



# **WP1. Scoping and Analysis of Quality Assurance in Azerbaijan Universities**

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT** **Nakhchivan University**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

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

Our purpose of the needs assessment first of all to review what have been done and to understand what should be done and improved in future. It is a great opportunity to discuss the method, technology and tools which are used in our University to reach the quality objectives.

## 2. METHODS

- **Brief description of each data collection method used**

To collect data from focus group members we held a meeting and discussed all the titles of survey form and put their mark from 0 to 5 to the table. All answers was indicated in written form.

- **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**

Nakhchivan University Quality Assurance Sector 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 7 key persons.

- 1) Vice rector for educational affairs
- 2) Dean Of Pedagogical Faculty
- 3) Dean Of Foreign Languages Faculty
- 4) Head of Internaional Relations Department
- 5) Head of Education Department
- 6) Head of Foreign Languages chairs
- 7) Specialist of QAS

## 3. KEY FINDINGS

### 3.1 Context of the organization

- a) Understanding the organization and its context

Our focus group agrees that “Nakhchivan” University determines the external and internal issues that are relevant to organization purpose, but it has some shortcomings, that is why average answer of our focus group was the value of 2. QAC which is newly establishing in the university needs to be improved. The university doesn't monitor and review information about external and internal

issues. It has the monitoring system, however it only involves the attitudes, behavior and assessments of the students. Therefore it is necessary to develop system.

b) Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

NU determines the needs and expectations of interested parties that are relevant to the quality management system and review these on a regular basis. However the average respond of our focus group was 4 but it must be improved.

c) Determining the scope of the quality management system

“Nakhchivan” University quality management system is available now but we must noted that its documented information is not maintained fully yet. The organization indetifies the boundaries and applicability of the quality management system. However the scope of the organization is not established in quality management system. The average answer was 2

d) Quality management system and its processes

Generally the quality management system is a set of policies, processes and procedures required for planning and development of the university. Quality management system in NU has been established including the process needed and their sequence and interaction. One person appointed as the head of this center. The strategy of the quality management system is defined by the university rector. It will be determined processes, their interaction, inputs and outputs. QMS takes actions to address risks and opportunities as a result of changes. Although this system is newly established in our university but step by step we fulfill all requires of quality management system. NU confirms that employees receive applicable training in the quality system requirements. Documentation of QMS processes is maintained and controlled in our university. It supports that the processes are being carried out as planned. Therefore the answer was 4.

### **3.2 Leadership**

a) Leadership and commitment;

a.1 General

In NU top management - leaders are sufficiently competent in the planning, communication and management and also they have be able to develop vision of the quality management system, how to implement them as well as made to ensure the participation of workers in their implementation. Management should be engaged in the processes with a model attitude and should be able to engage the whole organization actively in achieving objectives. Top management has ensured that the quality management system achieves its intended results and has taken responsibility for the effectiveness of the quality management system, they promote its improvement. The respond of focus group was 4.

There is not any relation between Quality Management system and

university's business processes, as it does not have any business processes.

#### a.2 Customer focus

It must be noted that that is pity in our organization customer satisfaction is not maintained, the risks and opportunities that can affect conformity of products and services and the ability to enhance customer satisfaction are determined and addressed sometimes but not in every situation. Customer focus is very weak. Therefore the answer was 2.

#### b) Policy;

##### b.1 Establishing the quality policy

However QAC newly established in NU but we have already created and implemented the quality policy Top management supports its strategic directions and provides a framework for setting quality objectives. The answer was 4

##### b.2 Communicating the quality policy

QAC has not been available and been maintained as documented information. After establishing QAC in NU now it has very limited work. It needs to be improved. Our rector and top management support fully this organization but it is not documented yet. The respond was 2

#### c) Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities

Top management has assigned, communicated and understood within the quality management system the responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles. That is why the answer was 5

But International standards of the QA system are not implemented at the university. Because our university is private and it has own rules and disciplines. QAC is established in our university but it has some limitations. The average answer of aour focus group was 2

### **3.1 Planning - ANARA**

#### a) Quality objectives and planning to achieve them

Quality policy of the university has high quality objectives planned to be established by the described below functions and ways. The appointed managers of quality management system are responsible to track the measure for quality objectives and present the results to the administration in order to be compared with the set objectives.

The appointed quality objectives are aimed to be relevant to the problem of determining qualitative goals.

