

Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan



Twinning project ENI/2018/395-401

Mission Report

Short-Term Mission on Activity 3.3.2 Create handbook on methodologies and requirements for self-evaluations of higher education institutions

(January 14 – 18, 2019)

1. Name and Function of the Expert:

Full name of expert

Mr. Mourad Attarça, France

Signature

Full name of expert

Mr. Almantas Šerpatauskas, Lithuania

Signature



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2. **Objective and Tasks of the Mission:**

The mission is carried out within the framework of:

COMPONENT 3: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IS FURTHER DEVELOPED TO REFLECT THE STUDENT-CENTEREDNESS OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

Activity 3.3.2 Create handbook on methodologies and requirements for self-evaluations of higher education institutions

Benchmarks for this activity are:

- for self-evaluation of universities reflecting student-centeredness and competence-based approach



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3. Time schedule of mission:

Date and Time	Activity
Monday 14 January 2019	<p>10:00-13:00 Meeting with the staff of the Accreditation Department. Presentation of Lithuanian and French practices on assessment of competence based and student centered approach of study programmes. Stakeholders: <i>Mr. Tofiq Abbasov, Head of Accreditation Department</i> <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova, Senior Specialist at Accreditation Department</i> <i>Ms. Konul Fatiyeva, Head Specialist at Accreditation Department</i></p> <p>13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH</p> <p>14:00-17:00 The work to be continued after the lunch.</p>
Tuesday 15 January 2019	<p>10:00-13:00 STEs start work on a handbook on program evaluation together with ANO staff. Stakeholders: <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova, Senior Specialist at Accreditation Department</i></p> <p>13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH</p> <p>14:00-17:00 The work to be continued after the lunch.</p>
Wednesday 16 January 2019	<p>10:00-13:00 The STEs and ANO staff work on self-evaluation handbook for universities Stakeholders: <i>Mr. Tofiq Abbasov, Head of Accreditation Department</i> <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova, Senior Specialist at Accreditation Department</i></p> <p>13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH</p> <p>14:00-17:00 The work to be continued after the lunch.</p>



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Thursday 17 January 2019	The STEs continue working on the handbook in the hotel due to stormy weather conditions.
Friday 18 January 2019	<p>10:00-13:00 The STEs discuss and finalize the draft of the handbook on study program evaluations with ANO staff. Stakeholders: <i>Mr. Tofiq Abbasov, Head of Accreditation Department</i> <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova, Senior Specialist at Accreditation Department</i></p> <p>13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH</p> <p>14:00-17:00 Report writing</p>



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4. Mission report:

4.1 A handbook for self-evaluation of universities reflecting student-centered and competence-based approach

During the mission experts share their experience in the evaluation of the competence-based and student-centered study programmes. The information from French and Lithuanian was discussed and taken into account while producing guidelines for self-evaluation for universities in Azerbaijan. The draft of the document was discussed together with Mr. Tofiq Ahmadov, Ms. Lala Abbasova. STE are thankful to ANO staff members for fruitful discussions and devoted time and efforts in order to provide prepare a guidelines for self-evaluation appropriate for Azerbaijan system.

During the mission STE also came to conclusion that set of indicators, that were developed in previous missions needs to be supplemented with additional information to reflect better the competence-based and student centered learning approach of study programmes in Azerbaijanian universities. Updated version of Criteria and indicators is attached to the mission report as Annex No 2. The proposed amendments to this document is marked in red.

The mission STE also proposed to put in place an additional guideline for assessing more precisely the competence-orientedness and the student-centeredness of study programmes. The proposed handbook (Annex 3) includes a set of definitions and principles, and a checklist that allows the programme manager and/or steering comity to improve the quality of the study programme.

We would like to recommend to ANO to think on the need for training to universities explaining how to perform a self-evaluation of their study programmes. In addition, workshops on designing competence-based and student centered study programmes would benefit a lot for universities of Azerbaijan. The proposed guidelines document in Annex 3 could be a good starting point for the training material.



