



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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OBJECTIVE AND GOALS OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

The primary aim of Baku State University's (hereinafter - BSU) Quality Assurance Policy (hereinafter – QAP) is to align with the institution's Strategic Development Plan and adhere to the Standards and Guidance on Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). This policy is crafted in accordance with the Statute of BSU and encompasses activities outlined for institutional accreditation in higher education.

The overarching goal of the QAP is to establish a cohesive approach to fostering a culture of quality within the university. This involves the systematic, regular, and standardized monitoring, evaluation, and enhancement of quality across various processes. By doing so, the policy aims to elevate the competitiveness of BSU graduates in both national and international labor markets. Additionally, it strives to enhance their contributions to the social and economic development of the country.

Furthermore, QAP has the broader objective of enhancing the international reputation of Baku State University as a cornerstone of science and education. By emphasizing quality assurance measures, the policy seeks to position BSU as a reputable institution on the global stage. Through continuous improvement and adherence to established standards, the university aims to strengthen its standing in the international academic community.



BASIC CONCEPTS

The following key concepts are used in the document:

The document references the European Standards and Guidance on Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. This framework encompasses three main domains: internal evaluation of the quality of higher education institutions, external evaluation of quality, and assessment of quality conducted by external agencies.

Skills

involve the application of knowledge and the use of experience to perform tasks and solve problems. In terms of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are cognitive (the ability to think logically, critically and creatively) and practical (physical ability and the ability to use appropriate methods, materials, tools and equipment). A skill is an ability to achieve predetermined results with minimal expenditure of time and energy (or both). Skills are usually divided into general and domain-specific types.

Knowledge

is the result of assimilation of information through the training (learning) process. Knowledge is the foundation of fact, principle, theory, and practice related to an activity or field of study. In terms of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or fact-based.

Internal quality assurance

Is an internal management evaluation system that serves to ensure the compliance of the activity of the educational institution with the state educational standards, the creation of an efficient and modern educational environment in the educational institution, and the continuous development of its activity based on self-analysis.

External quality assurance

Is the process of evaluating the quality level of the educational institution's activity and the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system.

Quality

Is the sum of features and characteristics of any object (product or service) that includes the ability to meet specific and intended needs and standards.

Quality assurance

is a process or a series of processes adopted at the national or institutional level.

**Competence
(competency)**

Is a person's ability to perform any work correctly; the ability to use knowledge, skills, social or methodological abilities in any field of activity or research, as well as in the process of professional and personal development; is the ability to perform activities according to the standards required in a professional environment, using appropriate knowledge, skills and approaches.

Innovation

is formed on the basis of various initiatives and scientific research.

Other concepts used in QAP have the relevant meaning provided in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education", "National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan" and other related legislation and normative-legal documents.

SCOPE AND ACTIVITIES OF QAP

The application of QAP covers the following directions (areas) and activities:

**Management**

- ❖ Facilitating assistance in monitoring and enhancing the existence of the normative-legal framework governing the operations of enterprise structural units, formulating duties in alignment with the normative-legal framework of relevant units, and devising action plans for these units based on the Strategic Development Plan and Quality Assurance Policy;

- ❖ Supervising the implementation of recommendations following institutional accreditation or international and (or) local program accreditation by relevant units by the action plan;
- ❖ Overseeing the planning, implementation, control, and adjustment cycle activities within the structural unit;
- ❖ Establishing the normative-legal foundation for the Quality Assurance Commission and (or) relevant working groups, defining monitoring mechanisms and criteria, and ensuring their implementation and accountability;
- ❖ Guiding the annual self-analysis on pertinent directions and criteria as per the evaluation criteria for institutional and program accreditation at the higher education level;
- ❖ Ensuring the monitoring and accountability of the timely and requisite quality implementation of issues related to the structural unit's responsibility by the action plan prepared for progress in relevant directions in international rating markets;
- ❖ Supporting the monitoring and enhancement of the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the activities of structural units, conducting satisfaction surveys, and other surveys aimed at improvement;
- ❖ Fostering the monitoring and enhancement of the involvement of learners and labor market representatives in management and decision-making;
- ❖ Sustaining support for ensuring business ethics in internal structural management and monitoring and improving the use of collaborative and modern management methods;
- ❖ Championing support for monitoring and enhancing the effective management of faculties and departments in accordance with relevant legislation;
- ❖ Upholding support for monitoring and enhancing the efficient organization of communication between structural units.



