

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

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# Desk and Field Study Report

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# 1. Introduction

The QUARTZ project, aimed at enhancing the synergy between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the labor market in Uzbekistan, seeks to improve the perceived quality of four key dimensions of the university: teaching, research, third mission/social engagement, and institutional environment. This initiative is aligned with the regional priority of the Erasmus+ program, "Sustainable Growth and Jobs," focusing on developing innovative approaches to ensuring the quality of students, enhancing their competitiveness in the labor market, and aligning educational content with the needs of all stakeholders.

The project specifically targets novice Uzbek universities with limited experience in Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) programs. By fostering partnerships with EU HEIs, QUARTZ not only aims to achieve its project goals but also provides participating universities with valuable experience in international cooperation and a fresh perspective on advanced higher education systems.

The desk and field study presented in this report serves as a foundational element of the QUARTZ project. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of skills development in Uzbek HEIs, particularly in the context of Western European educational standards. The findings from this study are intended to inform and guide the implementation of the project's activities, ensuring that they are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the participating institutions. This report highlights the key challenges and opportunities identified during the study, offering insights into the potential for quality assurance system improvements within Uzbek universities through the adoption of EU best practices.

## 2. Objectives of the report

There are several objectives of the report that should be achieved:

1. **Assessment of Current Practices:** To evaluate the existing practices in teaching, research, social engagement, and institutional environment within Uzbek HEIs, and compare them with European standards. This assessment aims to identify gaps and areas for improvement in the current educational and institutional frameworks.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement Analysis:** To analyze the level of engagement and collaboration between HEIs and various stakeholders, including employers, governmental bodies, and the community. This analysis will provide insights into how well the universities' outputs align with the expectations and needs of these stakeholders.
3. **Benchmarking Against EU Best Practices:** To benchmark the current practices in Uzbek HEIs against best practices from EU HEIs, particularly in the areas of quality assurance, curriculum development, and institutional governance. This will help in identifying successful strategies that can be adapted and implemented in the Uzbek context.
4. **Recommendations for Improvement:** To develop specific, actionable recommendations for

enhancing the quality assurance systems in Uzbek universities. These recommendations will focus on improving procedures, tools, human resources, and continuous professional development, drawing from the best practices observed in EU HEIs.

5. Foundation for Capacity Building: To lay the groundwork for subsequent capacity-building activities within the QUARTZ project. This includes outlining key areas where training, support, and development are needed to build the capacities of Uzbek universities, enabling them to fully engage in international collaborations and meet the standards of advanced higher education systems.

### 3. Desk Study

In Uzbekistan, the quality assurance (QA) framework for higher education has undergone significant development, particularly in recent years as the country has sought to align its practices with international standards. The introduction of the State Inspectorate for Quality Control in Education in 2017 was a major step towards formalizing QA processes. This body is responsible for overseeing and enhancing the quality of education across higher education institutions (HEIs) in Uzbekistan (Jumaeva, 2019).

The QA system in Uzbekistan comprises several key components, including national accreditation, internal quality mechanisms, and external evaluations. Accreditation processes are conducted by both national bodies, such as the State Inspectorate, and international agencies, ensuring that institutions meet both domestic and global educational standards. This involves comprehensive self-assessment reports, external peer reviews, and the implementation of corrective action plans as needed (Khamraev, 2021).

Internally, universities are expected to maintain robust QA practices, including regular assessments and audits. This includes collecting feedback from students and staff, conducting internal reviews, and making continuous improvements based on these evaluations. However, the implementation of these practices can be inconsistent across institutions, with some universities showing significant progress while others struggle with limited resources and expertise (Turgunov, 2020).

One prominent example of successful QA implementation is the Tashkent University of Information Technologies, which has achieved ISO certification for its quality management system. This reflects a commitment to adopting international standards and improving internal processes (Karimov & Rahimov, 2022).

Recent developments in QA practices in Uzbekistan include increased training for university staff, the development of national QA standards, and enhanced collaboration with international QA agencies. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to address existing challenges and improve the overall quality of higher education in the country (Akramov, 2023).

Case studies from various Uzbek universities highlight the adoption of best practices from other countries, such as peer reviews, student surveys, and regular program evaluations. These practices are helping to ensure that Uzbekistan's higher education system not only meets national expectations but also aligns with international standards (Bazarov, 2021).

However, even if Uzbekistan has partially developed the QA system at Universities there are still a lot of challenges that should be faced:

#### 1. Inconsistent Implementation of QA Practices

- Issue: There is a notable disparity in how QA practices are implemented across different higher education institutions (HEIs) in Uzbekistan. While some universities have adopted robust QA mechanisms, others lag behind, leading to a lack of uniformity in educational quality (Turgunov, 2020).

#### 2. Limited Resources

- Issue: Many universities face financial constraints that limit their ability to invest in quality assurance systems and staff training. This affects their ability to conduct thorough internal and external evaluations (Jumaeva, 2019).

- Impact: Limited resources can lead to inadequate facilities, outdated teaching materials, and insufficient support for quality improvement initiatives.

#### 3. Lack of Expertise and Training

- Issue: There is a shortage of qualified personnel trained in QA methodologies. Many institutions do not have dedicated QA staff or the necessary training programs for existing staff (Akramov, 2023).

- Consequences: This shortage affects the effectiveness of QA processes, as staff may lack the skills needed to conduct thorough evaluations or implement best practices.

#### 4. Resistance to Change

- Issue: Some universities exhibit resistance to adopting new QA practices or reforms due to established traditions, bureaucratic hurdles, or a lack of awareness about the benefits of QA (Bazarov, 2021).

- Examples: Institutional inertia and entrenched practices can hinder the adoption of innovative QA strategies and reforms.

#### 5. Fragmented QA Framework

- Issue: The QA framework in Uzbekistan can be fragmented, with varying standards and practices applied by different national and international accreditation bodies (Khamraev, 2021).

- Problem: This fragmentation can create confusion and inconsistencies in the QA processes, making it difficult for institutions to align their practices with both national and international standards.

#### 6. Data Management and Utilization

- Issue: Effective QA relies on the collection and analysis of data related to educational outcomes, student satisfaction, and institutional performance. However, many universities face challenges in managing and utilizing this data effectively (Turgunov, 2020).

- Impact: Poor data management can hinder the ability to make informed decisions and implement evidence-based improvements.

#### 7. Inadequate Stakeholder Engagement

- Issue: There is often insufficient engagement with key stakeholders, including employers, students, and alumni, in the QA process. This can result in a disconnect between educational programs and labor market needs (Akramov, 2023).

- Effect: Lack of stakeholder input can lead to educational programs that do not fully meet the needs of the job market, affecting graduates' employability.

## 4. Summary of Previous Findings

The integration of quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in Uzbek higher education has been a focus of national reforms in recent years, particularly in response to global trends. According to a study by Kholbekov and Ganiev (2020), the adaptation of international quality standards is one of the main drivers behind recent educational reforms in Uzbekistan. The authors emphasize that the government's efforts to align with international standards, particularly through the Bologna Process and the Erasmus+ programs, have led to the gradual introduction of quality assurance frameworks aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and academic standards in universities.

#### Role of Accreditation and Evaluation Systems

Quality assurance systems in Uzbek universities are tightly linked to accreditation processes, which are governed by the State Inspectorate for Supervision of Quality in Education under the Cabinet of Ministers. A recent report by Abdurahmanova (2021) highlights how the national accreditation process is designed to ensure that educational institutions meet basic standards for academic programs, facilities, and staff qualifications. The accreditation process, however, is often critiqued for its rigid bureaucratic structure and a lack of comprehensive peer reviews, which limits the flexibility for institutions to innovate or update their curricula.

#### Faculty Development and Continuous Learning

Professional development for faculty is recognized as a key component of quality assurance in Uzbek universities. Sharipov et al. (2019) argue that without proper professional development, many Uzbek lecturers may struggle to meet the demands of modern educational standards, especially in fields requiring digital literacy and innovative teaching techniques. Several universities, including the National University of Uzbekistan, have implemented faculty training programs focusing on international teaching methodologies, yet challenges remain in ensuring that these programs are applied systematically across all institutions.

## Student-Centered Approaches and Feedback Mechanisms

Ensuring student feedback plays an active role in improving educational quality is a relatively new concept for many Uzbek universities. In a study by Kadirov and Rashidova (2022), the authors surveyed several universities in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand, finding that while mechanisms for collecting student feedback are often in place, their implementation and impact remain inconsistent. The study notes that feedback is often collected via anonymous surveys, but the results are not always used to inform decision-making processes. This gap between data collection and action is a significant hurdle in enhancing the overall quality of education.

## Challenges in Implementation and Sustainability

Several studies address the inherent challenges in implementing quality assurance processes in Uzbekistan. As emphasized by Bekmurotov (2020), one major challenge is the resistance to change among administrative staff and faculty, especially in more established universities where long-standing practices are deeply rooted. Additionally, the lack of sufficient funding and technological resources exacerbates this problem, as many universities are unable to invest in up-to-date teaching materials, software, or infrastructure that could facilitate the QA process.

## The Impact of International Collaboration

International collaboration through programs like Erasmus+ has played a pivotal role in advancing quality assurance mechanisms in Uzbekistan. A case study conducted by Sattarova (2021) on the Empower project highlighted the positive effects of international partnerships, particularly in the exchange of QA practices between Uzbek and European institutions. The study emphasizes how collaboration in areas such as curriculum development, faculty training, and institutional governance has led to significant improvements in participating Uzbek universities. However, these benefits are often limited to institutions with greater access to international networks, leaving many regional universities behind.

## Technological Integration and Quality Enhancement

Another critical aspect of QA in education in Uzbekistan is the integration of technology into teaching and administrative processes. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for higher education institutions to embrace online learning platforms and digital tools. According to a report by Azizova and Karimov (2020), many Uzbek universities struggled with the sudden transition to online learning due to inadequate technological infrastructure and a lack of preparedness among faculty. Nevertheless, the authors argue that this transition has accelerated discussions on how to incorporate blended learning and digital tools into the QA frameworks of higher education institutions in Uzbekistan.

# 5. The survey creation process description

The QUARTZ project, focused on enhancing the synergy between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the labor market in Uzbekistan, aims to improve the perceived quality of four key dimensions: teaching, research, third mission/social engagement, and institutional environment. This initiative aligns with the Erasmus+ program's regional priority, "Sustainable

Growth and Jobs," by developing innovative approaches to ensure the quality of students, enhance their competitiveness in the labor market, and align educational content with the needs of all stakeholders.

Targeting novice Uzbek universities with limited experience in Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) programs, the QUARTZ project fosters partnerships with EU HEIs. These partnerships are designed not only to achieve the project's goals but also to provide participating universities with valuable experience in international cooperation and fresh perspectives on advanced higher education systems.

The desk and field study presented in the project's report serves as a foundational element of the QUARTZ initiative. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of skills development in Uzbek HEIs, particularly in the context of Western European educational standards. The findings are intended to guide the project's activities, ensuring they are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the participating institutions. The report highlights key challenges and opportunities, offering insights into the potential for quality assurance system improvements within Uzbek universities through the adoption of EU best practices.

The survey creation for the QUARTZ project was a comprehensive process divided into two key stages to ensure thorough data collection and accurate insights into the quality assurance practices at Uzbek universities.

