WP1. Scoping and Analysis of Quality Assurance in Azerbaijan Universities

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT
Baku Business University

1. **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

This section describes the purpose of the needs assessment and the specific questions and issues the assessment was designed to explore.

A needs assessment is a systematic approach to studying the state of knowledge, ability and interest of a particular group involving a special subject. The purpose of the needs assessment is to define weak and strong sides of the education management system of Baku Business University and then preparing what needs to be implemented or to be improved.

2. **METHODS**

Data Collection

- Brief description of each data collection method used
- Surveys – include a description of the groups that received and submitted surveys, including how representative each sample was of their larger population
- Focus Group – include a description of the number and types of groups that participated

Baku Business University Quality Assurance Center conducted focus group discussion in order to collect data from the top management of the university. For this purpose, QA Center organized a meeting with 5 key persons who were Vice Rector of Education, Vice Rector of Research, Chair of the Marketing department, Head of the Master department and the Chair of the languages department. Questions in the questionnaire were asked one by one to each of the participant with 0-6 assessment method and marks were noted in the value column. Afterwards medium number was calculated.

- Interviews – include a description of the individuals that were interviewed

3. **KEY FINDINGS**

3.1 **Context of the organization**

a) Understanding the organization and its context

Baku Business University has determined external and internal issues that are relevant to organization purpose and its strategic direction. However average respond of the focus group was 4 which mean it is implemented but needs to be improved.

Monitoring and reviewing system of the internal and external issues at BBU is weak because until establishment of QA Center, there was not such a system of monitoring of the quality. Although such kind of operations was conducted by the top management and orders of the rector were implemented in this field,

those actions were not systematically and periodically. Monitoring and reviewing have been conducted when they thought it was needed. Therefore such monitoring and reviewing system of the QA is needed to be developed.

b) Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

Focus group participants valued needs and expectations determination with 4 which means it is implemented. However as a newly established QA Center, we are aware of the very fact that such determination of needs and expectations of the interested groups are not defined. Especially expectations of the students should be defined with surveys or focus groups and actions must be taken to meet the expectations.

Taking into consideration that interested groups are students, teachers and administrative staff, in this triangular system students part is considered to be the lowest level of education system. Their expectations and needs are not determined and in case of determining these needs, not any action is taken to meet their expectations. After students in the second last level, teachers are considered whose expectations are also not taken into consideration. For this very reason, quality system of the university is low and needs to be developed.

BBU Quality Management system is available but its documented information is not ready yet. It needs to be written.

c) Determining the scope of the quality management system

Scope of the types of products and services is not covered in the QA Management system and not any justification is available. Average answer of the focus group was the value of 2.

d) Quality management system and its processes

BBU QA Center has been established including processes needed and their sequence and interaction. Average respond of the focus group was 3 which mean it is implemented, however it is not as detailed as it is described in the questionnaire. For example, it has not determined inputs and outputs expected from those processes although respond was 4.

It has not determined criteria and methods yet which is needed to ensure the effective operations of these processes. Respond was 3, however we are aware that it needs to be determined.

University has determined the resources needed for these processes but does not ensure the availability yet.

University has assigned authorities for this process and established QA center and appointed one person as the head of this center. Average respond was 4.

BBU has not addressed the risks and opportunities as the notion of "risk" is understood in a different way in the organization. Students are not seen as

customers and no action is taken to ensure customer satisfaction. Every year they lose tens of students because of this and students are conducting negative PR outside of the university. Still it is not considered as a "risk". Therefore, risks and opportunities need to be determined by the top management and QA Center together.

University does not conduct any evaluation processes to achieve their intended result. Although respond was 4, we believe it does not reflect the real situation and evaluation processes need to be conducted at the end of every subject in all semesters.

3.2 Leadership

a) Leadership and commitment;

a.1 General

Top management is taken accountability for the effectiveness of the quality management system of the university. Because QA Center has been established recently, and before this center whole top management was ensuring quality system spontaneously and in a non-systematic way when rector required to do so. Answer of the top management was 5.

Top management did have neither quality policy nor quality objectives for the quality management system. They were conducting this system in a very basic and primary level which was including having basic educating standards by the teachers. Such as having power point slides, teaching with interactive methods (which they do not understand themselves), being on time in the lessons, not using telephones in the class. While looking at those standards, they sometimes forget to look at the quality of the content of slides or lectures. Average respond was 4. Therefore, not only standards quality but also content quality needs to be conducted to ensure that content of the slides, books and lecture materials are in high quality.