Organization of training and education

- ❖ Overseeing and aiding guarantee the presence and proper execution of mechanisms and criteria for recognizing trainees' qualifications.
- ❖ Exercising control and providing support for the formulation of criteria governing admission planning and the implementation mechanism;

- ❖ Constructing elective subject offerings within the specialty, aligning them with labor market requirements, and supervising students' selection of elective subjects;
- ❖ Exerting control and support to ensure the public availability of training outcomes resulting from educational program implementation;
- ❖ Exercising control and providing support to organize education in compliance with the credit system and legislative requirements;
- ❖ Regulating the formation of the normative-legal framework about educational organization;
- ❖ Monitoring and providing support for the implementation and adherence to recommendations from institutional accreditation concerning training and education organization;
- ❖ Exerting control and support to execute obligations outlined in action plans related to training and education organization by the relevant structural unit(s) within stipulated timeframes and quality standards;
- ❖ Implementing control and support for a student-oriented and competency-based structure of the educational process;
- ❖ Conducting periodic monitoring of teaching methods, systematically evaluating and improving preventive measures;
- ❖ Monitoring and providing support for the establishment and effective implementation of student-oriented and competency-based procedures and rules related to the knowledge and skills assessment system;
- ❖ Overseeing and supporting the presence and implementation of the educational program monitoring strategy and action plan;
- ❖ Exerting control and support for organizing current and intermediate evaluations based on principles of transparency, fairness, and competitiveness, considering the specificity of relevant subjects;
- ❖ Developing guidelines for training and teaching organization, initiating communication with stakeholders, and ensuring their implementation through control and support;
- ❖ Conducting surveys at varying frequencies with interested parties regarding training and education organization, and exerting control and support to implement relevant improvements based on survey results;
- ❖ Providing control and support for the collection of relevant statistical results and the preparation of analytical materials related to training organization.



Implementation of educational programs

- ❖ Exercising oversight and offering support for the establishment and effective implementation of mechanisms that connect subject learning outcomes with specialty results, identifying, monitoring, and evaluating inappropriate learning outcomes;
- ❖ Reflecting subject learning outcomes in the subject syllabi and ensuring the existence and effective implementation of control mechanisms, exercising control, and providing support;
- ❖ Supervising and supporting the application of teaching methods and techniques adapted to educational levels and individual student characteristics;
- ❖ Overseeing and supporting the use of student-oriented, problem-oriented teaching, competency-based teaching, and approaches combining theory and practical application in teaching methods;
- ❖ Ensuring control and support for the use of innovative, creative, and interactive methods and technologies to achieve training results;
- ❖ Exerting control and support for considering factors contributing to students' self-evaluation ability, fostering a desire for independent learning, and enhancing the quality of training assessment;
- ❖ Conducting analyses on the knowledge and skills assessment system, monitoring and improving processes, and providing support;
- ❖ Exercising control and support for the integration of information and communication technologies in assessment;
- ❖ Monitoring and providing support for the preparation of annual self-evaluation reports for educational programs;
- ❖ Ensuring control and support for updating educational programs in line with labor market and societal requirements;
- ❖ Overseeing and supporting the availability and efficient implementation of opportunities to assess training result achievements for educational programs;
- ❖ Exerting control and support for the use of various assessment methods and tools (face-to-face, distance, mixed, open, etc.);

- ❖ Monitoring and providing support for the implementation and adherence to recommendations from local and (or) program accreditation;
- ❖ Implementing obligations outlined in action plans for relevant programs within the specified timeframes and quality standards set by the relevant structural unit;
- ❖ Conducting self-analysis according to program accreditation criteria on an annual basis;
- ❖ Implementing and monitoring the quality of the implementation of relevant educational programs in accordance with legislation and credit system requirements;
- ❖ Monitoring the employment status of graduates of the relevant program, conducting surveys among graduates and employers, and implementing improvements based on the analysis of results;
- ❖ Exerting control and support for the preparation of normative-legal documents for the relevant program within the required time and quality;
- ❖ Conducting planned and unplanned monitoring of the implementation of educational programs based on established mechanisms and criteria.