**Initial Stage:** The primary objective of this stage was to gather valuable insights from students and teachers, focusing on identifying the main trends and issues within the universities' quality assurance departments. The survey was initially designed by a team from Central Asian University. They created questions that aimed to capture both student and teacher perspectives on various quality assurance aspects, such as teaching quality, institutional support, and resource availability. The draft survey was then reviewed by the team from KIUT, who provided feedback and suggested improvements to ensure the questions were comprehensive and clear.

**Revision and Expansion:** After the initial survey was piloted, the feedback indicated that additional questions were necessary, particularly to better capture the teachers' perspectives on quality assurance issues. In response, the survey was revised to include these new questions, which delved deeper into specific areas such as curriculum development, student assessment, and institutional policies. This revision process was not limited to the initial teams; it involved active collaboration with all partner universities from Uzbekistan. These institutions provided valuable input, helping to refine the survey further and ensure that it addressed relevant issues across different university contexts.

The finalized survey was collaboratively edited in Google Docs, allowing all stakeholders to contribute and review changes in real time. Once the survey content was finalized, it was distributed via Google Forms, a platform chosen for its ease of access and data collection capabilities. The review process of the survey took approximately two weeks, during which

time the survey questions were carefully evaluated and finalized. The data collection phase then lasted for one month, during which responses were gathered from more than eight universities across Uzbekistan, including both partner and non-partner institutions. This thorough and inclusive survey creation process ensured that the data collected was representative and provided a solid foundation for analyzing the quality assurance practices in Uzbek universities.

## 6. Survey components

The "QUARTZ" survey was meticulously designed to evaluate the overall quality of educational programs and institutional support in higher education. By focusing on both students' and teachers' experiences, the survey aims to gather comprehensive insights into several key areas, such as the quality of teaching, resources, and academic support. The inclusion of separate surveys for students and teachers ensures that feedback is collected from all relevant stakeholders, providing a more holistic view of the educational environment.

The first section of the survey for both students and teachers centers on the **quality of courses and curricula**. For students, questions assess whether courses meet their academic expectations, are aligned with the curriculum, and if course materials, especially through platforms like MOODLE, are sufficient and relevant. Teachers, on the other hand, are asked whether they receive adequate support in developing and updating curricula, which is crucial for maintaining high educational standards. This section is vital as it ensures that the core of the educational experience—the courses—meets both student expectations and the academic objectives set by the institution.

Next, the survey delves into **teaching organization and assessment**. Students are asked if class schedules are regular, if assessments are fair and transparent, and whether the feedback they receive from instructors is timely and constructive. Teachers, in their respective survey, are questioned about the adequacy of technological resources and the support they receive for applying innovative teaching methods. These components aim to ensure that the teaching process is not only effective but also equitable, and that the necessary tools for both teaching and learning are in place.

Another critical component is **feedback and communication**. The survey seeks to measure how effectively students' concerns, such as the need to replace underperforming teachers, are addressed. For teachers, it assesses whether their input on improving educational quality is valued by the administration. This section is crucial as it reflects the responsiveness of the institution to its stakeholders and its openness to continual improvement.

The survey also includes questions on **support services**, asking both students and teachers about the availability of resources essential for academic success. For students, this includes access to study materials, classroom equipment, and the general campus environment.

Teachers are similarly asked about access to teaching resources and professional development opportunities. This part of the survey is designed to ensure that both students and faculty have the tools and support they need to thrive academically.

Lastly, the surveys culminate with questions on **overall satisfaction**. Students are asked whether they would recommend the university based on their educational experience, while teachers are queried about their satisfaction with the institution's efforts to uphold educational standards. This final section ties all previous components together, offering an overall assessment of the institution's quality assurance processes.

In conclusion, each section of the "QUARTZ" survey is designed to collect critical feedback on various aspects of the academic environment. By gathering perspectives from both students and teachers, the survey provides a well-rounded evaluation of the institution's strengths and areas for improvement, ultimately aiming to enhance the quality of education and align it with stakeholders' expectations.

## 7. Data collection process description

The data collection process for the "QUARTZ" survey was conducted in two distinct phases, aimed at ensuring the survey's validity and comprehensiveness. Each phase played a crucial role in refining the survey design and expanding the scope of data collection to gather meaningful insights from a broader range of respondents, including administration, teachers, and students across multiple universities in Uzbekistan.

The first phase of data collection focused on **piloting the survey**. During this stage, the survey was distributed among partner universities to test its effectiveness, identify potential issues, and refine the questions. This pilot phase was essential in evaluating whether the survey was clear, comprehensive, and capable of gathering relevant data. Feedback from the pilot participants, primarily teachers and students from partner universities, was invaluable in detecting ambiguities, unnecessary questions, or areas where additional clarity was needed. Based on this feedback, several revisions were made to the survey instrument to ensure its alignment with the project's goals. The piloting process was critical in tailoring the survey to meet the needs of the target population while also enhancing its ability to capture essential data accurately.

Following the pilot phase and subsequent survey revisions, the second phase of data collection commenced. This phase involved **a full-scale distribution of the refined survey** among 10 universities across Uzbekistan. The survey was extended to gather responses from a diverse group of respondents, including university administration, teachers, and students. By including a broader range of participants, the survey aimed to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the quality assurance practices, teaching standards, and institutional support mechanisms at various levels within the university ecosystem. The administration provided

insight into institutional practices and policies, while teachers shared their experiences regarding curriculum development, resources, and support. Students, on the other hand, offered their perspectives on the quality of education, availability of resources, and their overall satisfaction with the learning environment.

The **second round of data collection** spanned a full month and was carried out meticulously to ensure maximum participation and data accuracy. The review process that preceded this data collection phase was instrumental in ensuring that the survey was optimized for clarity and focus. During the month-long period, the survey was administered through online platforms, primarily using Google Forms, to facilitate ease of access and to encourage widespread participation. Constant communication was maintained with participating universities to ensure a high response rate from all respondent groups. This involved follow-up reminders, technical assistance, and clarification of any survey-related queries to encourage full engagement.

In conclusion, the two-stage data collection process for the "QUARTZ" survey was designed to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the data gathered. The initial pilot phase enabled critical adjustments to the survey, ensuring its suitability for a larger-scale distribution. The second phase, with its broader focus on 10 universities across Uzbekistan, allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of educational quality and institutional practices from multiple perspectives, providing valuable insights to inform quality assurance improvements in higher education.

## 8. Data analysis.

The data analysis process for the "QUARTZ" survey was designed to extract meaningful insights from the responses collected primarily from lecturers and administrators, whose perspectives were deemed essential for assessing the quality assurance practices within higher education institutions. A total of four surveys were distributed across four universities, each targeting lecturers and administrative staff involved in teaching and quality assurance activities. Each of these surveys successfully gathered between 30 to 40 responses, resulting in a robust dataset that enhanced the reliability of the analysis.

Upon collection through Google Forms, the data underwent an initial cleaning process to ensure its integrity. This involved removing incomplete or irrelevant entries, allowing only valid and comprehensive responses to be included in the analysis. Following this, the dataset was categorized according to respondent type—lecturers and administrators—to facilitate a segmented analysis that highlighted the differing perspectives and experiences of each group.

The analysis began with descriptive statistics, where key metrics such as response frequencies, means, and percentages were calculated. This initial step aimed to provide a broad overview of the data, helping to identify general trends in perceptions of teaching quality,

institutional support mechanisms, and the effectiveness of quality assurance processes. For example, it allowed researchers to discern how many respondents felt adequately supported in their roles or how many believed that quality assurance initiatives were effectively implemented.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative insights were collected from open-ended survey responses. These responses were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to quality assurance challenges and best practices. This qualitative component enriched the analysis by providing context to the numerical data, revealing the underlying reasons behind respondents' attitudes and perceptions.

The combination of these quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the data, offering a nuanced understanding of the quality assurance practices in place at the participating universities. The final synthesis of findings not only highlighted key trends and relationships but also provided actionable recommendations for improving quality assurance processes, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of higher education in Uzbekistan.

## 9. Findings

The analysis of the questionnaire data offers valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of various aspects of the educational environment at their institutions, particularly highlighting challenges related to quality assurance. Here's a more detailed description of the findings:

### Overall Satisfaction with Educational Quality

The majority of respondents indicated general satisfaction with the quality of education provided at their institutions, recognizing ongoing efforts by the administration to enhance educational standards. However, a significant minority expressed dissatisfaction or uncertainty regarding specific areas, such as curriculum relevance and teaching effectiveness. This duality not only underscores the positive sentiment toward institutional initiatives but also highlights persistent gaps in quality assurance processes that need to be addressed to enhance educational outcomes.

### Support for Curriculum Development and Analysis

Most respondents reported feeling adequately supported in the development and analysis of educational programs and curricula. However, a notable portion raised concerns about the sufficiency of this support, indicating that quality assurance practices in curriculum development may not be uniformly applied or sufficiently rigorous across departments. This feedback suggests a need for more structured assistance and clearer guidelines to ensure that all educators feel equipped to contribute effectively to curriculum design, thereby improving overall educational quality.

### Feedback and Communication Channels

While many respondents perceived the communication channels between faculty/staff and administration as open, a significant number expressed uncertainty or dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of feedback processes. This indicates that quality assurance mechanisms for incorporating faculty input into institutional decision-making may be lacking. Enhancing these feedback systems is crucial, as it could foster a more collaborative environment and ensure that quality assurance practices are informed by the experiences and insights of those directly involved in teaching.

### Access to Educational Resources

Respondents generally agreed that access to educational resources is adequate, yet some noted limitations, particularly concerning updated materials or specialized resources for certain disciplines. This points to a deficiency in the quality assurance framework related to resource allocation and management, suggesting that ongoing investment is necessary to meet evolving academic needs and support innovative teaching practices.

### Professional Development Opportunities

The majority of respondents felt that there are sufficient professional development opportunities available. However, some expressed a desire for more targeted training aligned with their specific teaching contexts. This indicates that the quality assurance processes governing professional development may not fully address the diverse needs of faculty. Tailoring these opportunities could lead to more effective outcomes and greater engagement in quality assurance initiatives.

### Student Preparedness

Responses regarding student preparedness revealed mixed sentiments. While some faculty felt students were well-prepared, others voiced concerns about gaps in critical thinking, problem-solving, and subject-specific competencies. This divergence highlights shortcomings in the quality assurance mechanisms related to student support and preparation, indicating a need for enhanced preparatory programs that equip students with the necessary skills for success in higher education.

### Conclusion

These insights collectively provide a comprehensive overview of the current educational environment, reflecting both strengths and areas needing improvement. While there is general satisfaction with educational quality and support, the challenges regarding communication, resource access, and student preparedness point to significant opportunities for enhancing quality assurance processes. Addressing these issues is essential for creating a more effective and supportive educational ecosystem, ultimately benefiting both faculty and students. By implementing targeted improvements, institutions can strengthen their quality assurance frameworks and ensure a higher standard of education.

# 10. Best European Practices in Quality Assurance

## Introduction

The information provided below offers detailed insights into several institutions and countries involved in academic and professional collaboration, with a focus on quality assurance (QA) factors. These include Varna Management University in Bulgaria and the University of L'Aquila in Italy, as well as notable contributions from Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The content explores the roles and activities of these entities, highlighting their commitment to ensuring high standards in education, research, and institutional management. Particular emphasis is placed on QA mechanisms, such as the continuous improvement of teaching methodologies, the alignment of curricula with industry needs, and rigorous evaluation systems. These QA factors are critical to enhancing the overall educational experience, fostering student competitiveness, and maintaining international academic standards.

