular decisions.
2. Strengthen the university's marketing activities and achieve broader-based cooperation.
3. Intensify activities are not directed to alumni to support the development of university as an organization.
4. To improve teaching and learning the university should integrate teaching staff and employer feedback more effectively into the internal evaluation of curricula and teaching.
5. There is lack of high-level academic staff including professors and other high-profile professionals.