At present period quality objectives are being monitored in the university, but need an opportunity to be improved. The university administration and quality management stake out the current trends in education and current methods to be improved for gaining higher quality of education. Therefore, our university tries to collaborate with the world's leading universities and update quality objectives by the way of experience exchange and setting the training courses on improvement of proficiency for our teachers. Our focus group evaluated the answer of this question with 3.

b) Planning of changes

Being a strong part of quality management system planning of changes should be focused constantly. The strategic plan of the University is discussed in Scientific Council of the University and responsible staff members undertake to fulfill an assignment. University is planning to determine the need for changes and improvements to the quality management system thanks to the project we joined. This point of the need assessment questionnaire has been assessed with 2.

### **3.2 Support**

a) Resources;

a.1 General

Aiming to improve and implement the quality management system at the university, administration monitors the situation and provides the university with the needed facilities and creates all kinds of opportunities for employees.

The university is a leading multidiscipline private higher educational institution at the region aimed to train the broad-spectrum specialists in all levels of education, busy with additional educational programs and fulfils a number of fundamental and applied scientific researches. Therefore, seeking the more effective ways of gaining success in this field university joins the projects like this. Overage 2 points were given to this item of the questionnaire.

a.2 People

Within the project we have joined, the University has determined Quality Assurance group for the effective implementation of quality management system and for the monitoring the process of renewing, controlling the changes and gaining the best results. The group includes following responsible persons:

Ismayil Aliyev –the rector of the University

Rajab Jafarli - the head of the department of the international relations  
Konul Babayeva – the head-teacher  
Anara Nasirli - the head of the department of the foreign languages  
Anar Abuzerli – the head of the educational affairs

### a.3 Infrastructure

“Nakhchivan” University operates since 1999. More than 1000 students study at “Nakhchivan” University. 100 professors-teachers staff carries out specialist preparation. 4 faculties, 10 chairs, 6 departments, 5 centers are operating at the university.

In 2014 “Nakhchivan” University was fully reconstructed and provided with all kinds of facilities. Just now university meets modern standards. 7 buildings, educational corps, e-library, sport and art complex, multi-storey dormitory, social service centre are situated within the area of the University-campus.

The structure of the university is determined by its academic council (except for branches) and approved by the head (rector) of the educational institution. The functions of the structural units of the University are reflected in the university regulation. Heads of departments (except for branches) are appointed by the rector of the university. And all bodies are monitored by the rector.

The following management and self-governing bodies are established to ensure democracy and transparency in the management of the University:

- General meeting
  - Scientific Council
  - Scientific methodological council
- The question's overage point is 4.

### a.4 Environment for the operation of processes

The level of the existing conditions and opportunities at every institution is the main factor attracting the employees and surely students as well. We may confidently say that the organization really has determined, provided and maintained the environment necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services. Our university has kinds of Information and communication technologies (ICTs), more exactly, 444 computers, more than 20 e-boards are in the usage of the academic administrative staff and students. Besides, university library, computer rooms, ECDL center, Huawei center and more than 5 studies are equipped with all kinds of information technologies. These technologies are introduced to support learning and the development of professional competencies. Thereafter they

might be used for effective quality management system implementation. .  
Average answer of the focus group was the value of 4.

#### a.5 Monitoring and measuring resources

Nakhchivan University tried to determine and provide the resources needed to ensure valid and reliable results when monitoring or measuring is used to verify the conformity of products and services to requirement.

NU has been in the process of Bologna reform, which brings a significant shift from a traditional didactics to modern ones, which stresses competence development by means of an active role of students, a linking of teaching and research activities, group and team work, problem solving, utilization of electronic media, involvement of practitioners in teaching and training of students in work environments. Problem is not all academic, senior and middle administrative staff are required to have a good foreign language and the students as well. In addition foreign lecturers aren't involved in the teaching process. For short term they are invited but it is not enough. This question is evaluated with 2 at our university.

#### a.6 Organizational knowledge

The representatives of the project visited our university and held the meeting for informing the university administration about the aim and plans of the organization, importance of the quality management system and discussed what can we do together for improving the system at our university.

#### b) Competence

The members of the quality management system are competent for the position they occupy and feel great responsibility for this. The University administration ensured that every member is intelligent and respected employee. Vice-rector, deans, heads of departments have appropriate education to hold the position. Along with this the members of Quality Assurance Group need to pass special courses for improvement qualification.

Teachers go abroad to improve their qualifications, to attend conferences, and to improve their knowledge of the methods of teaching.

#### c) Awareness

Persons working under the university's supervision are aware of their duties and objectives. Quality policy is also very important point about which the responsible persons should be aware. Along with the quality policy members should have new, creative ideas for forming the quality policy by themselves. The university administration ensured that the chosen members were able to fulfill that mission.