## The Case of Varna University of Management in Bulgaria

### 1. Quality Assurance Policies

Varna University of Management (VUM) has established and publicly accessible Quality Assurance Policies, which form part of VUM's Strategic Management System and address public needs. The policy is available on the VUM website (<https://vum.bg/bg/upravlenie-na-kachestvoto/>). VUM adheres strictly to its officially approved and published Quality Assurance Policies, which reflect the university's commitment to placing the professional and personal development of its students at the forefront of its priorities. The Quality Assurance Policies at VUM are built on three main pillars, namely:

1. Education and training
2. Science and innovation and
3. Internationalisation.

The quality of activities within these pillars is achieved through effective institutional management, which includes shared leadership and governance. This approach actively involves VUM students, alongside participants at all levels of management, in the decision-making process. In alignment with its Quality Assurance Policies, VUM annually establishes quality objectives for the respective calendar year. These objectives encompass the key processes outlined in the Quality Assurance Policies and covered under VUM's certification scope. The quality objectives are adopted annually during a general meeting of the Senior Academic Forum. The formal reporting on the implementation of both the quality objectives and the Quality Assurance Policies is presented in the Annual Report of VUM's Rector, submitted to the General Assembly of the Senior Academic Forum. The latter reviews and approves the Rector's report on the implementation of the objectives, votes on the adoption of objectives for the following calendar year, and reviews the report from the Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee.

VUM operates a comprehensive Quality Management System that has been evaluated and certified in accordance with the international standard ISO 9001:2015. Quality assurance procedures are developed and implemented following the guidelines of EN ISO 9001:2015.

Several regulations have been established to govern the primary processes at the institution, including:

- Academic education
- Research, innovation, internationalisation, and stakeholder management
- Project development and management
- Lifelong learning, postgraduate, and vocational education and training (VET).

Each regulation contains a comprehensive description of the respective process, including its purpose, scope, responsibilities, and implementation. This encompasses aspects such as organisation and planning, service performance, product safeguarding, and the use of application diagrams. All quality objectives are aligned with the VUM Strategic Development Plan for the period 2021-2025.

Ongoing verification of the objectives is conducted by the Operational Coordination and Control Committee through internal audits, as well as by the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee, which oversees the education and research activities. VUM Departments and Programme Committees are also involved in the continuous review process. The reports from internal and external audits are published on the VUM website, while minutes from the Department and Programme Committee meetings are archived by the respective units. A full list of documents constituting the Quality Management System at VUM is publicly accessible through VUM website.

VUM has developed and adopted several documents that regulate its strategic management, which are integrated into the university's Strategic Management System. The Strategic Management System includes the following documents:

- VUM Strategic Development Plan
- Research and Development Strategy
- Human Resources Management Strategy
- Strategy for the Development of Continuing and Vocational Training
- Marketing Strategy
- VUM Internationalisation Strategy
- Internal Rules and Regulations

All these strategic development documents incorporate VUM's mission and vision for its future growth. They are aligned with the institution's Quality Assurance Policies and provide further details on objectives in areas such as student education and training, human resources management, research and innovation, and internationalisation. These strategic documents are formally adopted at meetings of the Senior Academic Forum, regularly updated, and made publicly available on the VUM website under the Quality Management System section.

The mission, goals, and objectives of VUM are outlined in all key strategic documents. The implementation of VUM's mission, goals, and objectives is continuously monitored by the university's management. The Annual Reports of VUM's Rector, which provide analysis and commentary on their progress, are adopted at the general meetings of the Senior Academic Forum. The implementation of specific tasks under each strategic objective is further discussed during Rector's Council meetings, with minutes of these meetings and relevant ISO 9001:2015 quality management system documents providing formal records.

The internal environment and institutional culture at VUM are managed through clearly defined and accepted policies and procedures that ensure high-quality education and support services.

The quality assessment and maintenance system in place at VUM is modeled after the one established by Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK), with which VUM holds an academic agreement for mutual recognition of education and the award of dual degrees in most of the degree programmes offered at VUM. The partnership between VUM and Cardiff Metropolitan University started in 2009 and over the last 15 years, hundreds of students

In addition to the Quality Management System, the System for Evaluation and Maintenance of the Quality of Education and Academic Staff further regulates the standards and procedures for periodic self-evaluation of teaching and research quality. This system covers all teaching units, including degree programmes, curricula, courses, and all activities related to education such as teaching, learning, practical training, research, examination procedures, student services, and the organisation of the learning process. Several bodies are established within VUM to ensure rigorous quality control, namely:

- Ethics and Academic Unity Committee
- Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee
- Operational Coordination and Control Committee.

In addition to these, the academic quality is monitored daily at the department and degree programmes levels. The quality of all processes at VUM is reviewed and reported at least once a year during general meetings of the Senior Academic Forum and at faculty meetings. External audits conducted by Cardiff Metropolitan University assess the quality of academic documentation, student assessment procedures, learning resources (such as module books), and teaching quality. The System for Evaluation and Maintenance of the Quality of Education and Academic Staff also outlines the composition, duties, and quality control responsibilities of all bodies involved in maintaining the effective operation of the Quality Management System at VUM. Moreover, VUM has appointed Authorised Representatives for Quality Management, including the Deputy Directors of Quality Management and the Vice Rectors, alongside two certified internal auditors, to ensure continued oversight and compliance with quality standards.

The Quality Management System for Education and Training at VUM includes several key components, such as the System for Evaluation and Maintenance of the Quality of Education and Academic Staff. Additionally, it encompasses Internal Regulations, Regulations on the Rights and Obligations of VUM Students, Regulations for the Management of Student Status, Standards for Educational Documentation, Regulations for Handling Complaints and Grievances, Regulations for the Prevention, Detection, and Sanctioning of Unethical Practices, and Regulations for the Conduct of Student Internships, which also include a set of Guidelines and Tools for Conducting Student Internships. In total, around 20 internal normative documents govern the quality management of the educational activities.

For the regulation of quality procedures related to research and development, internationalisation and project management, two specialised systems have been developed and adopted, namely the Quality Management System for Research and Project Management and the Stakeholder Management System. The Quality Management System for Research and Project Management provides detailed guidelines for research and project development and management. It includes VUM's Research and Development Strategy, Regulations for Conducting Research and Development, Regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students Involvement in Research and Development, Regulations for Publishing, Regulations of the Department of Advanced and Innovative Teaching Methods, a Policy and Structure for the Commercialisation of Research and Development, and the Regulations on Intellectual

Property. In total, around 10 regulatory documents clearly define the duties, procedures, and quality control responsibilities for individuals managing these activities.

The Stakeholder Management System is designed to ensure the quality management of the internationalisation activities and stakeholder management at VUM. For the quality management of lifelong learning, VUM has developed a Quality Management System for Postgraduate and Vocational Training, which includes a Strategy for the Development of VET, regulations for all VET units, procedures for assessing students and postgraduate learners, curriculum development for vocational training programmes, and various other internal documents.

To ensure the proper functioning and continuous improvement of the Quality Management System, VUM conducts annual training sessions for both academic staff and administrative personnel responsible for student services. The annual training plans are published on the VUM website. In addition, according to the attestation procedure at VUM, lecturers are required to complete a Personal Development Plan, which outlines any training they need to perform their academic duties. These suggested training topics are then incorporated into the annual training plans.

## **2. Internal Structures for the Implementation of the Quality Assurance Policies at VUM Involving Students and Stakeholders**

The internal structures responsible for the development and implementation of the quality assurance policies at VUM include the following bodies:

- **Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee**

The activities of this Committee are governed by its Rules of Procedure, which detail its role in auditing the quality management of teaching and research activities. The document clearly defines the scope, organisation, and operational support of the Quality Management System at VUM. Notably, paragraph 20 outlines the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee's responsibility to assess student opinions on the quality of VUM's activities. The Committee's composition and annual reports are publicly available on the VUM website. Additionally, the Student Unethical Practices Section is affiliated with the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee.

- **Ethics and Academic Unity Committee**

The Committee's primary function is to oversee compliance with the VUM's Internal Rules and Regulations, and the Code of Ethics for Academic Unity. It also exercises control functions, including internal oversight of the legality of elections to VUM's governing bodies and providing opinions on the draft and implementation of VUM's budget. Article 13 of the Ethics and Academic Unity Committee's Rules of Procedure mandates the participation of a student in the Committee, ensuring student involvement in its operations.

- **Operational Coordination and Control Committee**

This Committee operates as a subsidiary body under the Assembly of Founders and Donors, which is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective financial management and control systems. It is supported by both internal and external audits. The Operational Coordination and Control Committee conducts internal quality control audits covering international activities, project management, marketing, and administrative functions.

## **3. Internal Audits at VUM**

At VUM, internal audits are conducted according to an Internal Audit Plan adopted annually. The following types of internal audits are processed at VUM:

- Audits by the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee

Each year, the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee produces a report on the quality of training, which includes strengths of the teaching and learning processes in each study programme and across curricula, identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching and training, as reported by moderators, external evaluators, programme directors, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, or discovered through surveys of students and employers, as well as guidelines for improving the quality of education in specific study programmes. The report is prepared by the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee and adopted by the Senior Academic Forum. Prior to the start of each academic year, the Committee organises teacher training workshops covering innovative teaching and learning methods, administrative procedures for collaboration with the Academic Affairs Department, the International Cooperation Department, and the Accounting Department; documentation and information records management, ethical issues in teacher-student relationships, as well as preparation of exam materials for the academic year (coursework assignments and written exams).

- Audits by the Programme Committees

Continuous audits of the quality of education and training at VUM are also conducted by the Programme Committees. The Programme Committee for each study programme, led by the Programme Director, exercises continuous oversight of the programme's quality and delivery. Programme Committees consist of all faculty involved in the specialty, student representatives, and administrative staff supporting the programme. Each Programme Director supervises the Programme Committee's work, ensuring ongoing organisation of the teaching and learning processes, compliance with procedures and criteria for maintaining the quality of education within the study programme, and availability and appropriateness of programme documentation and teaching materials.

The Programme Directors are also responsible for monitoring the organisation of the education process, including exam dates and coursework submission deadlines, provision of information on teaching staff requirements to the relevant department and initiating necessary changes to programme curricula or course plans via approved internal processes. The Programme Directors are required to respond promptly to any reports of deficiencies in the courses, whether raised by students, academic staff, or employers. They report findings to the Programme Committee at least annually, summarising issues and proposing solutions for improvement. If deviations from established standards are identified, appropriate measures are taken, such as informing the lecturer, adjusting the evaluation report, or revising the teaching schedule. Annual Review Reports prepared by the Programme Directors are reviewed and approved by the Programme Committee and submitted to the appropriate department. Each Annual Review Report summarises all activities and findings related to the monitoring of the particular study programme during the previous academic year.