There is not any integration between QA Management system and university's business processes, as it does not have any business processes.

Top management cannot understand what risk-based thinking is as they only serve needs of the centralized management system where students are not included. It needs to be improved with major changes from the root.

Top management does not ensure the QA System achieves its intended results. Average answer was 2.

According to the focus group responses top management promotes improvement and valued it with 5, which we believe it is debatable. Improvement is in a very low level and in fact top management is not interested in much.

a) 2 Customer focus

Top management is not working with respect to customer focus which they think it is the last thing to focus.

Students requirements are not determined, understood and consistently met.

Risks and opportunities are not determined which can affect customer satisfaction as we mentioned above. Average respond was 5

b) Policy;

b.1Establishing the quality policy

Top management recently established a QA center which is supposed to determine and maintain a quality policy that is appropriate with the purpose and context of the university. Average respond was 4

Quality policy system of the university provides a framework for setting quality objectives. Average respond was 3.

QA management system includes a commitment to satisfy applicable requirements and continual improvement. Average respond was 5.

Overall, quality policy is conducted spontaneously and needs to be organized and planned.

b.2 Communicating the quality policy

Quality policy of the university has never been available and maintained as documented information. After establishment of the QA Center at BBU, such policy has been frame worked. However as it is a new system, it needs to be developed.

Quality policy was understood and applied in a general way with the order of rector and top management obeyed those orders and applied somehow quality policy. However as we mentioned above such policy was not conducted in a planned way. Average answer was 5 for this question.

c) Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities

Top management has been assigned, communicated and understood within the university and their responsibilities and authorities have been determined. Average answer was 4 for this question in the focus group. However the reality is that responsibilities and authorities are sometimes mixed up, top management are assigned to the responsibilities which are not in their job description. They are forced to do things which are not their expertise and sometimes one person might do 3-4 jobs at the same time. Therefore, organizational roles and responsibilities need to be clarified more and they should not be forced to do things which are not in the job responsibilities.

International standards of the QA system are not implemented at the university although average respond was 5 for this question. There is only one standard which is centralized by the rector of the university.

Top management mostly ensures the processes to be delivered their intended outputs but with limitations.

Top management does not report performance of the quality management system and opportunity for improvement. They might prepare report upon request of the rector once in a semester usually at the end of the semester. Average respond was 5. As the situation is like that the reports need to be delivered periodically.

Unfortunately customer focus is not ensured although average answer was 5 for this question. As we mentioned before our customers are our students and students are in the lowest level within the institution. This part needs to be developed.

3. Planning

3.1. Quality objectives and planning to achieve them

Achieve quality policy is the one goal of BBU. Quality objectives and planning to achieve them is considering by scientific council of BBU sustainably. Not only quality objectives and achieve them, also some various type of decisions are discussing and decision by Scientific Counsel of BBU. Scientific Counsel of BBU decides the decisions collegially. Baku Business University five-year strategic development plan for 2014-18 years has decided by Scientific Council of BBU.

a) BBU has defined several goals for quality objectives and planning to achieve them. So organization tries that all the goals have to be appropriate to quality policy. Organization arranges the meetings with internal and external partners for realizing of these goals. Average respond of top managers of BBU was 5 for quality objectives of BBU have been consistent with the quality policy. But there are minor unconformities between them.

b) BBU has several achievements about providing of quality objectives and planning to achieve them. But, unfortunately organization has not any measurement methodology for quality objectives and planning to achieve them. Some kind of trainings may be efficient for formation of measurement methodology. Average respond was 4.

c) Before deciding of decides BBU considers its potential. High level of potential makes chance efficiency of plans for quality objectives and achieving them. Average respond was 4.

d) Unfortunately in organization has not methodology system for appropriation of conformity of products and services and to enhancement of customer satisfaction. There are some problems in this field. But

realizing of some training will make chance solving this kind of problems. Average respond was 4. Although average response was high, in reality we have some kind of needs in this direction.

e) Scientific Counsel of BBU decides some various types of decisions for quality objectives and achieves them. Especially the rector and top managers of organization determines the works for the responsible persons. Monitoring of the quality is realizing by responsible persons of organization regularly and they report their jobs. Average response of top managers of BBU was 3 for monitoring of quality objectives.

f) Communication among the departments is the one main things of management system of BBU. This field is always considered and tries to reform by rector of organization. Average response of top managers of BBU was 4 for communicating of quality objectives of BBU.

g) Quality objectives of BBU have been updated as appropriate. Average respond was 4. Although average respond was high, in reality we are aware of the fact that objectives are not updated periodically and do not open to changes very much.