Student support system

- ❖ Overseeing and offering assistance for the existence and effective utilization of diverse tools and mechanisms for addressing complaints and/or suggestions from trainees;
- ❖ Ensuring the presence of academic advisors (tutors) possessing appropriate qualifications who monitor student development and provide support in resolving academic challenges;
- ❖ Organizing and overseeing the availability of consulting services;
- ❖ Monitoring the accessibility and availability of psychological counseling services;
- ❖ Monitoring the availability and efficient implementation of resources (administrative and budgetary resources), support plans for student clubs, social, cultural and sports activities of students;
- ❖ Coordinating library operations and exercising control over availability efficiently;

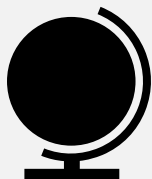
- ❖ Doing effective organization and ensuring the availability of canteen, dormitory, and medical services;
- ❖ Exerting control over the establishment of scholarships for students;
- ❖ Forming and supporting the normative-legal basis for volunteering activities;
- ❖ Monitoring and ensuring the efficient organization of student society and organizations' activities;
- ❖ Taking initiatives for continuous learning and improvement of student feedback on infrastructure.



Research and innovation

- ❖ Exercising control and providing support to ensure the presence and effective implementation of the scientific research strategy along with the corresponding action plan;
- ❖ Monitoring the enhancement of performance indicators in the realm of scientific research;
- ❖ Controlling and supporting various activities aimed at boosting the research skills of academic staff;
- ❖ Allocating resources for organizing scientific research work and continuously monitoring the optimality and adequacy of resources;
- ❖ Overseeing the involvement of young scientific researchers in scientific research processes;
- ❖ Defining monitoring mechanisms and criteria for scientific research direction and conducting monitoring accordingly;
- ❖ Taking steps in alignment with the action plan to progress in international rating bases;
- ❖ Ensuring the timely and quality implementation of recommendations provided during institutional and program accreditation;
- ❖ Exerting efficacious control over the organization of the student scientific society;
- ❖ Taking initiatives in line with the strategy and action plan for creating an innovation-friendly environment;
- ❖ Monitoring the improvement of income dynamics resulting from scientific research;
- ❖ Controlling the achievement of internationalization goals in scientific research;

- ❖ Overseeing the expansion of collaborative relations in research with various scientific institutions and organizations;
- ❖ Exercising control over activities related to the acquisition and commercialization of patents;
- ❖ Creating a framework to handle cases concerning academic integrity and transfers, developing guidelines, involving stakeholders, and monitoring the successful implementation of the mechanism



Internationalization

- ❖ Guaranteeing the successful execution of the action plan formulated in alignment with the internationalization policy;
- ❖ Securing international accreditation for programs and enhancing visibility within the country;
- ❖ Attaining internationalization goals for the academic staff;
- ❖ Realizing internationalization objectives in education;
- ❖ Advancing in global rankings of universities;
- ❖ Developing and effectively implementing mechanisms and criteria for the admission of exchange students;
- ❖ Promoting internationalization in the context of scientific research;
- ❖ Enhancing overall internationalization performance.



Management of human resources

- ❖ Monitoring the presence of the employment procedure at the Higher Education Institution (HEI), ensuring its transparent and accessible implementation, and verifying the compliance of elective position procedures with legislative requirements;
- ❖ Implementing a system to motivate and reward employees at the HEI;

- ❖ Conducting periodic evaluations of the efficiency of employees' activities at the HEI;
- ❖ Overseeing the participation of HEI employees in training programs aimed at enhancing their qualifications and professional levels;
- ❖ Guaranteeing adherence to legal requirements in the commencement and conclusion of labor and civil relations.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF QAP

To instill a culture of quality, every member of the academic and administrative staff at BSU, including leaders and employees across all structural units, bears direct responsibility for fulfilling their obligations promptly and with the requisite quality, aligning with the scope of their activities and within their defined rights.