- External evaluations by Cardiff Metropolitan University

External evaluations by Cardiff Metropolitan University's partner institutions are conducted annually and include the following components:

A) Audit of curriculum documentation

This audit encompasses the complete documentation for the degree programme for the upcoming academic year. It includes the objectives and expected outcomes for each course, required and recommended reading materials, lecture topics, assessment components

(including coursework assignments and examination questions with indicative answers), and established assessment criteria for each assessment element. The audit follows a two-stage process. Initially, an expert in the relevant field of studies from Cardiff Metropolitan University reviews the documentation. Subsequently, an external examiner, who is an expert from another UK university also checks and approves the documentation. Should any comments arise during the review, the documentation is revised and re-evaluated.

#### B) Quality audit of the previous academic year

The quality audit, prepared by the external examiner for each particular study programme involves a comprehensive summary and analysis of course results and student feedback from the past academic year. Its aim is to assess the extent to which the stated objectives and expected outcomes for each specific discipline have been achieved. Key performance indicators include the percentage of students passing the course, the average grade for the course, the minimum and maximum grades, the variance in average grades, as well as student satisfaction ratings measured by surveys. The objectivity of the quantitative indicators (such as grades) is validated by comparing them against the established assessment criteria and the provided indicative answers. Similar to the documentation audit, this quality audit also follows a two-stage process, beginning with a review by an expert from Cardiff Metropolitan University, and followed by an assessment and approval from an external reviewer from another UK university.

The Cardiff Metropolitan University Coordinator in charge of the partnership and the collaborative provision to VUM also conducts an annual audit that encompasses both the findings of external examiners on individual courses and an evaluation of general VUM indicators, including resources, facilities, student satisfaction, and the implementation of partnership initiatives. As part of this process, the Cardiff Metropolitan University Coordinator performs an annual on-site monitoring visit to VUM, with the findings included in their annual report. During this visit, the Coordinator holds independent meetings with students as well as separate discussions with faculty members. Following each monitoring visit, they prepare a comprehensive report assessing the state of the learning process, the facilities, the control system, and the overall quality of education at VUM.

#### **4. Ethics and Academic Freedom and Integrity at VUM**

VUM is committed to respecting academic freedoms and has established specific procedures related to academic integrity and ethical standards. Central to this commitment is the Code of Ethics for Academic Unity for faculty, students, and staff, which is incorporated into the VUM Human Resources Management System. The Code of Ethics outlines rules for the protection of intellectual property, the treatment of faculty and staff toward students, and prohibits all forms of discrimination within the institution. It also explicitly rejects any form of corruption, referencing the definition of corruption provided by the Council of Europe Civil Convention on Corruption. Furthermore, the Code of Ethics for Academic Unity addresses conflicts of interest by outlining the relevant scenarios that constitute such conflicts.

To oversee adherence to the Code of Ethics and other internal regulations at VUM, the Ethics and Academic Unity Committee has been established. This Committee's objectives include monitoring compliance with the VUM Rules and Regulations, and the Code of Ethics for Academic Unity. The Committee's activities are governed by VUM's Rules and Regulations and are represented in the organisational chart of VUM's management structure. The Ethics and Academic Unity Committee also functions as the Control Committee in accordance with Article 34a of the Higher Education Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, overseeing the legality of

elections for governing bodies, providing opinions on the annual budget, and participating in various activity assessments.

Compliance with ethical norms in both academic and behavioral contexts is the responsibility of students, as well as all academic and administrative staff at VUM. To support this, a Regulation for the Prevention, Detection, and Sanctioning of Plagiarism and Other Unethical Practices is in place at VUM. This document details the rules and procedures for addressing alleged or detected cases of plagiarism and other unethical practices at VUM. It is based on the premise that preventing plagiarism and unethical behaviour should be a priority for the academic community at VUM, which is essential for reducing such incidents. To verify the originality and authenticity of theses and dissertations, VUM utilises specialised software (<http://turnitin.com/>). To further ensure the protection of academic freedoms, VUM has adopted the Regulations for the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Code for the Appointment of Lecturers. Both documents are successfully implemented, with annual reports detailing their outcomes and any related cases or practices.

VUM also operates an internal system for evaluating the quality of teaching and academic staff. This system includes surveys of student feedback and the opinions of other stakeholders.

## **The case of University of L'Aquila**

### **Introduction**

This part of the Report provides 3 European Practices in QA, all complying with the decisions taken by the European Ministries in the process of building up the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) at the end of the so called Bologna Process (2010), that has fixed principles and methods that characterize the European Universities.

One basic issue has been the definition of the “quality” of Higher Education and the indicators for its assessment.

By now in Europe the HE systems and Institutions belong to the EHEA and adopted the mentioned principles.

The reference document for the Quality Assurance and assessment procedures is the “**European Standard and Guidelines (ESG 2015)**”.

The standards are in three parts covering **internal** quality assurance of higher education institutions, **external** quality assurance of higher education, and quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies. (*Annex1: ENQA-Bergen-Report*)

### **Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions**

**1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance:** Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which

recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

**1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards:** Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

**1.3 Assessment of students:** Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

**1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff:** Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

**1.5 Learning resources and student support:** Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

**1.6 Information systems:** Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

**1.7 Public information:** Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

## **Part 2: European standards for the external quality assurance of higher education**

**2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures:** External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

**2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes:** The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

**2.3 Criteria for decisions:** Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

**2.4 Processes fit for purpose:** All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

**2.5 Reporting:** Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

**2.6 Follow-up procedures:** Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

**2.7 Periodic reviews:** External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

**2.8 System-wide analyses:** Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

## **Part 3: European standards for external quality assurance agencies**

**3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education:** The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

**3.2 Official status:** Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

**3.3 Activities:** Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

**3.4 Resources:** Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

**3.5 Mission statement:** Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

**3.6 Independence:** Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

**3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies:** The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

**3.8 Accountability procedures:** Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

All HE Systems and Institutions aligned their quality assurance policies to the general rules but in the framework of their characteristics and missions.

## The National QA Systems in some EU countries

### Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) was established under Article 11, Paragraph 1 of the Higher Education Act, passed by the National Assembly on December 27, 1995. The Agency's legislative framework was further defined by Decree No. 189 of the Council of Ministers on August 1, 1996, which set forth the NEAA's statute and employee structure. The NEAA's first Accreditation Council began operations by the end of 1996. With amendments to the Higher Education Act enforced on 4 June 2004, the NEAA's role was expanded to include specialised responsibilities such as conducting evaluations, accreditation, quality control for higher education institutions, and introducing post-accreditation monitoring and control.

NEAA's mission is to improve the quality of higher education in Bulgaria through regular institutional and program evaluations, accreditation, and the assessment of proposals for establishing new institutions and their core units. Additionally, the agency is tasked with post-accreditation monitoring and control, ensuring independence, transparency, and the expertise of both Bulgarian and international experts involved in the processes. NEAA's work is aligned with the higher education related legislation enacted by the National Assembly, which aim to encourage institutions to enhance their potential and maintain high educational standards. These evaluations are also used by the government when shaping higher education policies.

In carrying out its mission, NEAA adheres to the purpose of accreditation as outlined in the Higher Education Act, which defines accreditation as the recognition granted by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency. This recognition allows a higher education institution to offer education and award qualifications in specific fields of studies, professional areas, and regulated professions, based on an evaluation of the quality of its activities in accordance with Article 6 of the Higher Education Act.

The key responsibilities of NEAA, as outlined in the Higher Education Act and related to external evaluation and accreditation of higher education, include the following:

- Ensuring the quality of higher education across institutions and organisations specified in Article 47, Paragraph 1, based on which the Agency either grants or denies accreditation.
- Evaluating proposals for establishing or relocating a higher education institution, faculty, branch, or college, as well as for introducing a professional field or a major from the list of regulated professions.
- Accrediting the right of all higher education institutions and organisations under Article 47, Paragraph 1 of the Higher Education Act to offer doctoral degree programmes.

To achieve its mission and objectives of ensuring external quality assurance for higher education provided by institutions, NEAA applies a comprehensive set of evaluation and accreditation procedures and criteria (please refer to the attached Annex 3 and Annex 4). The criteria are based on the principle that the core activities within the educational process at higher education institutions are equally important, specifically focusing on:

- educational activities
- research and scientific work and performance
- institutional management and the internal quality assurance system for education and teaching staff.

The evaluation and accreditation procedures developed by NEAA are designed to ensure the quality of evaluation and accreditation processes, as follows:

- Institutional accreditation

The goal is to create objective conditions for the thorough evaluation of a higher education institution's activities, following a structured process that includes self-assessment by the institution, external evaluation by NEAA, and the provision of recommendations back to the institution.

- Programme accreditation for professional fields

This focuses on evaluating all institutions offering tertiary education in a specific professional field. A key component of this process is the compilation of a comprehensive report that compares the activities of various institutions, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and offering insights for future development within the field.

- Programme accreditation for scientific majors

When accrediting scientific majors, similar programmes at one or more institutions or scientific organisations under Article 47 of the Higher Education Act are evaluated by a single expert team. This process follows predefined criteria to ensure consistency and rigor.

- **Project evaluation**

All administrative steps are undertaken to review evidence provided by applicants, ensuring that there are adequate human resources, facilities, and financial backing to support the establishment of a new higher education institution or the transfer of its core units, while also meeting labor market demands.

## **Spain**

The document “**Quality assurance in higher education**” explains the aims, methods and tools used at national level to which each university, in its autonomy, establishes its internal rules and bodies for the application of the national directives and provide the National Quality Assessment Agency (ANECA) the documents for the periodical assessment.

### **The main principles**

Quality assurance has specific features, as it must reconcile the autonomy that is recognised for universities in Spain with the accountability that the regional and national education authorities must fulfil. For this reason, it has a dual orientation: supervisory and advisory.

On the one hand, Organic Law 6/2001 on Universities (LOU) established the objectives for the promotion and assurance of quality in Spanish universities, indicating the following:

- the measurement of the performance of the public service of university higher education and accountability to society;
- transparency, comparison, cooperation and competitiveness of universities at national and international level;
- the improvement of teaching and research activity and university management;
- information to public authorities for decision-making within the scope of their competences;
- information to society to promote excellence and mobility of students and teaching staff.

On the other hand, Organic Law 2/2023 on the University System (LOSU), which repeals the LOU, establishes that the university system must guarantee levels of good governance and quality that are comparable with internationally recognised standards, in particular with the criteria and guidelines established for quality assurance in the *European Higher Education Area*. The promotion and assurance of such quality is a shared responsibility of universities, evaluation agencies and the public authorities with competences in this area.

### **Responsible bodies**

1. The **General Assembly for University Policy** is the body for consultation, coordination and cooperation on general university policy.

It is made up of the head of the ministry responsible for universities, who chairs it, the people in charge of university education in the Governing Councils of the autonomous communities, and by five members designed by the presidency of the Assembly. Without detriment to the powers conferred on the university coordination bodies of the autonomous communities, it has the following functions:

- to establish and assess the general guidelines of university policy, its
- articulation in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and its
- interrelation with scientific and technological research policies;
- to draw up, inform, consult and provide advice on the general organisation
- and long-term programming of university education, including the necessary
- human, material and financial resources required for the provision of the
- public university services;
- to approve the coordination criteria regarding evaluation, certification and
- accreditation activities, aimed at promoting and guaranteeing the quality
- and efficiency of the universities;
- to propose and assess measures in order to promote collaboration between
- universities and companies;
- to coordinate the drawing up and monitoring of reports on the application of
- the principle of gender equality at the university.