The organization documented information on the quality objectives been maintained in Baku Business University five-year strategic development plan for 2014-18 years. But they are not enough for realizing all of the quality objectives. Average respond was 3. Although average respond was high, in reality in this direction we have some problems. Getting some kind of external trainings may profit for solving of the problems.

BBU has determined quality objectives and planning to achieve them:

a) BBU has determined what they will do for providing of quality objectives and planning to achieve them. Average respond was 4. For this purpose QA center has been established to provide quality objectives.

b) BBU has determined resources which they will be required for providing of quality objectives and planning to achieve them. Average respond was 4.

c) BBU has determined persons who they will be responsible for providing of quality objectives and planning to achieve them. Average respond was 4. For this reason BBU has appointed head of the QA Center.

d) BBU has determined duration of process which during this period the project will be completed. Average respond was 4. However concrete duration and work plan is not ready yet.

e) BBU has determined evaluating of results. Average respond was 3. Actually evaluation system is very weak at the university, since

leadership and top management is not interested in evaluation results. Sometimes surveys are conducted but there is not any mechanism to discuss the results and take an action. Therefore analysis and evaluation process needs to be developed.

3.2. Planning of changes

When the organization determines the need for changes to the quality management system, the issue is discussing by Scientific Counsel of BBU. Then appropriate decisions are accepting by Scientific Counsel of BBU. Realizing of decision is realizing by the top management of BBU. Average respond was 4.

4. Support

4.1. Resources;

4.1.1. General

Determining and providing of the resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the quality management system is reformed by the rector of BBU. Quality objectives and planning to achieve them is in starting stage at BBU. Therefore the organization needs experience in this field. Average response of top managers of BBU was 5 for determining and providing the resources BBU has needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the quality management system. Although average respond was high, in reality in this direction we need to get experience in this field.

a) The capabilities of, and constraints on, existing internal resources are assessing by the rector of BBU sustainable. Providing of the capabilities of, and constraints on, existing internal resources is the one of organization goals. The top management of the university usually tries to increase the capabilities of, and constraints on, existing internal resources operatively. The one of goals is to integrate for International Standards. Then we can get good result in future. <u>Average response of top managers of BBU was 5 for considering the capabilities of, and constraints on, existing internal resources.</u>

b) Quality objectives and planning to achieve them is main of the organization goals. In the direction external providers play especially role for BBU. The expectations of BBU are great from interact work with external providers. We can get increase in each field if we work with external providers. Because, we try to get good experience of external providers. Average response of top managers of BBU was 5 for

considering needs which they are obtained from external providers. However there are some unconformities.

4.1.2. People

Labor force plays the main role for the top managers of BBU. Because, the one of the essentials is operatively in works for BBU. So the organization determines and provides the persons necessary for the effective implementation of its quality management system and for the operation and control of its processes. Average response of top managers of BBU was 4 for determining and providing the persons necessary for the effective implementation of its quality management system and for the operation and control of its processes.

4.1.3. Infrastructure

The organization tries to determine, to provide and to maintain the infrastructure necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services in all fields. This field is controlling usually by the rector of BBU. But creating of management system in this field can be better for university. Average response of top managers of BBU was 3 for determining, providing and maintaining the infrastructure necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services.

4.1.4. Environment for the operation of processes

The realizing of work in time is the main for university. So environment is essential in university. So organization has determined, provided and maintained the environment necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services. Average response of top managers of BBU was 4 for determining, providing and maintaining the environment necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services.

4.1.5. Monitoring and measuring resources

Monitoring or measuring is realizing by the top management of university. So the organization has determined and provided the resources needed to ensure valid and reliable results when monitoring or measuring is used to verify the conformity of products and services to requirements. But the main need is reforming of methodology of monitoring or measuring. Average response of top managers of BBU was 4 for determining and providing the resources needed to ensure valid and reliable results when monitoring or measuring is used to verify the conformity of products and services to requirements.

a) Monitoring and measuring process is always providing by top management and rector of BBU. So monitoring and measuring resources plays specially role for realizing quality objectives and planning to achieve them. Monitoring and measuring are suitable for the specific type of monitoring and measurement activities being undertaken and this

reforming of this field is considering by top management of BBU sustainably. Average respond was 4.

b) Monitoring and measuring resources are maintained to ensure their continuing fitness for their purpose and the increasing of this is actual for top management of BBU. The main problem is the low of experience in this field. We hope, realizing relationship with external providers will give chance to increase of monitoring and measuring resources. Average respond was 3.