Under the framework of the QAP, the Quality Assurance Center formulates a pertinent one-year action plan. Once endorsed by the rector, the Quality Assurance Center assumes the responsibility for monthly monitoring of the action plan's implementation, tracking progress based on the specified result indicators. This structured approach ensures a systematic and ongoing commitment to quality standards throughout the university.

The director of the Quality Assurance Center assumes direct responsibility for establishing communication on the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) with relevant stakeholders. This includes organizing the monitoring of the action plan's effective implementation at specified frequencies, both planned and extraordinary, and preparing corresponding monitoring reports.

The Quality Assurance Center submits the report on the monitoring results of QAP implementation to the Advisor to the Rector on Quality Assurance, in need directly presented to the Rector. The Advisor to the Rector on Quality Assurance provides monthly reports to the Rector and periodic updates to the Scientific Council. Moreover, comprehensive reports are presented to the Board of Trustees concerning the QAP implementation if necessary.

Upon the approval of a set of standards, guidelines, and rules for the application of QAP by the Rector, the Quality Assurance Center takes responsibility for communicating relevant issues with related parties.

The Quality Assurance Center not only offers training, but also provides methodical support in various directions related to quality assurance to structural units or designated individuals, guided by an analysis of ongoing needs.

To enhance the professionalism of the academic and administrative staff involved in QAP implementation, the Quality Assurance Center conducts activities across various domains, ensuring continuous development and improvement.

The Quality Assurance Center takes charge of coordinating the activities of Commissions (or Councils) and (or) working groups established to implement the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP).

Commissions (or Councils) and (or) working groups designated for QAP implementation provide reports on their activities to the Advisor to the Rector on Quality Assurance.

For the effective execution of QAP, the Quality Assurance Center allocates financial, infrastructure, and human resources. It also monitors the optimal and efficient utilization of resources, both financial and infrastructure.