Every two the Assembly draws up a report on the situation of the university system and its funding, putting forward proposals to improve its quality and efficiency with the aim of ensuring financial sufficiency and the right to education under equal conditions.

2. The **Council of Universities** is the body for academic coordination, cooperation, consultation and proposals in university matters.

The Council of Universities is chaired by the head of the ministry responsible for universities and is made up of the Rectors of the universities and five members appointed by its chair.

It has the following functions, which it performs with full functional autonomy:

- to serve as a channel for collaboration, cooperation and coordination in the
- academic field;
- to inform the legal and regulatory provisions that affect the university
- system as a whole;
- to provide advice on university matters as required by the ministry
- responsible for universities, the General Assembly for University Policy or,
- where appropriate, the autonomous communities;
- to make proposals to the Government on matters regarding the university
- system and to the General Assembly for University Policy;
- to verify the alignment of study plans with the guidelines and requirements
- established by the Government for official degrees;
- to carry out any other tasks entrusted to it by law and their implementing
- provisions.

### 3. The **National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA)**

The most important functions of the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) are the following:

- to promote the improvement of the teaching, research and management
- activities of universities;
- to contribute to the measurement of higher education performance
- according to objective procedures and transparent processes;
- to provide public authorities with suitable information for decision-making;
- to inform society about the fulfilment of goals in university activities.

The set of functions that correspond to ANECA can be found in Article 6 of Royal Decree 1112/2015:

#### **Article 6. Functions.**

1. Within its area of competence, ANECA is responsible for, using internationally-referenced evaluation protocols and criteria, the following functions:

- a) The teachings leading to the obtaining of official university degrees valid throughout the national territory.
- b) The merits of candidates for teaching staff and contracted professors at universities.
- c) The teaching, research, knowledge transfer and management activities of the teaching and research staff of universities and of the career civil servant research staff of public research organisations, which may generate salary supplements, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1086/1989, of 28 August, on the remuneration of university teaching staff, and Law 14/2011 on Science, Technology and Research, and other regulations in force, as well as what may be established in regional regulations, where applicable.
- d) University institutions and centers.
- e) The activities, degree development plans, programmes, services and management of higher education centres and institutions, as well as higher education centres that provide teaching in Spain in accordance with foreign educational systems or Spanish university centres abroad.
- f) Foreign university degrees, through homologation procedures, recognition of equivalences to Spanish university degrees or validations, in the terms determined by regulation.
- g) The correspondence to the levels of the Spanish framework of qualifications for higher education (MECES) of the national university degrees prior to Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, which establishes the organization of official university education, in the terms that are determined by regulation.

2. Within its area of competence, ANECA is also responsible for:

- a) The realization, publication and dissemination of studies and prospective studies on the orientation, evaluation, certification and accreditation of Spanish universities, acting as an observatory of the quality of the Spanish university system, in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities and other bodies with similar functions.
- b) The promotion, evaluation and certification of the Internal Quality Assurance Systems of Universities and their centres.
- c) Training of evaluators and quality assurance technicians.
- d) Research on issues relating to the quality of higher education, the dissemination of experiences and projects, as well as the implementation of training programmes, when required, for other agencies or evaluation bodies.
- e) The provision of timely information and advice to the Social Councils of Spanish public universities when required to do so, as well as to other institutions or stakeholders of the university system.
- f) The implementation of public policies assigned to it by current regulations, or those entrusted to it or in agreements formalized for these purposes with other Administrations, departments or agencies.
- g) Other activities and programs that may be carried out with the aim of promoting the quality of academic activities by Universities and other public Administrations.

- h) The remaining functions assigned to it by the Law, this Statute and the rest of the current regulations or which are entrusted to it, within its purpose and scope of competence.

3. The guidance, evaluation, accreditation and certification functions of ANECA will be articulated through expert judgment, in accordance with the provisions of this Statute and the regulations corresponding to each program.

4. For the effective development of the functions indicated, ANECA may:

- a) Establish agreements, arrangements and contracts with public institutions and bodies, universities and private entities that carry out activities within the functional areas of ANECA.
- b) Formalize legal transactions with public and private entities or with individuals that are necessary to obtain the income that allows financing the required activities.
- c) Promote the publication of publications and the organization of scientific activities at national and international level.
- d) Represent, where appropriate, the General State Administration before national and international bodies and organizations in matters under the jurisdiction of ANECA.
- e) Promote cooperation in the areas of its competence with the Autonomous Communities.
- f) Develop international cooperation programs and activities in the areas of its competence.

#### **Example Spanish Institution**

##### **UNIVERSITAT de GIRONA - UdG**

##### **(University of Girona)**

In the Manual elaborated by the *Gabinet de Planificació i Avaluació*, revised by the *Vicerektorat de Qualitat i Transparència* and officially approved by the *Comissió de Qualitat* de la UdG in January 2024, all the principles of the ENQA document “*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area-ESG 2015*” are adopted (*Annex 3-Manual-of-SGQ*)

The document “*Manual del Sistema de Gestió de la Qualitat (SGQ) de la Universitat de Girona*” contains the institutional policies and plans for the quality assurance and the guidelines for their application.

This Manual covers both the general scope of the University and the SGQ of each one of its teaching centers and, where appropriate, those in other areas of the university - services, departments, institutes and other organizational units.

A Quality Management System - *Sistema de Gestió de la Qualitat (SGQ)* is a tool that establishes the formal mechanisms of management that facilitate the achievement with guarantees and quality of the objectives that in each moment to be determined.

The organizational complexity and heterogeneity leads the UdG to determine and promote the formalization and diversification of its management using a set of *Quality Management Systems* that, despite their singularities, must work coordinated and consistent.

Each SGQ must be a means to improve management and achieve the objectives determined by the university in accordance with its mission, as well as those specific of the area concerned. Since each SGQ responds to the management need of a specific area, it must have all the necessary components (policy, manual, processes with

its specific policies, plans and procedures, improvement plan, records, reports and other evidence) always in accordance with the mechanisms established in the manual and the documents derived from it.

The Manual is articulated in the following sections:

**1. Object and scope**

**2. The Quality Management System**

*A Quality Management System (QMS) is a tool that establishes the formal mechanisms of management that facilitate the achievement with guarantees and quality of the objectives that in each*

*moment to be determined.*

*The organizational complexity and heterogeneity that is its own, leads the UdG to determine and promote the formalization and diversification of its management using a set of Quality Management Systems that, despite their singularities, must work coordinated and consistent.*

**3. Policies and institutional plans**

3.1. Quality policy of the UdG

3.2. Each SGQ's own quality policy

3.3. Other institutional policies

3.4. Changes in policies

3.5. Institutional plans

**4. Responsibilities**

4.1. Organization

4.2. Owner, responsible and support of the SGQ

4.3. Quality commissions.

4.4. Management and publication of functions and positions

**5. SGQ processes**

5.1. Processes that make up the SGQ

5.2. The standard model of processes for teaching centers

5.3. Process map

5.4. Main roles of the process

5.5. Process name and code

5.6. Management and publication of processes

**6. QMS documentation**

6.1. Structure of the documents

6.2. Identification, validity, and preservation of documents

6.3. Process documents format

6.4. Approval of modifications to process documents

**7. Improvement Management**

7.1. The improvement plan

7.2. Structure of the improvement plan

7.3. The record of Observations

**8. Review and improvement of the SGQ**

8.1. Monitoring and continuous improvement of processes

8.2. SGQ review

**9. SGQ tools**

9.1. SGQ operation

9.2. the web

**A summary of the content**

[SGQ of the UdG](#)

At the highest level, the SGQ of a UdG establishes rules and procedures ensuring the management at the institutional level and integrates policies, plans, processes, objectives and actions common to all or a large part of the institutional units. It also contains those elements that need to be included in the other SGQs of the UdG.

#### SGQ of teaching centers and other SGQ

The UdG will be equipped with as many SGQ as it deems necessary, with a clear identification of the scope of each one.

In addition to the SGQ of the Teaching Centres, other SGQs are contemplated for the management of other diverse areas such as, for example, departments, institutes or services.

#### Quality policy of the UdG

The Quality Policy of the University of Girona is the document that includes formally the general guidelines to be followed in this area for the institution as a whole. The Rector or vice-rectorate delegate in matters of quality is responsible for the definition and impetus of the quality policy of the UdG, which must be approved by the governing bodies established by the Statute of the University.

#### Each SGQ's own quality policy

Each SGQ has a quality policy. This may consist of the adoption of the policy quality policy of the UdG or complement it with a quality policy of its own, but consistent with the quality policy of the UdG. Affiliated centers will have to formalize obligatorily an own quality policy aligned with that of the UdG with the approval of the person designated by the UdG who has responsibility for the affiliated centers.

#### Other institutional policies

The SGQ will be able to integrate and manage other policies in different areas approved by the government bodies of their area. These policies will be public and will designate a responsible

#### Responsibilities

The correct identification and assumption of SGQ responsibilities is a key element clearly described in the documents that establishes its operation. The people who assume them are unequivocally identified and informed.

#### Organization

The activity of the SGQ must be based on an organizational structure, where the assignment of responsibilities is based on a hierarchical relationship:

*Person → Function or position → Role → Responsibility*

in which:

- The same person can have several functions or positions;
- Each function or position can assume different roles;
- Each role entails responsibilities.

#### Owner, responsible and support of the SGQ

The highest responsibilities are assigned to the roles of Owner and Manager of the SGQ. These two roles, which can fall on the same person, are indispensable for anyone SGQ.

The *Owner of the SGQ* has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that the SGQ meets the needs of the management area and is operational and functional;
- Assume maximum authority over the SGQ;
- Ensure that the SGQ includes all the processes necessary for the correct management of its scope;
- Validate the improvements proposed on the SGQ;
- Act as default owner of all SGQ processes.

The *Manager of the SDG* is appointed by the Owner of the QMS and will

- Inform the SGQ Owner of the circumstances that may affect or compromise the normal operations;
- Ensure that the resources, mechanisms and tools for management and maintenance of the SGQ documentation exist;
- Ensure that the information of the people involved in the different functions is updated at each moment;
- Ensure that the management of the SGQ area is carried out in accordance with what has been defined the SGQ and, otherwise, assess its impact and take corrective measures necessary;
- Manages continuous improvement, ensuring that all opportunities are considered;
- Act as responsible by default for all SGQ processes, if not a delegate this responsibility.
- Prepare the in-depth review report of the SGQ

#### Quality Commissions

The Quality Commissions established for the University and for each center, in accordance with what is established by regulation, are composed by representatives of the different units involved in each area and headed by the owner of the SGQ.

In those SGQs that do not have a quality commission, the function of ensuring quality in the approach and deployment of the SGQ processes at field level will be undertaken by the University Quality Commission

The information flux follows precise rules and the process is object of continuous improvement.

An example of SGQ rules and process for internal quality assurance is in <https://www.udg.edu/en/fcee/la-facultat/qualitat/sistema-de-garantia-intern-de-qualitat>, section "Quality"

#### o Quality

- Commitment to quality
- Quality commission
- Internal quality guarantee system
- Quality of degrees
- Improvement plan
- Indicators

## Italy

In Italy the QA in HE follows the two steps foreseen in the ESG 2015: internal policy and strategy, external assessment from an accredited Agency, the ANVUR.