BBU has determined if the validity of previous measurement results has been adversely affected when measuring equipment is found to be unfit for its intended purpose, and taken appropriate action as necessary. Average respond was 3.

4.1.6. Organizational knowledge

The organization tries to determine the knowledge necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services. But organization faces several with barriers in this field. So the intent of BBU creating new relationships with external providers is to learn of their standards and integrate them. So BBU will determine the knowledge necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services. Average respond was 4. Although average respond was high, in reality in this direction we have several needs.

4.2. Competence

a) The quality management system is new in BBU. The determining of the necessary competence of person(s) doing work under its control that affects the performance and effectiveness of the quality management system is in starting stage in BBU. So we have great needs in this direction. Average respond was 2.

b) The organization has to provide high level the labor force for providing the quality management system. These issues are considering by the rector of BBU. The quality management system is the main thing for management of university. So the university tries to ensure that these persons are competent on the basis of appropriate education, training, or experience. Average respond was 3.

c) Persons who they are working for quality management system are chose by the rector of BBU. Specially, the rector of BBU creates the environment for developing of them. So this environment their contribution will great chance for the effectiveness of the quality management system, including the benefits of improved performance. Average respond was 2.

4.3. Awareness

The organization has ensured that persons doing work under the organization's control are aware of quality management system. Because they have to work operatively for realizing of works in time.

a) BBU has ensured that persons doing work under the organization's control are aware of the quality policy. Average respond was 4. Although average respond was high, in reality in this direction we have several problems.

b) For Baku Business University five-year strategic development plan for 2014/18 years, quality is the main of ambitions. So the works in organization are arranging appropriate to the quality objectives. Average respond was 4.

c) Quality management systems labor force's appropriate education, training, or experiences make chance for their contribution to the quality management system. Average respond was 4. Although average respond was high, in reality we need more training in this direction.

4.4. Communication

The organization determines the internal and external Communications relevant to the quality management system. But these works are not perfect. For getting development in this direction university try to expand relationships with the providers. Average respond was 2.

a) BBU has determined the internal and external Communications relevant to the quality management system. But now works is not perfect in this field. Average respond was 2. Providing of finance, labor forces, infrastructure and trainings can contribute to the quality of university management system.

b) Although BBU has determined the internal and external Communications relevant to the quality management system on the most of these communications are in the starting stage. Average respond was 4. In this direction we need reforming of this communication.

c) Although BBU has determined the internal and external Communications relevant to the quality management system. The internal and external Communications consist of most of the universities of Azerbaijan, universities of developing countries and several educational organizations of Europe. Average respond was 4.

d) Determining and assessment of the internal and external Communications are undertaken by international department and rector of BBU. Average respond was 4. Although average respond was high, in reality we need more trainings and experience in this direction.

e) Internal and external Communications are undertaken by international department of BBU. The rector of BBU considers appropriate education, training, or experience of international department responsible persons on

providing for the internal and external communications. Average respond was 4.

4.5. Documented information;

BBU has controlled quality management system. And this process is undertaken by the Scientific Council and top managers of BBU. But now top managers and rector of BBU want to develop quality management system. Because BBU has several goals in this direction.

a) The quality management system of BBU has documented information required by this International Standard. Average respond was 3. So this issue is on starting stage. The main thing is realizing of these documents and standards. We hope that it will happen in short time.

b) The quality management system of BBU has documented information determined by the organization as being necessary for the effectiveness of the quality management system. Average respond was 4. There are great work are realizing in this direction. During the next terms we wait good results in our works. But attending the trainings will help us realize these rapidly.

3.5 Performance evaluation

a) Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation;

BBU has a monitoring group which is doing monitoring and evaluation for the quality of education. The group consists of 17 people. They are Rector, 4 vice-rectors, 2 deans, 8 head of chairs and 2 assistants of Rector. They are attending lectures and seminars to check and evaluate the quality of education during the classes. The average point of the focus group was 3 out of 5. Because we are thinking that we have to enlarge the performance of evaluation. It should not be just for the educational issues and we have to implement it for the other departments and management system (HR, Accounting, International Relations, Marketing etc.) we can implement this kind of evaluation. The focus group agreed that this kind of monitoring and performance evaluation must be regular and uninterrupted. The other problem is the documentation process of the results. BBU has not that kind of practice to retained appropriate documented information as evidence of the results for the evaluation of performance.

