



WP1. Scoping and Analysis of Quality Assurance in Azerbaijan Universities

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT **Mingachevir State University**



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1. Introduction and Background

The questions set out for the establishment, development of quality assurance in education as well as the determination and investigation of needs at Mingachevir State University (ISO 9001: 2015) are summarized in six sections. Questions related to the context of the organization include: determining internal and external problems related to quality assurance in accordance with the organization's objectives and strategic plans, their monitoring, taking into consideration the needs and expectations of stakeholders in setting up a quality assurance system, identifying the boundaries of the quality assurance system, the existence of documented information on the quality assurance system, system's compliance with international standards and so on.

The quality assurance system and its processes include: relationships between the process and expectations, the sequence and interaction of the process, methods and criteria used, resource identification and benchmarking, assignment of duties and authorities, evaluation of processes and making necessary adjustments, supporting of processes and retaining of documented information.

The leadership-related part includes the ability of the top management in taking accountability for the effectiveness of the quality management system, attraction of resources, ensure the participation of all structural units in the process of quality assurance system, mobilize forces to achieve the goals, alignment of the policy implemented for the quality assurance with strategic direction of the university, actions made to ensure customer satisfaction, distribution of duties and commitments/responsibilities within the organization, ensuring compliance of the quality assurance system to international standards, preparing the action plan, determining the duration for implementation, supporting the quality assurance system (technical, human resources, etc.), taking into consideration the competencies of QAC employees, and so on.

The survey was aimed to identify the needs by summarizing the answers of the participants. Insufficient knowledge about modern quality assurance systems and lack of experience in this area are the key reasons for not achieving the desired result in the survey.

2. Methods

Focus group involved in the survey included individuals directly involved in the management as well as quality assurance processes since new assurance system in terms of ISO 9001: 2015 standards, unlike traditional approaches, requires a different approach. Focus group included 5 people - three deans and two employees from newly established QAC (Quality assurance center). The experience, competencies, and opportunities in managerial processes are taken into consideration. Participants of the survey had an opportunity to evaluate the questions as well. The answers to the questions have been summarized.

3. Key findings

3.1 Context of the organization

- a) Understanding the organization and its context.
- b) Understand the needs and expectations of stakeholders/interested parties
- c) Determine the boundaries of quality management system
- d) Quality management system and its processes

Implementation	Needs
Analysis of responses of survey on organization and its context show that, according to the opinions of the respondents, the university understands the importance of the establishing a new quality assurance system and establishment of such a	But, it is impossible to verify the effectiveness of the system as it has not fully started functioning. The University takes into account the costs and expected outcomes associated with the QAS and determines the sustainability and

<p>system is appropriate to the university's goals and strategic plan and relevant measures are being taken in that direction.</p> <p>The responsibilities and authorities of the stakeholders in the quality assurance system are theoretically determined and the Statue of newly established quality management system has been approved. So,it makes it possible to determine the scope of actions. The resources have been identified for the Quality assurance system, although the stakeholders know their duties and responsibilities but there are still problems with the implementation.</p>	<p>interactions between these processes. There is a need for radical changes in actions implemented forfully meetingthe customer needs.</p> <p>The University realizes the importance of applying a new methodology for identifying its internal and external problems by means of advanced system. However, there is a lack of modern practice to apply this new methodology.</p> <p>Documented information source that supports the processes of quality assurance is weak. The maintenance of documentary information sources verifying the implementation of the work according to the plan is not sufficient.</p>
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3.2. Leadership

a) leadership and commitment;

a.1 General information

a.2 Customer's focus

Implementation	Needs
<p>The goals of the quality assurance system are determined according to the strategic plan of the University.</p> <p>The university administration realizes that the efficiency of the management</p>	<p>The relationship with management system of University and business interests are weak and requires performance on these new requirements</p> <p>Clients' demands were primarily in the</p>

<p>system is related to quality management and takes accountability for the effectiveness of the quality management system. Structural department managers have been explained that the effectiveness of this system depends on them and opportunities have been created for their interaction.</p>	<p>center of attention, but, they haven't fully responded. There are some difficulties in creating a service that enhance customer satisfaction. Although the main goal is to respond the customers' demands, it is not possible to reach it yet.</p>
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2.2. Policy

b) policy;

b.1 Establishing of quality policy

b.2 Communicating the quality policy

c) Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities

Implementation	Needs
<p>The policy the University intended to implement in quality management system complies with the content and strategic direction of the university. It serves to formulate university goals in this area.</p> <p>The University realizes the need for the improvement of the quality management system. Thus it is interested in the functioning of new quality policy. The division of duties and responsibilities have been determined and accountability system have been developed in order to ensure the</p>	<p>However, there is a lack of practice meeting new standards in this area. Interested parties are in need of the preparation of new quality policy. The absence of communication at the highest level does not make it possible to carry out this task thoroughly.</p> <p>In this way, management takes steps to ensure that the quality of management meets international standards. For this purpose, the "Reporting System" has been established to ensure the attainment of processes. New mechanisms for the involvement of</p>

effective functioning of quality management system at university.	customers to the university life are identified. Actions in communicating the quality policy are weakly implemented
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2.2.2

