



Quality Assurance for Reform and Transformation of HEIs in Uzbekistan - QUARTZ

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GUIDELINES for designing a Quality Assurance Plan

WP 4

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GUIDING DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

This Plan describes the university's commitment to continuous improvement in teaching, research and the third mission. Quality for the university means always raising quality in terms of education, research, knowledge enhancement and organisational processes.

Quality assurance goes beyond mere compliance with pre-established standards; it is an active process, engaging the entire university community in a path of continuous improvement. Everyone in the academic community contributes.

Through a structured, participatory system, the university is able to document and measure progress in all its areas, ensuring that the processes are always aligned with the university's mission and strategy.

The recognition and enhancement of quality are at the core of the values and principles that guide all the university's actions, in alignment with the “national QA strategy”. *(Add specific tasks of NQAAE)*

The dissemination and enhancement of quality also take place through the publication of **guidelines and documents** on teaching, research, and the third mission/social impact, providing valuable resources for the academic community. *(Make specific reference to the documents and/or annex them)*

Continuous monitoring of processes and results is the foundation for the implementation of the university's educational, scientific, and public engagement projects.

This translates into a clear sense of responsibility toward all stakeholders, identified as the following:

- Student community and their families
- Faculty, technical, administrative, and library staff
- Economic and productive system stakeholders
- Local, regional, national, and international institutions *taking into consideration also the European Standards*
- Civil society organizations and non-profit organizations
- National and international scientific community, *scientific and cooperation Networks*
- Bodies, institutions, and universities, both national and international, with which the University collaborates in teaching, research, and third mission activities.

2. PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE QUALITY POLICY

Recognition and enhancement of quality are the foundation of the values and principles that guide the actions of the UNIVERSITY in pursuing its missions, as expressly defined in the **Strategic Plan** (annex.....).

In line with the National Policies, the term "quality" in this document refers to the degree to which established objectives are achieved, in line with the needs and expectations of stakeholders, represented not only by students and faculty and administrative staff, but also by external stakeholders, such as alumni, representatives of the world of work, businesses and civil society, public administration, and institutions. Listening to, engaging, and participating in all stakeholders' initiatives and decision-making processes, according to the formats defined by the **Statute (ref. annex)**, are considered fundamental to the QA process.

The approach to quality assurance adopts the following principles as guiding criteria for its actions and for the construction of its quality system:

- The active and informed participation of the entire academic community and internal and external stakeholders, through appropriate structures and processes and constant, up-to-date, clear, and comprehensive information, is an essential prerequisite for effective and qualified participation by all parties.
- The creation of a study and work environment focused on personal well-being, promoting principles of equity and inclusion, actively combating all forms of discrimination, direct and indirect, based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability, religion, language, political opinion, and personal and social conditions.
- The valorization of internal skills based on merit, outlining a path of individual and collective growth that is reflected in teaching, research, and third mission activities.
- The centrality of students, as long established by **European reference standards**, encouraging widespread listening and participation, actively promoting representation on university bodies, and working to ensure that the University's missions contribute in an integrated manner to the construction of a quality educational experience.
- Transparency, legality, and integrity in all teaching, research, collaboration with the public, management, and administrative activities, in order to pursue quality and efficiency of results.
- The promotion, within a framework of social responsibility, of sustainability and environmental protection, in connection with society, committing to creating the conditions for a widespread and informed culture of sustainability.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE QUALITY POLICY

The guiding principles of the university's Quality Policy outlined above are reflected in the following objectives, achieved through the development of a quality assurance system supported by appropriate support structures. These objectives are designed to:

- **spread a culture of quality** throughout the academic community through self-assessment methods and tools implemented across organizational units, with a view to continuous improvement resulting from motivation and support for everyone's commitment to pursuing defined objectives;
- **promote ongoing dialogue with stakeholders** in society to foster mutual benefit through the sharing of needs and opportunities that emerge during targeted discussions to define actions to improve the quality of teaching, research, and the third mission;
- **establish clear and verifiable objectives**, identify adequate resources, and define the processes and stakeholders involved, their responsibilities, methods, standards, and review tools;

- **ensure attention to factual evidence and access** to clear, precise, and objective information on the operations of its departments to support the management of all processes that contribute to quality improvement;
- **promote the development** and proper functioning of the design, execution, verification, and implementation phases of corrective measures to improve managed processes in order to verify their **overall effectiveness**.