International standards of education are another point of great importance for every university. To gain the success in this field is possible only by collaboration of academic and administrative staff that aimed to produce the skilled and intelligent graduates. To achieve this, the Administrative and Academic staff have set a goal, and deadlines for the procedures implementation. So, the university administration aware of the duties and objectives, but they are looking for better ways of improving the quality and solving the existing problems, thereafter together with the project managers. The question is marked with 4.

d) Communication

The organization ought to determine the internal and external Communications relevant to the quality management system. Here some main points are necessary to be taken into consideration: on what it will communicate, when to communicate, with whom to communicate, how to communicate and who communicates.

The University is planning to determine the internal communications relevant to the quality management system. The system will be always available for communication, therefore it hasn't time-table. People may connect with each other any time. So, colleagues will feel free to ask their question and get advice from quality management system representatives.

Regarding the question on how to communicate, the staff communicates mainly by telephone, during general or individual meetings. The interviewers suggest creating electron communication system

e) Documented information;

The organization's quality management system doesn't include all documented information required by the International Standard. All documentation related to academic process (syllabuses, curriculums) and the reports given for this



documentation are retained in dean offices, departments and strategic planning department. In order to save data from loss, deletion or corruption it is also stored in Google disk and printed copy.

### **3.5 Performance evaluation**

#### **a. 1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation;**

The structural units of the University are directly involved in the organization and realization of educational process and scientific research works, implement the decisions of the university's academic council, orders and decrees of the rector. And all bodies are monitored by the rectorate.

For quality assurance development we need to plan on monitoring the quality of administrative and support services for students and teachers. The aim is to establish a comprehensive quality monitoring and quality management system, which will provide regular activities of the management and administration.

#### **a.2 Customer satisfaction**

For students satisfaction Education department and IT department of the university were held surveys for improvement of the service from time to time. But expectations haven't been fulfilled in a normal range. University has to determine the methods for obtaining and monitoring of information.

#### **a.3 Analysis and evaluation**

All bodies of the university compile their results into reports. It is within these reports that head of the departments identify whether activities and plans have been effective, and recommend changes where appropriate. These reports then go through a comprehensive standard review process in the Scientific Council in order to ensure they are scientifically credible, accurate, and beneficial to university.

#### **c) Internal audit :**

Internal audit provide the University's Council and Rector and other senior managers with assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's arrangements for risk management, control and governance

The internal audit function provides a judgement on reasonable assurance, the responsibilities for control, risk management and governance in the University lie with the University's management. Internal Audit is simply to review the arrangements that the University has put in place to provide the necessary assurance, the internal auditors do have a role in assisting management to improve risk management.

In addition, the internal audit function also has a role in the required assurance in the specific area- the University's 'value for money' arrangements.

**c) Management review;**

**c.1 Management review inputs**

Management reviews of the education system are not conducted and presented in a documented form in a planned manner. However, top management and department heads prepare a report on the work done, submit it to the supreme body of the university and rector. Royal Institute of British Architects have visited our University 3 times and taking into consideration the status of actions from previous management reviews notes that we have constantly improved situation at the faculty.

**c.2 Management review outputs**

Within the accreditation process, which is currently being carried out by the deans, head of chairs and departments of our University the inspection commission from Ministry of Education, evaluators revise the content of education, comparison to education abroad, general quality and suggested actions related to future opportunities for improvement.

### **3.6 Improvement**

**a) General**

The University currently faces many challenges such as low enrollment, reduction in workforce, along with higher expectations for service excellence and accountability. As a result, administration is looking for ways to improve and transform the way the University operates and improve the service. There are many opportunities for process improvement at the University that will lead to efficiency and effectiveness on both the academic and administrative side that will result in improved customer satisfaction. Improvement is about making things better, rather than maintaining the status quo.

**b) Nonconformity and corrective action**

When a nonconformity occurs, including any arising from complaints, the University reacts to the nonconformity, takes action to control and corrects it. University rector appoints responsible persons-Ombudsman to cope with

nonconformity and its consequences. For example, any if the student complaint related to educational process, content of the program, result of the exam he or she needs to appeal to the Ombudsman of the university from the link in the web site of the university or directly to the ombudsman office, if the complaint related to the exam process the issue will be observed review by exam and testing commission specialist and etc. At the same time for special cases the student can have a meeting with rector. Ombudsman needs to evaluate the need for action to eliminate the cause of the complaints.

### c) Continual improvement

Nakhchivan university apply continual improvement principles and practices to both academic services and administrative processes. To increase the competitiveness find out effective way to address new demands and university organize trainings for academic and administrative staff have a cohesive approach to improvement across the department or faculty level.