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Annex no 1. Guidelines for self-evaluation

PREPARATION OF SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

SETTING THE SER GRUOP

The higher education institution shall be responsible for the proper conduct of its self-evaluation and the timely production of the self-evaluation report.

The higher education institution shall conduct its self-evaluation according to the procedure established by themselves. The self-evaluation report must meet the requirements set in this Methodology.

The self-evaluation process may include the following recommended stages:

1. Establishing of a working group for self-evaluation (SER) performance and development which will perform an internal assessment (self-evaluation) of the programme or several programmes of the same (or similar) study field;
2. Defining the tasks and responsibilities of each member of the group;
3. Drawing up the schedule of the group's activities;
4. Collecting data for self-evaluation;
5. Analysing the data;
6. Discussing the results of the self-evaluation performed; and
7. Producing a self-evaluation report.

The self-evaluation group should include active, experienced and competent representatives of the **administrative and teaching staff, students and other stakeholders (those who are regular partners of the institution)**. It is recommended that the self-evaluation group should consist of no more than seven members. In case the higher education institution is conducting self-evaluation of several study programmes within a certain study field, it is possible to set up subgroups. The activities of the subgroups shall be coordinated by a person appointed from among the self-evaluation group members.

PRINCIPLES OF WRITING THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

A study programme evaluation shall involve examination of 6 evaluation areas: the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme, curriculum design, teaching staff, facilities and learning resources, study process and students' performance assessment and programme management.

Each evaluation area shall be analysed according to the established criteria and indicators, i.e. on the basis of evidence pointing to the quality of the studies.

Higher education institutions shall conduct self-evaluation according to the procedures defined by themselves with due regard to the objectives of the self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation report should demonstrate the institution's *capacity for analysis, critical evaluation* of its own work and *prospects for improvement*.



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Statements in the self-evaluation report should be supported by quantitative and qualitative evidence.

The self-evaluation report should present information necessary for evaluation in a succinct manner and the self-evaluation group should be careful not to make the report too long. The recommended **scope of the self-evaluation report** should not exceed **30 pages** (excluding annexes).

Self-evaluation shall be conducted according to each criterion specified in the Handbook. In case a certain criterion is not applicable to the study programme, the fact should be duly recorded in the self-evaluation report.

Compliance with the criteria specified in the Handbook shall be analysed in the context of the quality of the entire programme: compliance with a certain criterion shall be analysed and judged by taking into consideration its effect on the entire programme.

Examination of any area shall include analysis of the changes stimulated by the latest evaluation (internal or external) of the programme.

At the end of the analysis carried out in every evaluation area, the strengths and weaknesses of the programme shall be specified, actions for improvement and deadlines for making such actions shall be envisaged.

The self-evaluation report shall cover **data of the past 5 academic years**. In case the programme has been provided for a shorter period of time, the report should cover data of the entire period.

Self-analysis report shall be submitted for every programme individually. If a programme of the same field is carried out by the branch campus of a higher education institution that is located in another town, a separate self-analysis report of the programme carried out in the branch campus shall always be developed. If the programme includes specialisations, they should be described in one self-analysis report but every specialisation shall be examined separately. If the programme or a part of it is carried out in a division that is not part of a higher education institution and that is located in another municipality, the self-analysis report should also include analysis of the programme implementation in that location indicating the special features related to it.

In case a study programme is provided as a *full-time and part-time* programme, each mode shall be examined separately. The mode of studies which is analysed first shall be presented in full while the analysis of the other mode shall present information common to both modes of studies only through references to the description of the mode of studies analysed first.

In case the programme is a **joint study programme** (i.e. it has been developed and provided together with another/other higher education institution(s)), the self-evaluation report shall cover provision of the whole study programme. The parts of the programme provided by each institution and their learning resources (equipment, teaching materials and human resources) used for the provision of their part of the programme shall be clearly indicated in the self-evaluation report.