The Quality Policy is further broken down into specific objectives related to the University's missions, with the aim of more precisely guiding the University's processes and actions.

3.1 Teaching and the Student Community

With regard to Teaching and Student Community, the University is committed to:

- **promote the quality of teaching in degree programs and doctoral programs** by ensuring constant monitoring of the sustainability of the educational offering in terms of teaching resources, technical and administrative staff, and facilities, continuous assessment of the achievement of expected learning objectives, the consistency of careers, student satisfaction, and the employability of skills.
- **promote systematic engagement with representatives of the professional world** (business, public administration, the professional and non-profit sectors, etc.) in the design and evaluation of training programs, with the aim of identifying and updating the skills and abilities that contribute to enhancing the graduate's cultural and scientific profile.
- **consolidate the attractiveness of its first, second and third cycle educational** offerings by designing an educational program that fosters the international openness of the University and best prepares students for their professional and personal future, constantly updated, also from an interdisciplinary perspective, and closely connected to the acquisitions of the research activity carried out at the University.
- **Support the internationalization of the educational** offering by providing study abroad programs, dual degree programs, resources, and services that allow students to experience the international dimension typical of the university world, and by supporting collaboration and co-planning between universities.
- **enhance and strengthen innovative teaching approaches and techniques by promoting training programs** connected to the world of work and teaching methods that encourage students to take an active role in the processes of knowledge production and in building individual paths of development and autonomy.
- **develop training programs and opportunities to support the continuous professional development of university faculty**, particularly with regard to teaching and organizational skills, learning and teaching methodologies and tools, in the knowledge that quality teaching also depends on the quality of teaching
- **Strengthen the right to education through a range of interventions and services** aimed at improving the study and living conditions of students, such as tuition fee subsidies and financial benefits (scholarships and tutoring grants), increasing the availability of housing, and ensuring adequate and inclusive support for students with disabilities, those with special educational needs, and those who, for a variety of reasons (work, care, detention, or involvement in armed conflict), find themselves limited in accessing educational activities.
- **improve the quality of student services** by developing ongoing orientation initiatives (initial, ongoing, and final) aimed at promoting the smooth completion of the educational program and the acquisition of greater awareness of personal decisions in academic and career contexts.
- **support active citizenship initiatives** among students and their participation in decision-making processes, in the ways provided for by the **Statute**, through participation in meetings of the Academic Bodies and in working groups and commissions, and promote and support

methods and practices to encourage their involvement in evaluation processes and in the planning and implementation of improvement initiatives and plans, in order to ensure constant improvement in the quality of teaching, research, the third mission and the entire organization of the University.

References:

- Guidelines for correct planning of curricula and preparation of syllabi (including assessment methods)
- Statute
- Strategic Plan (with qualitative and quantitative indicators)

3.2 Research

With regard to research objectives, the university is committed to:

- **Protecting the freedom and autonomy** of basic and applied research by supporting the scientific activity of young researchers and promoting participation in initiatives organized by national and international networks.
- **Promoting merit in the recruitment and career progression of researchers, periodically evaluating their effectiveness, revising, where necessary,** the quality criteria for new hires to improve the methods for distributing staff points to departments/faculties, and finally promoting merit-based criteria for the financial progression of technical and administrative staff.
- **Strengthening the quality of research** by improving support in the planning, management and reporting phases of competitive research projects, adopting evaluation practices that foster alignment with national and international ones, encouraging quality publications in prestigious publishing venues and promoting the organisation of scientific conferences, also with the aim of encouraging participation and the development of international research networks.
- **Increase participation in international, national, and local competitive calls** by promptly and comprehensively disseminating funding opportunities for research and teaching programs, and leveraging the results of successful competitive projects to foster the dissemination of best practices and impact regionally and nationally.
- **Promote interdisciplinary research and encourage Open Access** publications through appropriate evaluation policies, creating new shared research laboratories, and mapping the interdisciplinary nature of scientific production through the Institutional Research Information System and Activities & Projects profiles. Specifically, foster the development of Open Science through training activities
- **Enhance the international dimension of the PhD program**, both for incoming and outgoing students, by harmonizing aspects of third-level teaching activities and those related to research, monitoring and supporting the independent scientific growth of PhD students, and implementing actions aimed at strengthening the role of the PhD program in the productive world and in public administration.
- **Support the acquisition and management of shared spaces, laboratories, equipment, and infrastructure for research**, and improve the quality and usability of existing facilities, also intended as places for integrating research and teaching.