According to [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) and with ENQA recommendations for the accreditation of the Agency, the ANVUR Governing Board, in cooperation with the main stakeholders (Ministry, CUN, CRUI, CODAU, CNSU, CONVUI and CONPAQ), since its constitution has proposed several revisions of the requirements, in compliance with European standards and with the continuous improvement of Quality Assurance systems in universities and in the perspective of a systemic reorganisation and simplification of AVA 2 requirements.

The [GUIDELINES FOR THE UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM](#) (Annex 4) establish and fix rules, tools and methodology for internal and external assessment

#### University Self-assessment

According to [Legislative Decree No. 19/2012](#), self-assessment and internal evaluation are institutional activities that must follow methodologies, criteria and indicators developed by universities in harmony with those defined by ANVUR.

The University Quality Committees (*Presidio della Qualità di Ateneo* = PQA) are called to support universities structures in the construction of the Quality Assurance system and in the self-assessment processes, to monitor its effectiveness by implementing, where necessary, improvement actions and ensuring the correct flow of information between the structures responsible for QA.

The University Evaluation Boards (*Nucleo di Valutazione* = NdV) are responsible for assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the QA system, for monitoring the systematic and widespread application in the relevant areas of the qualitative and quantitative criteria and indicators established by ANVUR for evaluation, and to verify the adequacy of the self-assessment process of study programmes and Departments.

The Joint Teaching Staff-Student Committees (*Commissioni Paritetiche Docenti Studenti* = CPDS) monitor the study offer and the teaching quality as well as student service activities carried out by professors, by technical and administrative staff and by structures and services in general; CPDS are also responsible for identifying indicators for the evaluation of the results and for formulating proposals on the activation or suppression of study programmes.

#### Periodic Assessment

The [Ministerial Decree No. 1154/2021](#) specifies that periodic assessment is intended to measure efficiency, economic and financial sustainability of activities and results achieved by Universities in teaching, research and third mission/social impact, in line with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and taking into account the objectives of the Ministry's Triennial Programming.

The universities periodic assessment results are evaluated by ANVUR on the base of the indicators listed in *Annex E of the Decree* (indicators of periodic assessment of universities and study programmes) and are used for the purposes of the Periodic Accreditation of Universities and their Study programmes. In line with the general Guidelines of the Triennial Programming (currently [Ministerial Decree No. 289/2021](#)), the indicators chosen by each university according to the *Triennial Programming Objectives* are also used.

Thus, the Quality of HE is ensured by three levels of assessment

- Universities' Strategic Plan, that fixes indicators and targets
- Internal annual Quality assessment from the two committees *Presidio Qualità* and *Nucleo di Valutazione*,
- periodical external assessment from the ANVUR/AVA

All the committees provide a report on the state of achievement of the objectives of the four dimensions of the university: teaching, research, third mission/social engagement, regulatory and (infra)structural asset.

#### Example Italian Institution

**UNIVERSITA' degli STUDI DELL'AQUILA - UnivAQ**  
(University of L'Aquila)

#### Quality Assurance System

The national system for university evaluation, accreditation and quality assessment operates in accordance with the norms and guidelines establishing quality standards for higher education in the EU area. It consists in two assessment systems, an internal one carrying out assessment within every university and an external one accrediting universities and degree courses offered.

The AVA system (Self-assessment, Periodic evaluation, Accreditation) consists in a series of activities carried out in accordance with laws that introduce initial and periodic accreditation procedures of universities and the courses they offer, periodic assessment of quality, efficiency and results obtained together with enhancement of self-assessment procedures carried out by universities themselves.

The [Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes](#) (ANVUR) is entrusted with defining the national system.

The University of L'Aquila Quality Assurance System relies on the following bodies to perform assessment duties:

- [University Evaluation Board](#)
- [University Quality Control Committee](#)
- [Joint Teacher-Student Committees](#) (info in Italian)

The **University Evaluation Board** is responsible for assessing the quality and efficiency of university teaching, in accordance with indicators provided by student-teacher commissions, together with research quality assessment within university departments, and the screening of resumes submitted by teaching contract applicants to verify whether they meet scientific and professional requirements.

The Evaluation Board, independently and in connection with the activities of the "[Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes \(ANVUR\)](#)", also carries out the functions of Independent Evaluation Agency as specified in Act 150/2009, in reference to procedures for facilities and personnel evaluation with the aim of enhancing and improving university performance both on an organizational and individual level.

The **University Quality Control Committee** was established in 2013 to coordinate, manage, promote and monitor all activities in order to improve teaching and training in our university by activating a practical and efficient system of quality control within all study courses offered. The University Quality Control Committee supervises all quality assurance standards in accordance with the [University's Quality Assurance Policies](#) (available in Italian).

The Quality Control Committee:

- Defines and proposes a system of quality assurance and self-evaluation/evaluation for all courses offered (first-level degrees, master degrees, Ph.Ds, etc.)
- Monitors implementation of this system in all study courses offered
- Monitors teaching and training results obtained making them accessible for internal quality assurance and self-evaluation/evaluation
- Promotes quality control awareness

The procedures [regulations](#), [members](#) and [documents](#) are public documents available in Italian.

The Joint Teacher-Student Committee draws up an annual report which is sent to the Quality Control Committee and the Evaluation Board by 31 December of each year. Through this tool, it expresses its assessments and formulates proposals for improvement; in particular, drawing from the results of student opinion surveys and other institutionally available sources, evaluate whether:

- the University's educational offering has been designed while maintaining due attention to the functions and skills required by employment and personal and professional development prospects, identified taking into account the needs of the economic and productive system;
- the expected learning outcomes are effective in relation to the reference functions and skills;
- the teaching activity of the teachers, the methods of transmitting knowledge and skills, the materials and teaching aids, the laboratories, the classrooms, the equipment, are effective in achieving the learning objectives at the desired level;
- the examination methods allow the results obtained to be correctly ascertained in relation to the expected learning outcomes;
- the annual review results in effective corrective interventions on the study courses in subsequent years;
- student satisfaction questionnaires are effectively managed, analyzed and used;
- the University effectively makes available to the public, through regular and accessible publication of the public parts of the SUA-CdS (Unique Annual Form of Study Courses), updated, impartial, objective, quantitative and qualitative information on each course of study offered.

The teachers and student representatives who are part of this Committee are elected according to the procedures established by the General Regulations of the University and by the Electoral Regulations of Student Representatives.

## Sweden

The Guidelines for reviewing the HEIs' quality assurance processes for education and research Published by Swedish Higher Education Authority in 2023 (annex 5-vvvv) describe how the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) reviews the quality assurance processes that higher education institutions (HEIs) have in place for education and research. The guidelines describe the purpose, starting points and content of the review and the various stages of the process.

Universities and HEIs in Sweden are responsible for ensuring that education and research are of high quality. UKÄ's role is to ensure that the universities and HEIs fulfil their responsibility for quality and therefore conduct various types of reviews. The overall goal of UKÄ's reviews is to help to ensure that the education and research conducted at universities and HEIs in Sweden maintains a high quality. Provisions on UKÄ's responsibility for quality assurance of the activities of universities and HEIs are found in Sections 1 and 2 of Regulation (2012:810) with instructions for the Swedish Higher Education Authority.

UKÄ conducts the following reviews:

- appraisals of applications for degree-awarding powers
- reviews of HEIs' quality assurance processes
- programme evaluations
- thematic evaluations.

UKÄ's reviews are based on the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100), the Government's communication *Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (2015/16:76) and *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*(ESG 2015) as well as national and international guidelines for research.

The method for the reviews has been developed in dialogue with representatives of universities and HEIs, the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) and labour market representatives, as well as in dialogue with UKÄ's reference groups and a selection of quality assurance organisations within the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

## **Purpose and focus**

The aim of UKA's review of HEIs' quality assurance processes is both to verify that HEIs achieve high quality in their activities and to contribute to HEIs' quality development.

The review focuses on whether the HEIs' quality assurance processes contribute to ensuring and developing the quality of education and research in a systematic and appropriate manner.

The term quality system, which is used in UKA's review, refers to the systematic nature of the HEIs' quality assurance processes. By quality system, we mean the structure or framework that the HEI has for its quality assurance processes. The quality system includes both the documented conditions, in the form of organisation, distribution of responsibilities and policy documents, and the procedures and working methods used to work with both quality assurance and quality development. A quality system can clarify the relationship between different parts of the organisation (e.g. how goals, policy documents and activities are related).

An effective quality system includes an effective continuous improvement process. By an effective improvement process, we mean that the HEI works systematically to monitor and evaluate its activities, and uses the results to achieve high quality in education and research.

The HEI must be able to demonstrate that it organises the quality assurance processes and applies the quality system in an effective manner, and that the HEI in practice changes what does not work effectively.

## **Main principles**

The reviews of HEIs' quality assurance work are based on assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are based on Swedish law and regulations as well as national and international principles and agreements.

The review of HEIs' quality assurance processes for education is based on the international principles for quality assurance of higher education formulated in *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). The ESG deal with the internal quality assurance processes of the HEIs, external quality assurance of the HEIs' educational activities and the requirements that the quality assurance bodies must fulfil. To fulfil the agreements in the ESG, both the HEIs and UKÄ need to ensure compliance with the international principles for quality assurance. The Higher Education Act (1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) are also starting points in the reviews conducted by UKÄ. They contain several provisions with a bearing on the HEIs' quality work and their responsibility to ensure high quality in education and research. All assessment criteria for quality assurance of education are based on the quality requirements in the Act and Ordinance or in the principles of the ESG.

The review of HEIs' quality assurance processes for research is based on the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. National and international frameworks and guidelines for research and the Act on Responsibility for Good Research Practice and Investigation of

Misconduct in Research (2019:504) also play an important role. The international guidelines for reviewing the quality assurance of research that are particularly relevant are the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* (Charter and Code). In Sweden, the Swedish Association of Higher Education Institutions (SUHF) has also developed a national framework of overarching principles for the quality assurance of research.<sup>3</sup> The framework has played an important role in the UKÄ's work to formulate assessment criteria for reviewing the quality assurance processes for research at HEIs.

## **Assessment criteria**

The assessment criteria are the benchmarks for the assessment panel's evaluation. The assessment panel evaluates the HEI's quality assurance processes in relation to each individual assessment criterion.

The assessment criteria deal with the structure and function of the quality system and the different areas that the HEI's quality system should be able to address. Some assessment criteria specify basic elements that should be present in a quality system, while others capture the HEI's capacity to monitor and develop specific areas through the system.

## **Assessment criteria for reviewing HEIs' quality assurance processes for research**

The assessment panel uses eight assessment criteria in their review of the HEI's quality assurance processes for research.

For all assessment criteria, the assessment panel evaluates whether the HEI's quality assurance processes contribute to ensuring and developing the quality of research in a systematic and appropriate manner. This includes the existence of a functioning improvement cycle that helps the HEI to identify development needs and ensure and develop research quality, and that the HEI has knowledge of whether it organises the quality assurance processes and applies the quality system in an effective manner.

All in all, the assessment panel evaluates how well the HEI's quality assurance processes are described, reasoned and work in practice.