a.2 Customer satisfaction

This is one of the weakest parts of the University. For us students are the customers of our University. So we have to monitor customers' needs and expectations regarding their study and other issues at University. The reason of this problem is the BBU has not any methods for obtaining, monitoring and reviewing the customer satisfaction. The answer of the focus group was 2 which means

implemented with minor(less) inconformity. Therefore this part needs to be improved.

a.3 Analysis and evaluation

As we mentioned above the University has not any standards and monitoring system for the evaluation of performance except the some aspects of quality in education. That is why we can not say that BBU is doing analysis and evaluation of the any kind of performance. Because of this, it is not clear for us the the degree of customer satisfaction, the performance of external providers. As a result the answer of the focus group was 1 point.

a) Internal audit

The University has not conduct any internal audits to provide information regarding quality management system. Only Rector can do this process at BBU but he don't have enough time for this issue, that is why we can't say that the University has any internal audit system. Also the University has not any requirements for the quality management system. The answer of focus group was 1 of of 5.

b) Management review;

c.1 General

For the BBU quality in education is more important than quality of management. That is why the top managers (vice-rectors, deans, head of chairs, head of departments) involving to increase the quality in education. The University has a strategic direction which is to be in the top 5 in among Azerbaijani Universities. But without the quality in the management system it is not possible. That is why in general, the answer of the focus group was 1 point.

c.2 Management review inputs

Usually top managers are not taking into consideration the status of actions from previous management review. The changes in internal issues are much more relevant for the University than external issues. Usually they do not take into consideration the audit results, monitoring and measurement results. That is why there are several nonconformities for the management input reviews. The respond of the focus group was 1 which means implemented with major inconformity.

c.3 Management review outputs

There are always opportunities for improvement of the quality in education and as well as management system. To succeed on this, we need involvement of top managers to the process to increase the quality system at the University. Most of

the top managers are well educated and experienced persons, so it would have just positive aspect to take into consideration their review outputs. The answer of the focus group was 3 which mean to be implemented.

3.6 Improvement
a) General

Unfortunately it is one of the weakest parts of the University. As a University we would like to improve ourselves but the problem is that we do not know how we can do it to succeed on this. We don't have selected opportunities for improvement. Usually customers' (students') requirements are quality education, quality management system, well-educated professors, well material-technical base at the University. Because of this we are trying to improve those aspects to meet requirements and future needs and expectations. BBU has goal and aim to correct, prevent and reduce negative things and undesired effects. The respond of the focus group was 3 which means implemented.

b) Nonconformity and corrective action

There are many nonconformities at the University but the positive thing is that BBU is trying to take action to control and correct it as well as deal with the consequences. Sometimes top managers including Rector, trying to review and analyze nonconformities during the meetings but it is not enough. It needs deep analyzing to find a difficulties and nonconformities. The focus group' respond was 3 out of 5 which means implemented.

c) Continual improvement

It is the goal of BBU to get continual improvement in its activities. Because of this BBU has to improve the management system to succeed on this. The current management system is not effective . The University is not consider the results of analysis and evaluation and the outputs from management review. The answer of the focus groups was 1 and it means that implemented with major inconformity

4. SUMMARY
a) Strengths

Alongside with the weak side, BBU has got several strengths as well.
2, 2.2.1., 3.2., 4.1.1., 4.1.3., 4.1.4, 4.1.6., 5.3., 5.3.2.
1.1. Although there are some inconformities, BBU has got 5 years of strategic plan.
b) Areas of improvement
1.2., 1.3., 1.4.,2.1.1., 2.2.2., 2.3., 3.1., 3.1., 4.1., 4.1.2, 4.1.5.,4.3.,5.1., 5.1.2, 5.1.3., 5.2., 6.1., 6.2.

c) The SWOT analysis of the current state of the Baku Business University.

STRENGTHS

- BBU has material-technical base facilities;

- BBU is willing to establish and implement QMS

- BBU leadership is open to new ideas and changes;

WEAKNESSES

- BBU does not have enough young staff;

- Most of BBU staff does not speak English;

- BBU students enter university with low score;

-BBU staff and teachers are not well-qualified;

- Motivation and salary is low;

- Old generation does not bear young ones;

OPPORTUNITIES

- has got infrastructure

-has got human resources

-has got good relations

- has got place and energy

THREATS

-black PR of unsatisfied students

- losing potential students

- negative social network management

- low incentive of lecturers

- low quality of lecturers

- low motivation by adminstration

- unpaid jobs

lack of communication