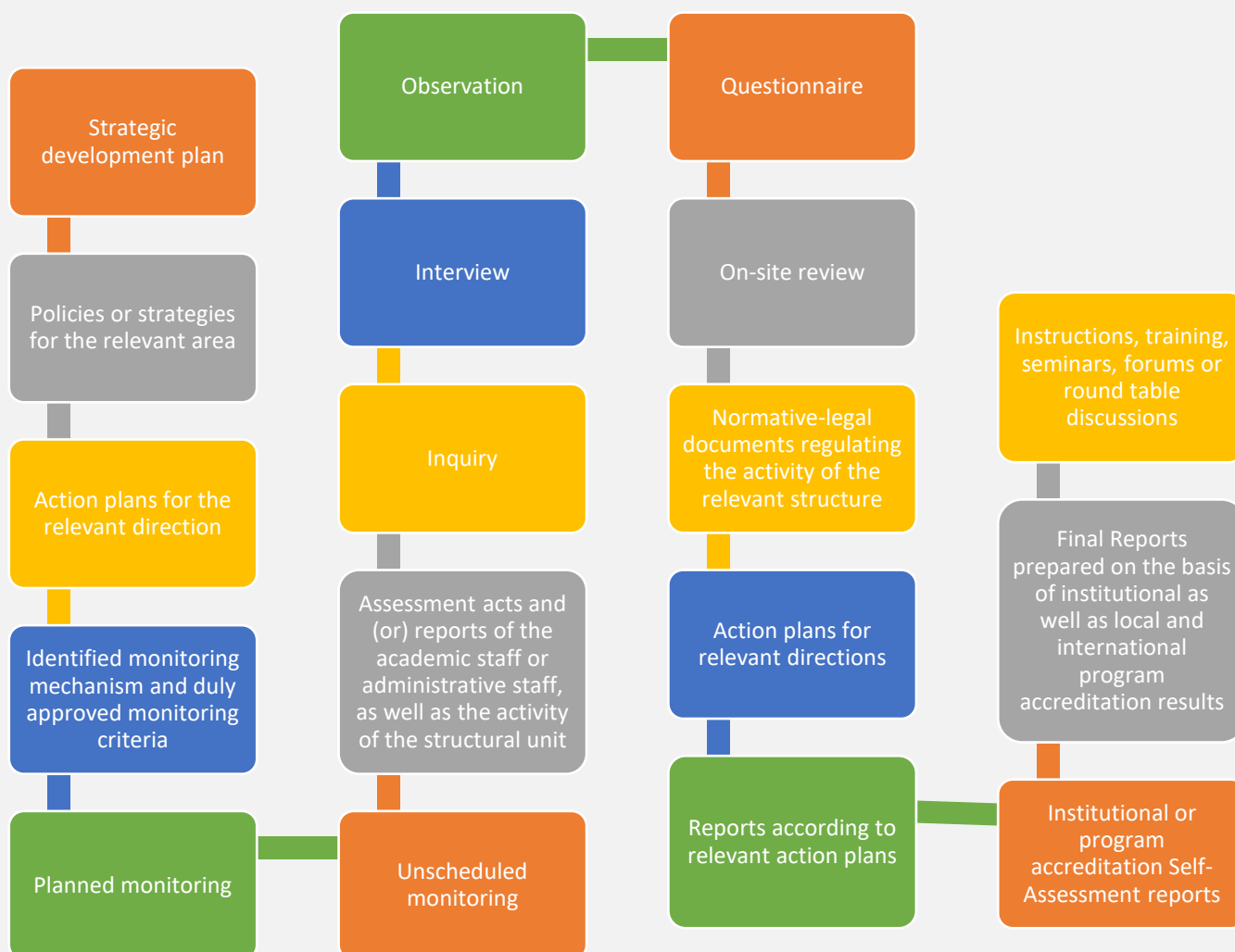
Following institutional accreditation, as well as local and (or) international accreditation, the Quality Assurance Center leads the preparation of an action plan to implement recommendations given by the relevant structural unit within a specified timeframe. The center oversees the execution of the action plan and ensures accountability.

In the context of progress in international rankings, the Quality Assurance Center takes the lead in preparing an action plan for conducting activities in pertinent directions, increasing awareness, and providing timely and high-quality information. The center also monitors the implementation of the action plan and ensures accountability.

All heads of structural departments, including vice-rectors for various areas, bear direct responsibility for executing obligations under the action plan within specified deadlines and with the requisite quality. They are accountable accordingly.

During the monitoring of the implementation of relevant QAP action plans, if activities are found to be inadequately implemented, not implemented, or implemented at an unsatisfactory level, the head of the responsible structural unit is to be warned or disciplined in accordance with the law. This is based on the report of the Quality Assurance Center, and the Advisor to the Rector on Quality Assurance raises the issue before the rector.

The following tools are used during the implementation of QAP in the specified directions:



EFFECTIVENESS, UPDATE OR MODIFICATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