3.3 Planning

a) *Quality objectives and planning to achieve them*

b) *planning of changes*

Implementation	Needs
<p>The university has determined its quality goals and the ways to achieve it in its Charter and in the Quality Assurance Statute. The purpose of quality and an action plan to achieve it have been developed as well as technical and human resources have already been involved. The responsibilities of other structures have been clarified as well. The action plan for quality assurance system is one year and specific targets have been identified and its goals are updated according to new circumstances.</p> <p>Discussion and evaluation of further intended actions is planned. (at the Academic Council of the Faculty and University.</p> <p>Changes are expected in the event of</p>	<p>Though the purpose of quality is appropriate to the quality policy of university, it is not possible to realize it fully. The university aims to formulate quality on needs and demand for positive result, being aware of the essence of new standart in determining new measurement methods of quality. Hence, the main goals are mostly focused on customer satisfaction.</p> <p>University administration has no a special mechanism for informing the staff with quality changes.</p>

any issues arising during the implementation of planned actions with the quality management, Thus, any delay or non-fulfillment of the plan will require changes in the plan.	
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3.4 Support

Implementation	Needs
Resources used to improve quality at MSU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial and material resources, training buildings and other facilities (gym, Act hall, canteen), office equipment, software (www.msu.unibook.az); - information resources (MDU site - http://www.mdu.edu.az); - physical resources (energy, water, etc.); - Educational and methodological support; -Library support - Edition and publishing; - Ensuring the safety life; 	Despite a number of measures have been taken for strengthening the university's human resources (involvement of additional staff in various specialties, obtaining targeted places for scientific degrees in different HEIs of country in order to ensure the proficiency/seniority of staff, etc.), for social support of staff as well as learners (remuneration and motivation of staff, exemption from tuition fees), there is no systematic approach to determining criteria for assessment employees' competences.

The University has determined the needs for improving the quality of education till the reporting period, and provided them through its own internal resources.(see 4.1.1)

Analysis of current situation

Weakness	Threads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The traditional infrastructure not meeting new standards -Lack of communication model between university departments -Lack of necessary relationships for the joint (dual) education system -Complex procedures in purchasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low competitiveness of the trained specialists and non-compliance with world standards - The current unstable geopolitical and economic situation in the world - Low level of students' general secondary education

<p><i>while meeting the university's requirements</i></p> <p><i>-Lack of connection between "university-graduate- employer"</i></p>	<p><i>- failure of the teaching programs to meet international standards and employers' requirements</i></p> <p><i>-very low acceptance scores for some admissions (specialties)</i></p>
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3.5 Performance evaluation

Environment for the operation of processes

The surrounding environment includes the following human and physical factors:

- social (eg, lack of discrimination, peace, confrontation, etc.);
- physiological (eg stress reduction, emotional protection etc);
- physical (eg temperature, humidity, light, dust, gas, noise, vibration, electromagnetic and radiation).

It creates necessary conditions for proper management of factors and ensures the safety of personnel.

The internal strategic planning and regulations of the MSU are intended to create the positive spiritual and psychological environment mentioned above and are successfully implemented.

Monitoring and measuring resources

Relevant department meetings are periodically held for the discussion on whether the existing curriculum meets the requirements of learners and society. Measurements on curriculum and exams are carried out for improvement of achievements.

Unit resource for student achievement measurement includes examination papers (tickets).

Although the university has few laboratories for experiments, it does not have other means of monitoring and measuring resources and software.

4.1.6. The database

There is a serious need to improve, enrich and update the existing database in order to ensure the provision of services and professionals trained at the University to meet the relevant requirements.