Annexes: description of labs, research infrastructures, equipment....

3.3 Third Mission and Society

Regarding the objectives related to the Third Mission and Society, the university is committed to:

- **Creating the conditions for intensifying opportunities for encounter and dialogue between universities, society, institutions, and businesses, both public and private** for sharing principles and goals, promoting research, participating in working groups, and signing agreements aimed at strengthening public value creation efforts.

- **Design entrepreneurship training programs** that also involve the student community to consolidate and expand opportunities for discussion and mutual understanding among researchers and institutions in general, including small, medium, and large enterprises in order to increase technology transfer activities, the creation of spin-offs, startups, and patents as promoters of a culture of innovation in the social, economic, and productive fabric.
- **Plan for the implementation of public engagement activities** that, in addition to traditional dissemination activities, offer opportunities for collaboration with training and research projects. This will allow citizens to take a proactive role in identifying needs and co-producing the data and insights that emerge from these activities, which translate into models of social innovation. These initiatives can generate guidelines for territorial development and the valorization of community, artistic, and cultural assets.
- **Connect collaborative actions with society** to the sustainable development goals of the UN 2030 Agenda, explicitly highlighting their contribution to environmental and climate sustainability, the ecological and energy transition, social inclusion and cohesion, the fight against inequality, and international cooperation.
- **Increase resources for designing activities that enhance all fields of knowledge**, responding to the needs of profit and non-profit enterprises, associations, public and private entities, and local and international communities.
- **Support the implementation of third mission monitoring processes** to design more effective and specific support services that enhance the vocations of each organization and enhance opportunities in less frequented areas.

Annexes: offices in support

4. ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW METHOD

The University's Quality **Assurance Plan** will be implemented within the same timeframe as the University Strategic Plan (ref.) and will be subject to revision in line with the revisions to the University's missions and strategic guidelines. **The University Quality Committee** (put the right name) is responsible for any revisions to the document.

Roles and responsibilities

The University has a **Governance System** in place, i.e. a set of bodies with specific governance roles and competences relating to planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation processes, for the pursuit and fulfilment of quality requirements. The **Governance System** includes all the stakeholders of the **Quality Assurance System**, headed by the **University Quality Committee**, which guarantee the effectiveness and efficiency of ongoing improvement processes with different timings and using different tools.

The document entitled **Architecture of the Governance and Quality Assurance System** deals with the architecture of the two systems in all their complementary and interactive nature. This is because "working in the pursuit of quality" is an integral part of "good governance", achieved through the principles and objectives of the University's Quality Plan.

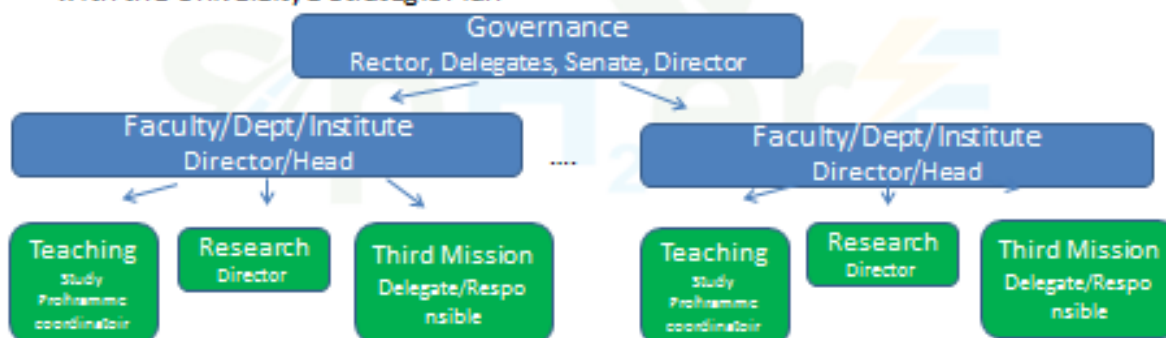
Reference:

[Architecture of the Governance and Quality Assurance System](#)



The architecture of the University's Governance

Universities are structured in Faculties/Departments/Centers/Institutes. They all contribute to the 3 missions with some degree of freedom in the decision-making process, focused on their specific competencies but coherent with the University's Strategic Plan



The architecture of the Quality Assurance System

Consequently the Quality Assurance system



The student community's contribution

We constantly endeavour to promote ways of listening to student representatives and to give them a prominent QA role, so that they can actively participate in decision-making processes relating to quality-related education policies.

Students can actively contribute to the process of improving the teaching quality through their experience as users of training and support services. In addition, by carrying out internships or

theses at organisations, companies and other universities and providing feedback on their experience, they can contribute to improving the teachers' relations with external stakeholders, and indirectly to improving relations useful in the field of research and the third mission/social impact.

Reference:

Guidelines for Promoting and Supporting Student Representations (in governance bodies)

Developing a culture of quality

For the University, working in the pursuit of quality means first and foremost promoting a culture of quality within the University's community.

To this end, the University uses training as a lever, promoting participatory pathways on the themes of quality assurance in teaching, research and the third mission, in collaboration with the University Quality Committee.

By sharing principles, methodologies, tools and good practices, the University aims to co-create meaning and value, with the contribution of all the stakeholders of the University's quality processes.

The Training for Quality website, collecting material relating to the training, information and communication initiatives organised, has been set up to facilitate knowledge transfer and self-training pathway. The website may be accessed by the University's teachers, professional staff and students.

5. QA TEAMS FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW METHODS

Enhancing the quality and the image of the university means to “measure” how the activities and deliverables meet the expectations established in the University's Strategic Plan that encompasses the 4 dimensions describing them through specific indicators.

The Strategic Plan, generally drawn up every 3 years, consists of goals and deliverables to be achieved in 5 Areas of intervention:

Area A – Vision, Planning and Organization of teaching, research, third mission/social impact, institution and regulatory framework

Area B – Resource management aims and strategy

Area C – Quality Assurance system

Area D – Quality of teaching and student services

Area E – Quality of research and third mission/social impact

AREA D

Quality of Degree Programmes

Quality Assurance system is developed in line with the overall University system, based on the rationale of the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' cycle. The model is developed through a set of interrelated elements:

- Formalising the planning and redesigning processes through constant dialogue with stakeholders (public and private bodies and companies, economic and business organisations, professional organisations, former graduates) in order to learn more about the motivation and potential for developing and updating the training project (Plan),
- Providing training activities for students and all supporting services (Do),
- Defining a system for monitoring processes and results, also by detecting and analysing the opinions of the student community (Check)
- Using monitoring results to identify, plan and implement improvement processes also useful for redesigning Degree Programmes (Act).

Roles and responsibilities

The quality assurance system is integrated with the organisation of the degree programme and is based on collaboration among several stakeholders.

The **Degree Programme Board** defines all aspects related to the teaching of the programme, the organisation of services, and the management of activities, also in coordination with the relevant Department. The **Degree Programme Coordinator** (or Coordinator) is responsible for implementing the directions of the Board.

The Board may be supported by Committees tasked with specific activities. Some of these may have decision-making powers, particularly where they manage student record reviews and prepare minutes to be forwarded to the relevant offices to complete administrative procedures.

The main actors specifically involved in the quality assurance system of the programme are the Quality Assurance Committee and the Advisory Board.

The Quality Assurance Committee, chaired by the Coordinator and composed of teaching staff and student representatives, monitors the quality of teaching and proposes improvement actions, also in coordination with the Department's Joint Teaching Staff–Student Committee.

The Advisory Board, composed of external professionals, is tasked with establishing a stable connection with the world of work, production, and services, gathering feedback and strategic input on the design and development of the programme.

Designing a curriculum

Consultation with representatives of job world, identification of competences and skills, connection with research, labs, human resources.