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LANGUAGE OF SER

The self-evaluation report shall be produced in Azeri language. If the evaluation of the programme is conducted by an international expert team, the self-evaluation report shall be submitted also with translation in English.

STRUCTURE OF SER

The self-evaluation report shall consist of the following parts: introduction, analysis of the programme, annexes.

The introduction should contain the following:

1. a brief description of the organisational structure of the higher education institution providing the study programme, its units, their management and interrelations, the appropriateness and weaknesses of the institution's organisational structure;
2. the composition of the self-evaluation group, the scope of the work and responsibilities of each member and the schedule of the team activities;
3. reference to the previous evaluation of the study programme, if any.

The analytical part of the self-evaluation report **shall cover six evaluation areas** to be evaluated **according to the criteria and indicators** established in this Handbook.

ANNEXES OF SER

The programme self-analysis report should have the following annexes attached to it:

1. study plan;
2. description of study subjects/syllabus and/or modules (including description of the final thesis and practice);
3. list of lecturers;
4. profile of teaching staff;
5. list of students' final theses;
6. summary of previous assessment conclusions (not longer than two pages).
7. agreement concluded among higher education institutions performing the programme (when a joint programme is assessed).

The first annex to the self-evaluation report includes a study plan developed according to a form established by the higher education institution. If the programme is envisaged in the form of full-time and part-time studies, the study plan shall be presented for both study forms separately. The programme study plan shall show the programme structure, subjects (modules) taught by semesters, the number of credits granted. Study subjects (modules) shall be specified in the plan in accordance with their study field, general university study subjects, subjects of other study fields if the objectives of the programme are linked to interdisciplinary studies. It shall specify practice, scope of optional courses (if available) selected by the student, thesis, number of credits granted to a minor studies where it is envisaged. It is also recommended to specify the form of completion of every subject, number of hours and the name of the lecturer teaching the subject.



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The second annex to the self-analysis report shall include descriptions of the programme subjects (modules). The descriptions shall be submitted in a form established by a higher education institution, specifying the following necessary information: name of the subject (module), number of credits and hours (specifying hours of contact and individual work), intended learning outcomes and their assessment criteria, links between study methods and student achievement assessment methods, topics, main bibliography, etc.

The third annex to the self-analysis report shall specify data about academic staff: names and dates of birth of lecturers, subjects taught by them, their academic (artistic), pedagogical and practical work experience in years.

The fourth annex to the self-analysis report shall include descriptions of the activities in which the lecturers teaching subjects of the study field are engaged. A lecturer's activity description shall include the following information: the lecturer's name, education background, work place (specifying the position and type of work), significant academic (artistic), methodological work made during the last five years (not more than five works), foreign language level of proficiency. The activities of lecturers in the annex to the programme description shall be presented alphabetically (by last name). If a joint programme is provided, CVs of lecturers teaching in every partner higher education institution shall be presented. It is not necessary to provide activity descriptions of lecturers teaching general university study subjects.

The fifth annex to the self-analysis report shall include lists of final theses of the last two years of graduates with grades.

The sixth annex to the self-analysis report shall include the summary of previous evaluation conclusions (recommendations for improvement). If previous evaluation was performed by the same Agency, the summary may not be provided by HEI. This annex is added only in the case when previous evaluation was performed by another QA agency. Also, a link to full evaluation report to be provided in the annex.

ELECTRONIC VERSION OF SER

Electronic versions of self-analysis reports of the same field in a higher education school shall be submitted to the Agency by email The general part of the self-analysis report should be presented as a DOC or PDF file. The self-analysis report with annexes should be archived in a WinZip or WinRAR format. The folder name should state the name of the higher education institution (its acronym), programme name (a shortened version if its name is longer than three words). Each annex to the self-analysis report should be presented as a separate file. Annexes presented as individual documents should be put into one folder. Names of individual annexes should correspond to the content of the annex.

INTERNAL DISCUSSION ON SELF-EVALUATION RESULTS

After its completion, the results of the self-evaluation must be discussed with the community of the institution or one of its units. The discussion should be attended by as many members of the community as possible, including students.