## **Assessment criteria for research:**

### **Established procedure and quality culture**

1. The HEI has an established and publicly available description of the HEI's quality system, which sets out the division of responsibilities, principles and concrete working methods for ensuring and developing quality in research. The quality assurance processes involve management and staff as well as external stakeholders when appropriate, and support the quality culture and strategic work at all levels of the organisation.

### **Continuous monitoring**

2. The HEI ensures that it regularly collects, analyses and uses appropriate information with a bearing on the quality and relevance of research. The information is used as a basis for strategic decisions, prioritisation and quality development. The information is made available to relevant stakeholders and is used as a basis for research development, strategic and prioritisation.

### **Periodic reviews**

3. The HEI ensures that its research or research environments undergo regular peer reviews from a national and international perspective. The reviews are conducted in a way that is appropriate for the HEI. The HEI systematically captures and addresses the recommendations arising from such reviews.

### **Research development and renewal**

4. The HEI works systematically to create favourable conditions for the development and renewal of research and research environments.

**Support activities and research infrastructure**

5. The HEI works systematically to provide fit for purpose support for research and has appropriate processes for the prioritisation and long-term renewal of research infrastructures.

**Competence supply, professional development and career support**

6. The HEI works systematically to ensure a long-term competence supply for the development and renewal of research. The HEI also works systematically to create good conditions for professional development and offers well-functioning career support for researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of the form of employment.

**Gender equality**

7. The HEI works systematically to promote gender equality in the preconditions for research.

**Good research practice**

8. The HEI works systematically to promote good research practice and to prevent and address misconduct in research

**Assessment criteria for reviewing HEIs' quality assurance processes for education**

The assessment panel uses eight assessment criteria in their review of the HEI's quality assurance processes for education.

For all assessment criteria, the assessment panel evaluates whether the HEI's quality assurance processes contribute to ensuring and developing the quality of education in a systematic and appropriate manner. This includes the existence of a functioning improvement cycle that helps the HEI to identify development needs and ensure and develop education quality, and that the HEI has knowledge of whether it organises the quality assurance processes and applies the quality system in an effective manner.

**Assessment criteria for education:**

**Established procedure and quality culture**

1. The HEI has an established and publicly available description of its quality system, which sets out the division of responsibilities, principles and concrete working methods for ensuring and developing quality in education. The quality assurance processes involve management, staff and students as well as external stakeholders when appropriate, and support the quality culture and strategic work at all levels of the organisation.

**Continuous monitoring**

2. The HEI ensures that it regularly monitors and continuously collects, analyses and uses appropriate information with a bearing on the quality and relevance of education. The information is made available to relevant stakeholders and is used as a basis for development of education, strategic decisions and prioritisation.

**Periodic reviews**

3. The HEI's programmes undergo regular peer reviews to ensure that they are of high quality, are designed to provide students with the conditions necessary to achieve set goals, and meet the needs of students and society. The reviews lead to continuous improvement of the programmes. Results and actions are communicated in an appropriate manner.

**Establishment and discontinuation**

4. The HEI ensures that there is a clear division of responsibilities, and appropriate processes and procedures for the establishment and discontinuation of courses and study programmes.

**Student support, learning resources and infrastructure**

5. The HEI works systematically to ensure that infrastructure, student support and learning resources are appropriate for students' and doctoral students' learning.

**Competence supply and professional development**

6. The HEI works systematically to ensure a long-term competence supply to satisfy the needs of education and enable renewal. The HEI works systematically to create favourable conditions for the professional development of teaching staff.

**Connection between research and education**

7. The HEI works systematically to ensure that there is a close link between research and education in the organisation.

**Student-centred learning**

8. The HEI works systematically to ensure student-centred learning

**Example Sweden Institution**

**Stockholms Universitet  
(Stockholm University)**

**Quality Policy** (*Annex 6-Quality Assurance\_StockholmUniversity*)

The quality policy sets out the points of departure for how Stockholm University secures and develops its core operations of research and education, with the aim of achieving the highest quality.

**Quality culture**

The university's quality work is founded in a vital and strongly established quality culture, characterised by reflection and a critical search for knowledge, along with the sharing and defence of established knowledge. Research and education are developed in close connection with each other, through collegial work involving departments, faculties, scientific areas, university management and students. Peer review is one of the cornerstones in the efforts to develop the highest quality. Another is that the professors, senior lecturers and associate senior lecturers of the university are active in both research and education, and make contributions to the quality and the development of both activities. Conducting and developing education and research requires competent and efficient administrative support. An inclusive environment, where all staff and students are treated equally and with respect, is another part of the quality culture, where the different backgrounds, life situations and competences staff and students bring to the university are seen as assets.

**Organisation and management**

A quality-enhancing culture is based on commitment, trust, and individual responsibility. This means that teachers, other staff, and students each have a responsibility in their respective roles, both individually and in collaboration with others, to actively contribute to securing and developing the university's core operations. The quality of research and education lies foremost with the teachers and researchers at the departments. In the university's collegial bodies, such as departments, faculties, and scientific area boards, quality in planning processes and decisions is assured through the broad combined expertise of the members. The collegial bodies are led by chairpersons, who also act as line managers, and have an overall responsibility for the quality work and for keeping a dialogue with and through their subordinate line managers and bodies to organise the core organisation and lead necessary development processes. The university strives to achieve a trust-based management where internal control and monitoring are resource-efficient activities, with the aim of promoting quality. This intent is reflected in the organisational structure of the university with its various

levels of responsibility, in the form of clear and transparent decision- and delegation procedures, which comprise both collegial bodies and managers.

Leadership plays an important role in all activities and units of the university. Skilful managers who initiate and lead the development of the core operations, based on well-grounded decisions, provide a guarantee for high quality in education, research and administration. The organisation and distribution of responsibilities create good conditions for dissemination of knowledge, which allows the university to take appropriate, legally secure and effective action.

## **Quality System**

The university's current quality system consists of both development and evaluation and considers for instance preconditions, implementation, and monitoring of education and research. Internally, the system must be quality-enhancing and contribute to fulfilling the goal of the university's strategies: to strive for research and education of the highest international quality. The quality system includes processes where research and education are regularly reviewed and monitored, in order to ensure quality and development of the core operations. The quality system must also ensure that laws and regulations that apply to university activities are obeyed. Finally, the system must meet the quality requirements, expectations and demands from the Government, students, and external stakeholders. The various components of the quality system are described in more detail on the university's website, on specific web pages as well as in governing documents.

UKÄ's review of Stockholm University's quality assurance system completed

<https://www.su.se/english/news/uk%C3%A4-s-review-of-stockholm-university-s-quality-assurance-system-completed-1.589032>

Research quality will be ensured at the university

<https://www.su.se/staff/services/information-communication/staff-news/research-quality-will-be-ensured-at-the-university-1.544673>

## **United Kingdom**

An example from non-EU university is provided by UK (*Annex 7-QAA-UK*)  
Providing rules for each State.

### **Higher education and QA in the United Kingdom**

[UK higher education providers](#)

The term 'provider' is widely used in the UK to describe any institution or organisation that delivers or contributes to all or part of a higher education programme.

### **Requirements to undergo external quality assurance**

Different providers are obliged to undergo external quality assurance for different reasons. Publicly funded providers are obliged to undergo external quality assurance or assessment because the bodies that allocate public funding are required by law to ensure that provision is made for the assessment of the quality of the education at providers they fund. However, Higher education is a devolved matter to the national parliaments – The Welsh Senedd, The Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Scottish Parliament. Each country of the UK has different requirements for quality assurance.

Alternative providers of higher education are obliged to take part in external quality assurance if they want 'educational oversight' from QAA, which they need in order to be:

- licensed by the UK Government to recruit students who are not European Economic Area nationals
- they want 'specific course designation', which allows eligible students access to student support loans from the Student Loans Company (SLC)
- they hold Degree Awarding Powers (DAP), which, for alternative providers, must be renewed every six years.

### **National approaches to quality assurance (see document)**

- UK
- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales

### **Qualifications frameworks**

QAA maintains and publishes the Qualifications Frameworks for UK higher education, on behalf of the HE sector.

The Qualifications Frameworks describe the achievement represented by higher education qualifications. They apply to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards granted by a higher education provider with degree awarding powers. There is one qualification framework for higher education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (*The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - FHEQ*), and a separate one for Scotland (*The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland - FQHEIS*).

Both Scotland and Wales have developed credit and qualifications frameworks and, functionally,

the FQHEIS effectively forms part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), which covers pre-HE levels of learning, as well as the three cycles at HE. Similarly, the FHEQ is a constituent part of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). The SCQF is not maintained by QAA but the Agency is a member organisation of the SCQF Partnership. The CQFW is also not maintained by QAA, but takes account of the Agency's advice in its work.

### **Responsibilities and structure of QAA**

#### **Organisation**

In 1997, QAA was established as a single quality assurance service for providers of higher education in the UK. QAA is an independent body, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Its Articles of Association, dated 10 April 2017, are published on its public website. As such, it is independent from Government.

QAA is governed by its Board. The QAA Board is responsible for QAA's mission, strategy and policy development at strategic level, for the Agency's finances and for monitoring its performance against agreed targets at a corporate level. It oversees all annual reporting, with overall responsibility for the company's assets. Board members are trustees of the charity, with experience both from within higher education across the UK, and in other areas.

The QAA Board has a number of committees, each of which is chaired by a Board member or independent person approved by the Board:

- Access Recognition and Licensing Committee
- Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers
- Student Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC)
- Audit Committee
- Nominations and Remuneration Committee
- QAA Wales Strategic Advisory Committee
- QAA Scotland Strategic Advisory Committee
- QAA Enterprises.

## **Example UK Institution University of Oxford**

### **Quality assurance governance framework**

#### **Introduction**

The University's framework for the governance of quality assurance integrates activity at all levels: University, division and department or faculty and across the collegiate University. This document summarises material on the key bodies responsible for quality assurance and the formal structure for integration. Links lead to the relevant section of University Statutes and Regulations.

#### **University level**

The University's Council has overall responsibility under the statutes and subject to resolutions of Congregation for all academic matters relating to teaching and research. Council is responsible for drafting and implementing the University's Strategic Plan which sets out the overall goals for the collegiate University (including those related to teaching and learning) for the specified period. Much of the detailed work of Council is delegated to committees, including Education Committee.

#### **Education Committee**

Education Committee has strategic oversight of all aspects of teaching and learning and the wider student experience, including responsibility for:

- the assurance of the quality of the University's educational provision, particularly in relation to the design, implementation, evaluation and review of mechanisms for quality assurance and quality control;
- the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning; and
- the safeguarding of academic standards.

Education Committee reports to Council on any significant items of teaching and learning policy.

#### **Panels**

Education Committee is supported by three panels: *Undergraduate Panel*, *Graduate Panel* and *Examinations Panel*.

The *Undergraduate Panel* and *Graduate Panel* give focused attention to issues affecting the wider academic provision and support for these student groups, and as such their remits include academic and pastoral support, induction, skills development, and feedback. To ensure integrated provision, the membership of the panels involves Proctorial, divisional, college, and student representation.

The *Examinations Panel* provides a further forum for detailed scrutiny of issues related to assessment and examinations.

The panels are staffed by officers of Education Policy Support and chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), which ensures close linkage with the broader quality assurance and enhancement work undertaken by the section in co-operation with divisional and Conference of Colleges' officers.