4.2. Competence

<p>The university organizes scientific-methodological conferences on various subjects at the republican level, publishes materials. The program, methodology and textbooks prepared by professor-teacher staff are discussed in different departments (Scientific Council) and published. According to the result of the survey conducted among the students (80% of the respondents (4 groups), the vast majority of participants are satisfied with the teaching staff's professionalism.</p>	<p>However, participation of professor-teacher staff in specialization enhancement and development courses is not satisfactory for various reasons. Systematic arrangements (attestation) have not been established to determine employee competencies.</p>
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4.3. Awareness

<p>The staff of the university are informed about policy of the University at the extended meetings of the Scientific Council and at different levels of meetings.</p>	<p>The data provided have common and observational characteristics. (orders and decisions taken at the state level). The following are important questions. It does not include the following important issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The policy of quality improvement - Relevant objectives for quality assurance - Nonconformity of the results with the requirements of the quality management system and so on.
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4.4. Communication

Communication with interested parties is organized through electronic means and Open Days

4.5. Documented information

Information retention does not meet international standards.

Performance Evaluation

5.1. Monitoring, measurement, analysis, evaluation

The goal is to verify the relevance of scientific activity to needs

The methods used - the organization and discussion of open lessons, the discussion of the results of scientific activities (scientific articles, programs, lessons and methodical materials) and checking them for various plagiarism programs.

5.1.1. The quantitative and qualitative indicators of the university are evaluated based on the results of the examination (eg, winter/spring exam sessions) and the activities of the teaching staff. Statistical analysis of the data is carried out

Weaknesses:

- Conducted monitorings are not systematic and documented;
- analysis and inspections are often statistical;
- management of monitoring, analysis and verification not at all stages of the process, but only to verify the results (analysis of the results of the examination);
- uncertainty of monitoring methods.

5.1.2. The university determines a variety of methods (views and inquiries) taking into consideration needs, interests and expectations of customers (educators, learners, and other stakeholders that are generally interested in learning).

5.1.3. Reasons for the nonconformity between the requirements of this unit and the University:

- a lack of relevant local organizations and enterprises corresponding to relevant specialties;
- Low motivation of organizations and enterprises;
- limited capacity, appropriate methods to eliminate risk factors.

In particular, it is necessary to improve the quality management system in this area.

5.2. Internal audit

The current situation internal audits are not planned, graphically implemented;

- The Appeal Commission operates in the process of examination
- does not comply with international standards;

5.3. Management review

5.3.1. The measures taken comply with the Strategic Plan and Action Plan of the University.

There is nonconformity in the intended action plan set by top management and actions implemented

5.3.2. The role of top management in management.

Management review is based on the comments, proposals or opinions of the customers

Although the organization of work on other points is not satisfactory, the university has a positive environment for the improvement of those areas.

5.3.3 Management review outputs

Opportunities for improvement and development of actions in certain areas (meet the needs of students, teachers, employees, etc.) are determined and implemented. However, these actions are not documented using appropriate methods (analysis, generalization and result).

3.6 Improvement

6.1. University intends to meet the requirements of stakeholders in its internal regulatory legal documents and implements the following activities.

University administration, structural units of various levels are open to make changes in their actions, if necessary, in order to meet the needs of the interested parties.

Certain actions are being implemented; enhance the quality of the material and technical base; ensure the transparency of management; ensure justice and democracy; ensure the employment of young specialists at the university; take various measures to increase the number of specialized teachers in various fields (4.1.2) etc.

6.2. Nonconformity and corrective actions.

When a nonconformity occurs University takes actions to control and correct it. Relevant actions are taken to prevent the growth of the scope of the problem. However, the sequence of implemented actions like analyze of current situation, the adoption of appropriate decisions and its application and evaluation is not satisfactory (inadequate).

6.2. Corrective actions, being implemented, are directed to the solution of nonconformities.

Existing problems:

- documentation issues do not meet the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 standards;
- failure in the sequence of analysis, organization, apply, evaluation while implementing the process.

6.3. In order to ensure sustainable development, the organization takes into account the results of the analysis and evaluation (the location of the university in the rating table) and determines the requirements

SUMMARY

Strenght

- Compliance with current legislation
- Determination of the "Strategic Plan" of the University and the "Action Plan" of quality assurance system
- The university administration is constantly informing the public about quality changes and the goals are updated according to new circumstances.
- University leadership is interested in building a new quality assurance system
- Establishment of quality management system

Weakness

- lack of experience in the field of application of the international standard
- no specific methods for studying internal and external problems in quality assurance system

- outdated infrastructure
- Lack of modern communication standards among university structural divisions
- Poor connection among "University - graduate - employer"
- Low Competitiveness of specialists
- Lack of international experience
- fewer job opportunities for graduates with certain specialties in city
- The university has almost no experience with the implementation of international standards of quality assurance system. In general, there is a need for exchange of experience in this area.

Opportunities

- Establishment new system at university promises positive results in quality of education