## 4. SUMMARY

- a) Strengths
- b) Areas of improvement
- c) The SWOT analysis of the current state of “Nakhchivan” University.

Strengths	Topic	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive balance in teaching-learning-assessment, research, and service provision activities</li> <li>- Experience in the definition and adoption of institutional and political strategies (teaching, research, service to society, internationalisation, innovation,...)</li> <li>- Good internal and external environment for studying, reflecting, and student academic experience.</li> <li>- Atmosphere among students with a sense of belonging</li> <li>- Good institutional image and credibility in the region</li> </ul>	NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulty in establishing a nationwide renowned profile</li> <li>- Difficulty in attracting students with above-average abilities, interests, and motivation</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of a development strategy in harmony with the requirements and implementation of the Bologna process</li> <li>- Timely planning of the academic calendar and of school timetables, with emphasis on students' time management</li> <li>- Increased mobility of students and staff through a network of international agreements, contacts, and partnerships (protocols, Erasmus, Movlana)</li> <li>- Significant decrease in bureaucracy by making services available to students online through digital databases such as the online academic services</li> </ul>	<p>Organisation and Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temporary physical constraints in some faculties (Social and Human Sciences,)</li> <li>- Difficulty in implementing a cooperative and collaborative culture among services and departments</li> <li>- Insufficient strategic planning in some areas/spheres</li> <li>- Weak support to graduate entry in the job market</li> <li>- Excessive number of bodies in the University's structure and management, with overlapping of duties.</li> <li>-Quality-control integrated system not implemented and lack of adequate response to arising problems</li>   <li>- Limited intermediate management structures and decision-making ability</li> <li>- Decision-making with inconsistent follow-up</li> </ul>
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Strengths	Topic	Weakness
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good working environment for teaching staff and good conditions for the practice of teaching and research</li> <li>- Interdisciplinary activities using Laboratories, centres, interdepartmental units, and workshops</li> <li>- Study programmes adjusted to Bologna and with adequate curricula.</li> <li>- Quantification of student workloads by the ECTS</li> <li>- Quality of teaching-learning-assessment and a good relation of proximity between students and teaching staff</li> <li>- Study programmes with clear identity of the core curricula integrating study areas and teaching staff from several departments</li> <li>- Entrepreneurship curricular activities incorporated in study programmes (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles)</li> <li>- Online assessment by students of the pedagogic features of teaching.</li> <li>- Ability to create and develop transversal and multidisciplinary teaching projects (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles)</li> <li>- Diversified offer of study programmes</li> <li>- Publishing service for master dissertations and PhD theses in book for</li> </ul>	<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient ties with former alumni</li> <li>- Pedagogic concern of teaching staff in promoting students' academic success</li> <li>- Insufficient quality-control through instruments and methodologies</li> <li>- Need of quality assurance in training and study programmes</li> <li>- Low success rates in the first two years of the 1st cycle</li> <li>- Critical survival rates in some fields of knowledge</li> <li>- Need of quality assurance in training and study programmes</li> <li>- Occasional English-taught lectures in the 2nd cycle</li> <li>- Small number of foreign students</li> <li>- Lack of adequate preparation for the challenges and demands in higher education (self-study, workloads, university attendance, )</li> <li>- Adjustment of programmes not flexible enough for market demands (study programmes, core curriculum, calendar,...)</li> <li>- Shift of focus to quantity (number of graduates) of University outputs in detriment of quality</li> <li>- Restrictive 2nd-degree offer due to the decrease in public funding</li> <li>- Low success rates at the secondary-school level and high drop-out rates</li> <li>- Student outward mobility in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)</li> <li>- Insufficient ability to attract students to sciences, technologies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequate scientific productivity in research units</li> <li>- Research units with funding and "Very Good" and "Good" ratings</li> <li>- Improve articulation of teaching-learning-assessment activities with Research activities to obtain increased external funding</li> </ul>	<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small number of undergraduates involved in research activities</li> <li>- Some difficulties in recruiting PhD staff for research units</li> <li>- Difficulty in drawing students into PhD programmes</li> <li>- Lack of external acknowledgement of research</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good working environment for teaching staff and good conditions for teaching practice.</li> <li>- Young, experienced, and qualified teaching staff</li> <li>- Cooperative collaboration between teaching- and non- teaching staff</li> </ul>	<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fragmentation and excessive internal competitiveness between teaching staff and researchers</li> <li>- Precarious contracts of University staff (sense of non-belonging)</li> </ul>