### **Subcommittees**

Education Committee has a largely strategic focus. Responsibility for the detailed consideration of specific areas of its remit are delegated to its sub-committees. Those with most relevance to quality assurance and the student experience are set out below.

- *Joint Sub-Committee of Education Committee with Student Members*
- *Student Health and Welfare Subcommittee*
- *Careers Service Subcommittee*
- *University Sports Strategic Subcommittee*
- *Permanent Private Hall Supervisory Committee*
- *Quality Assurance Subcommittee*

The Quality Assurance Subcommittee is responsible to Education Committee for institutional-level oversight of the assurance of quality and maintenance of standards across all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision, for example oversight of external examiner reports and the University's process of periodic review. The subcommittee has Proctorial, divisional, college and student representation.

### **Divisional level**

In view of the very large and diverse range of courses and programmes of study offered generally, the first line oversight rests with divisions, faculties and departments, which are best placed to provide the detailed academic scrutiny required in a robust quality assurance system.

Divisional Boards have a quality assurance and enhancement function at the divisional and faculty/departamental levels in ensuring that the division's constituent faculties and departments implement the University's and their own quality control procedures satisfactorily. In many cases, responsibility for teaching and learning is delegated by the Head of Division to a divisional Associate Head for Education or Learning and Teaching (or equivalent). To ensure Education Committee's relationship with Divisional Boards is a two-way process, the chairs of divisional education committees (or their equivalent) are *ex officio* members of Education Committee.

The Department for Continuing Education does not operate within a division but is overseen by the Continuing Education Board which has a reporting line to Council. The Director of the Department for Continuing Education is an *ex officio* member of Education Committee.

### **Department/Faculty level**

Responsibility for day to day course management and oversight lies within the governance structures of individual departments and faculties, including responsibility for programme level monitoring. Boards of examiners, whose membership is approved by the relevant supervisory body, oversee the examination process. Nominations for chairs of examiners are approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Proctors.

### **College framework**

Colleges play a central role in the provision of tutorial and other small group teaching. This teaching is linked closely to the academic frameworks established by the University through its divisions, faculties and departments. Provision is monitored closely in each college by the Senior Tutor and the relevant college committee.

Collectively the Conference of Colleges operates its own college quality assurance and enhancement procedures. The conclusions of an annual template and reporting cycle are considered both by Conference bodies - the Senior Tutors' Committee and the Graduate Committee of Conference - and by the University's Quality Assurance Subcommittee. The Conference of Colleges has representation on Divisional Boards and Education Committee and its panels and subcommittees.

### **Student engagement**

As partners in the quality assurance of the University's educational provision, student representatives are members of the majority of the key bodies responsible for quality assurance described here. Full details are given in the *Policy and Guidance on student engagement and representation*.

## 9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the QUARTZ project survey highlights a complex landscape of quality assurance in higher education institutions across Uzbekistan, revealing both strengths and significant areas for improvement. While a majority of faculty respondents express satisfaction with the overall quality of education and recognize the administration's ongoing efforts to enhance educational standards, a notable portion also voices dissatisfaction or uncertainty regarding specific aspects, such as curriculum relevance and teaching effectiveness. This dual sentiment underscores the need for a more consistent application of quality assurance practices across institutions.

Support for curriculum development is perceived as adequate by many, yet concerns persist about the sufficiency of this support, indicating gaps in quality assurance processes that could hinder effective curriculum design. Furthermore, although communication channels between faculty and administration are generally viewed as open, many respondents express uncertainty or dissatisfaction with feedback mechanisms, pointing to a critical area for improvement in ensuring that faculty voices are heard in institutional decision-making.

Access to educational resources is another crucial dimension, with a general consensus on adequacy, but some faculty highlight limitations in terms of updated materials and specialized resources. This suggests that quality assurance frameworks must prioritize effective resource allocation to meet evolving academic needs. Additionally, while many faculty members appreciate the availability of professional development opportunities, there is a clear call for more targeted training that aligns with their specific teaching contexts, further emphasizing the need for tailored professional development strategies.

The mixed perceptions regarding student preparedness reflect deeper issues within the quality assurance system, with some faculty expressing confidence in students' readiness, while others identify critical gaps in essential skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. This disconnect suggests that current support structures for students may not be sufficiently robust, necessitating enhanced preparatory programs that better equip students for success in higher education and the labor market.

Overall, the insights derived from the survey not only highlight areas of satisfaction but also illuminate significant challenges that must be addressed to strengthen quality assurance processes in Uzbekistan's higher education sector. By focusing on

improving communication, enhancing resource access, and aligning educational outcomes with market needs, institutions can elevate their educational standards and align more closely with international benchmarks. Such efforts will ultimately foster a more effective, responsive, and equitable educational environment, benefiting both faculty and students alike.

## **Application in Uzbekistan**

Integrating the practices observed in European higher education institutions can significantly enhance the quality assurance (QA) systems in Uzbek higher education. Varna University of Management (VUM) in Bulgaria exemplifies a robust QA framework, which can inspire Uzbek institutions to develop policies reflecting similar commitments to high-quality education, research, and internationalization. By adopting a strategic development plan that encompasses stakeholder management, vocational training, and lifelong learning, Uzbek universities can create a structured approach to quality assurance that is both comprehensive and adaptable to local needs.

The internal QA standards established by VUM, which emphasize the involvement of stakeholders and students in QA processes, can be particularly beneficial for Uzbek higher education institutions. Implementing formal policies for program approval, monitoring, and assessment, along with regular internal audits, will contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. Additionally, the establishment of dedicated committees similar to VUM's Quality Assurance and Evaluation Committee can help oversee these processes, ensuring that institutions maintain high academic integrity and transparency.

The practices employed by the University of Girona (UdG) highlight the importance of a committed quality culture within universities. By creating quality commissions and ensuring that each department and service aligns with overarching QA policies, Uzbek institutions can foster a collaborative environment focused on improving educational standards. Incorporating performance indicators to assess teaching quality, student satisfaction, and research outcomes will provide valuable insights into areas needing enhancement and will support the continuous improvement of academic programs.

In Italy, the University of L'Aquila's QA framework underscores the necessity of self-assessment and periodic external evaluations. Uzbek higher education institutions can adopt similar methods, establishing internal quality committees to monitor compliance with national and international standards. Regular assessments conducted by external agencies can ensure accountability and continuous development of QA systems, providing a structured pathway for enhancing educational quality.

Sweden's UKÄ guidelines offer another perspective, emphasizing systematic monitoring and improvement processes in higher education. By adhering to a quality system that encompasses defined responsibilities and clear procedures, Uzbek institutions can establish a framework that facilitates the ongoing evaluation of both educational programs and research outputs. Regular peer reviews and engagement with stakeholders can further strengthen QA processes, promoting a culture of excellence.

Finally, the structured approach to QA in the UK, exemplified by the University of Oxford, can serve as a model for Uzbek institutions. By integrating QA activities across all levels of the university and involving student representatives in decision-making processes, institutions can foster a more inclusive environment that prioritizes the needs of students. This collaborative approach not only enhances educational quality but also prepares students for future challenges in the workforce.

By drawing on these European practices, Uzbek higher education institutions can develop robust quality assurance systems that align with international standards while addressing local context and needs. This will ultimately lead to improved educational outcomes, increased student satisfaction, and enhanced institutional reputation in the global academic landscape.

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## Annex 1. Survey for students

### Survey for Students

#### Quality of Courses and Educational Programs

Is high quality maintained in educational courses and programs?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Is the instruction being conducted according to the established curriculum and educational program?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Should there be oversight to ensure that course materials are current and relevant?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are the materials available in the MOODLE system sufficient for studying the subjects?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Overall, do the courses you have taken meet your educational expectations?

- Yes

- Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

## B. Organization and Assessment of Learning

Does the schedule provide sufficient regularity for lectures and independent work?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are the forms, conditions, and methods of conducting exams, as well as the appeal procedures, clearly defined?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Was there appropriate oversight for lectures, practical classes, exams, and academic practice?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

In your opinion, is fairness and transparency ensured in the assessment processes?

- Yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- No
- Unsure

- Recommendations:

---

Do the exam results reflect your actual level of knowledge?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

### C. Appeals and Feedback

Do you receive timely and constructive feedback from instructors on your assignments and exams?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are student requests for replacing instructors deemed incompetent addressed?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Does the institution respond promptly to student issues and requests?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Is there an opportunity to approach the administration regarding personal issues?

- Yes

- Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Have you specifically contacted the quality assurance department with suggestions/complaints about educational processes?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

#### D. Support Services

Are the necessary conditions for safety, health, and nutrition of students provided?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you have access to educational and other resources necessary for achieving academic success?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are the classrooms and laboratories adequately equipped for lectures, seminars, and practical classes?

- Yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- No

- Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are you satisfied with the state of the official university website (completeness of information, timely updates, effective communication of important information, etc.)?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are you satisfied with the organization of student services?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

#### E. General Learning Environment

Does the university help maintain a positive learning atmosphere?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you have opportunities to communicate with students and alumni (Student Union activities)?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
-

Is there support for your professional development (participation in competitions, Olympiads, sports competitions, etc.)?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are useful workshops, seminars, and classes organized in your professional field?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Overall, are you satisfied with the policies, strategies, and procedures in place for improving the quality of education at the university?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

#### F. Overall Satisfaction

Overall, are you satisfied with the quality of education at the university and would you recommend this university to your acquaintances?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
-

## Annex 2. Survey for Faculty

### A. Quality of Courses and Educational Programs

In your opinion, is there support for effective development and analysis of educational programs?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you receive adequate assistance (from faculty, administration, etc.) regarding the content and structure of your courses?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are updates and changes to the curriculum and educational program communicated clearly and promptly?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are your classes analyzed by the quality assurance department?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
-

Is the quality assurance department involved in the development of educational programs and syllabuses?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

## B. Educational and Other Resources

Is there access to educational resources and are your requests for necessary literature considered?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are the technical and technological resources provided sufficient for effective teaching?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are your innovative teaching methods supported to enhance the quality of education?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are you satisfied with the current system for diagnosing and assessing student knowledge?

- Yes

- Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you feel you have sufficient skills in using modern information (digital, online) technologies in your teaching?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

### C. Support and Professional Development

Are opportunities for your personal, professional, and career development offered

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you regularly undergo training that helps improve your pedagogical skills

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Is timely support and encouragement (both moral and material) provided for your efforts to ensure quality education?

- Yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- No
- Unsure

- Recommendations:

---

Is adequate support provided in terms of research (to realize your potential, obtain academic degrees, attend conferences, organize research events)?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you feel a need for further qualification improvement, and are there any issues in this regard?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

#### D. Evaluation and Feedback

Do you believe that the current level of student preparation meets the modern requirements for professional specialists?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Do you receive constructive feedback from students or staff about your teaching activities?

- Yes
- Mostly yes
- Mostly no
- No
- Unsure

- Recommendations:

---

Have you been given specific comments/recommendations for improving the quality of education?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Is there an opportunity for open and transparent communication with the administration?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Is the policy and strategy for ensuring educational quality clear to you? Would you like to change anything?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

#### E. Overall Work Environment\*

Is a positive atmosphere for faculty maintained at the university?

- Yes
  - Mostly yes
  - Mostly no
  - No
  - Unsure
  - Recommendations:
- 

Are you satisfied with the balance between the volume of work and responsibilities assigned