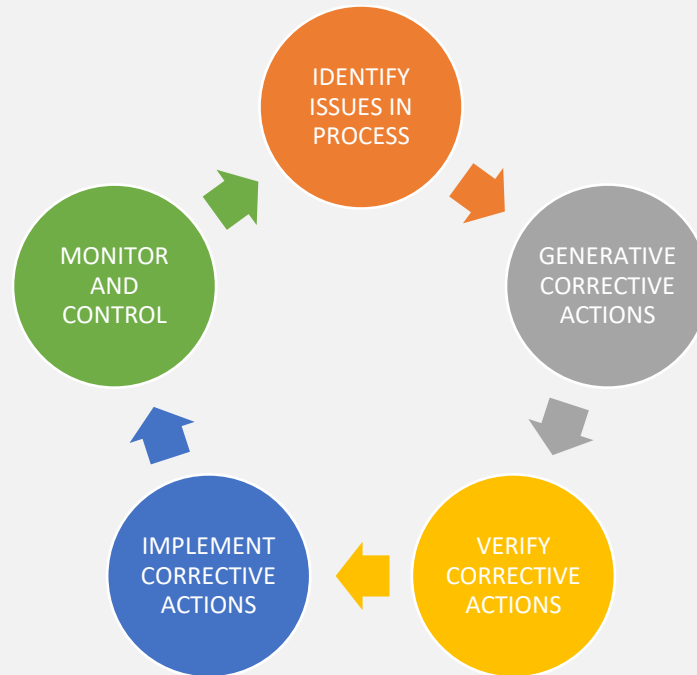
The period of QAP is determined by the period of Strategic Development Plan of BSU.

QAP is updated or relevant changes are made in the following cases:

1. By the decision of the Scientific Council;
2. By order of the rector (on the basis of a reasoned presentation of the rector's quality assurance adviser);
3. According to the result of institutional accreditation, based on the presentation of the Advisor to the Rector on Quality Assurance.

4. By order of the rector on the basis of a reasoned presentation of the Quality Assurance Center or the Quality Assurance Commission.

QAP has legal force from the moment it is approved by the rector's signature, and it is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Center to establish policy communication with stakeholders, prepare an action plan, and organize monitoring based on relevant action plans.



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY INCORPORATING PDSA CYCLE

At BSU, our commitment to excellence in education drives us to embrace continuous improvement. To achieve this, we have adopted the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle as a foundational framework for quality assurance in our academic and administrative processes.

Alignment with Quality Objectives:

The PDSA cycle is integral to our university's commitment to providing high-quality education and services. It serves as a structured approach to identify opportunities for improvement, enhance processes, and ensure the consistent delivery of exceptional quality in teaching, research, and support services.

*Incorporating PDSA into Processes:***Plan:**

In the planning phase, we will define quality objectives for academic programs, research initiatives, and administrative processes. This includes setting clear educational standards, establishing learning outcomes, and outlining the steps required to achieve them.

Do:

During the execution phase, academic and administrative teams will implement the planned activities. This involves following established processes, utilizing resources efficiently, and maintaining a commitment to quality in all aspects of university operations.

Study:

Regular assessments, academic program reviews, and monitoring will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of our educational and administrative processes. Data analysis and performance metrics will be used to measure adherence to quality standards and identify areas for improvement.

Act:

Based on the findings from the "Check" phase, adjustments and improvements will be made to academic programs, research initiatives, and administrative processes. Lessons learned will be documented, and corrective actions will be implemented to address any deviations from quality standards. This phase is integral to our commitment to continuous improvement in the higher education experience we provide.

Responsibilities and Roles:

Clearly defined responsibilities will be assigned to faculty, administrators, and staff for each phase of the PDSA cycle. Accountability is crucial to ensuring that quality objectives are met, and every member of our academic community plays a vital role in the success of the quality assurance process.

Documentation and Reporting:

Comprehensive documentation will be maintained throughout the PDSA cycle. Regular reporting on key academic and administrative performance indicators will be conducted, providing insights into the effectiveness of our quality assurance processes.

Training and Awareness:

All faculty and staff will undergo training on the PDSA cycle and its application in higher education quality assurance. Awareness campaigns will be conducted to ensure that every member of our academic community understands the significance of the PDSA cycle in achieving and maintaining high-quality education and support services.

Continuous Improvement Culture:

Our university is dedicated to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in education and research. The PDSA cycle is not a one-time activity but a continuous process ingrained in our academic and administrative operations. We encourage proactive identification of improvement opportunities and a commitment to implementing positive change for the benefit of our students and the broader academic community.

Review and Updates:

This quality assurance policy, including the incorporation of the PDSA cycle, will be regularly reviewed, and updated to adapt to changing educational needs, accreditation standards, and insights gained from the implementation of the PDSA framework.