Further details are available in the documents:

Guidelines for planning a curriculum and description of syllabi
Architecture of the Governance and Quality Assurance System

Self-assessment

The annual self-assessment process aims to monitor the performance of the Degree Programme in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and therefore plan improvement actions for the following year with the involvement of the teaching and professional staff and of the student community.

This self-assessment facilitates the circulation of information and knowledge management, also with a view to increasing transparency in the decision-making and implementation processes.

The activities carried out must have documentable and measurable effects, therefore documents are functional to discussing the improvement actions of the Degree Programmes with the Faculty-Student Joint Committees and the relevant Departments' governance systems.

Degree Programmes analyse and monitor their performance on the basis of the results of the student community opinion survey and the indicators defined by the Strategic Plan and the Quality Committee.

The Quality Committee draws up and annually updates guidelines and templates, available to the Degree Programme Board and the Department's Faculty-Student Joint Committee.

References:

[Guidelines for the Design and Organisation of degree Programmes](#)

[Guidelines for stakeholder consultation for Degree and PhD Programmes](#)

[Guidelines for the Analysis and Monitoring of Teaching Programmes](#)

[Guidelines for Analysing and Discussing the Results of Student Opinion Survey](#)

[Template Minutes for Stakeholder Consultations on degree Programmes](#)

[Annual degree Programmes Report Template](#)

Quality of PhD Programmes

The PhD Programmes' Quality Assurance system is developed in line with the overall University system, based on the rationale of the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' cycle. The approach to quality for PhD programmes includes:

- Formalising the planning and redesigning processes through constant dialogue with stakeholders (public and private bodies and companies, economic and business organisations, professional organisations, scientific companies, research centres, alumni) in order to learn more about the motivation and potential for developing and updating the training and research project (Plan),
- Providing training and research activities for PhD students and all supporting services (Do),
- Defining a system for monitoring processes and results, also by detecting and analysing the opinions of PhD students (Check),
- Using monitoring results to identify, plan and implement improvement processes also useful for redesigning PhD Programmes (Act).

The **Doctoral Programme Committee** supports the Coordinator in management tasks, with specific responsibilities such as quality assurance, internationalisation, and training. It prepares quality-related documents, promotes their discussion within the Academic Board, and fosters the dissemination of quality culture.

The **Advisory Board**, composed of qualified representatives from the academic, scientific, cultural, and socio-economic sectors, provides strategic guidance on the alignment between the programme's objectives and the needs of the relevant context, contributing to continuous improvement and fostering engagement with external stakeholders.

Further details are available in the document:

[Architecture of the Governance and Quality Assurance System](#)

Designing a PhD Programme

The PhD Programme's Academic Board is called upon to define a clear and articulated vision of the training and research pathway available to PhD students, first of all by consulting the parties involved in terms of the goals that the PhD Programme sets itself and of possible job opportunities, taking into account the strategic planning of the Departments involved and of the University.

The Quality Committee draws up guidelines and templates available to the Academic Boards:

- [Guidelines for the Design and Organisation of PhD Programmes](#)
- [Guidelines for stakeholder consultation for Degree and PhD Programmes](#)
- [Template Minutes for Stakeholder Consultations on PhD Programmes](#)
- [Annual PhD Programme Report Template](#)
- [Template Guidelines for awarding Doctoral Credits](#)
- [PhD Credit Allocation Form](#)
- [PhD Educational Offer Template](#)

Annual Reports of the University Quality Assurance Committee

Assessment of the results achieved, i.e. of the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the processes and actions implemented, is carried out both through direct discussion with the stakeholders involved and by drafting summary documents and reports containing reflections on the outcomes of the activities implemented by the Departments, Degree Programmes and the PhD Programmes.

The Quality Committee collects the requests and analyses of stakeholders and, in turn, makes observations that it reports to the University bodies in its annual report. This feeds a circular and shared flow of information, at all levels of the organisation, aimed at spreading knowledge and increasing awareness of processes and their results.

One of the main parties involved in direct discussions is the Evaluation Group, tasked with assessing – as a third party (i.e. external to the university) – the proper functioning of the quality assurance system.