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The self-evaluation group shall produce a self-evaluation report by taking into account the observations and comments offered during the discussions.

IF SOME CHANGES HAPPENED

Two weeks before the visit of the experts at the latest, the higher education institution may submit information on the essential changes in the study programme introduced after the submission of the self-evaluation report.



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TEMPLATE OF SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

NAME OF UNIVERSITY

LOGO

Study Field of

Master's Degree Study Programme

TITLE OF THE PROGRAMME

(state code:)

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

Rector prof.

Head of SER group: Prof.

Baku

2019



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Data of the study programme

Title of the study programme	
State code	
Study type	University studies
Cycle of studies	First/Second
Mode (form) of studies	Full-time/part-time
Duration (in years)	
Volume of the study programme (in credits)	
Degree and/or qualification awarded	Master in
Date and number of programme registration	
Language (s) of instruction	Azeri/English/Russian
Special features of the programme	Joint study programme

Self-evaluation group

No.	Pedagogical title (scientific degree), name, surname	Position	Telephone (work and mobile)	E-mail address
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				



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ANNEXES

1. Study plan of the programme
2. Description of study subjects and/or modules
3. List of lecturers
4. Descriptions of the activities of teaching staff
5. List of students' final theses
6. Summary of previous assessment conclusions (*optional*)
7. Agreement concluded among higher education institutions performing the programme (*optional, when a joint study programme is assessed*)



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INTRODUCTION

Structure of University and Faculty of

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Workload and work schedule of self-assessment group

Table 1. Workloads and responsibilities of self-evaluation group members

No.	Group member	Workload and responsibility
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Table 2. Work schedule of the group

No.	Work schedule	Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Previous assessment of the Programme

.....

STUDY PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

Data, analysis

Strengths and weaknesses and actions for improvement

.....

2. CURRICULUM DESIGN

Data, analysis



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Strengths and weaknesses and actions for improvement

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3. TEACHING STAFF

Data, analysis

Strengths and weaknesses and actions for improvement

.....

4. FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Data, analysis

Strengths and weaknesses and actions for improvement

.....

5. STUDY PROCESS AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Data, analysis

Strengths and weaknesses and actions for improvement

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6. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Data, analysis

Strengths and weaknesses and actions for improvement

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ANNEXES

1. STUDY PLAN OF THE PROGRAMME

	Number of credits	Contact work hours	Individual work hours	Total number of hours	Assessment methods	Name of lecturer
SEMESTER 1						
Compulsory course units						
Optional course units						
Total per semester						
SEMESTER 2						
Compulsory course units						
Optional course units						
Total per semester						
SEMESTER 3						
Final master thesis and final examination						
Total per semester						
Total in the Programme						



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2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY SUBJECTS AND/OR MODULES (INCLUDING DESCRIPTION OF THE FINAL THESIS AND PRACTICE);
3. LIST OF LECTURERS;
4. DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF TEACHING STAFF;
5. LIST OF STUDENTS' FINAL THESES;
6. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS (NOT LONGER THAN TWO PAGES).
7. AGREEMENT CONCLUDED AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PERFORMING THE PROGRAMME (WHEN A JOINT PROGRAMME IS ASSESSED)



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Annex No. 2. Updated list of Criteria and indicators for study programme evaluation and accreditation in Azerbaijan

Evaluation criteria	Indicators and information to be presented in SER
<i>Programme aims and learning outcomes</i>	



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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible. 2. The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. 3. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. 4. The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. 5. Learning outcomes of the programme correlate with the strategy of the HEI and regional context. 6. Opportunities for further education and employment are brought to the attention of students and other stakeholders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formulation of the aims and learning outcomes of the programme (the program learning outcomes as well as learning outcomes of each subject/module are clearly established). 2. Programme aims and learning outcomes are known by students and other stakeholders. 3. Public resources (information publications, websites, etc.) containing the description of the programme aims and learning outcomes. 4. Data on the regularity of evaluation of learning outcomes and the involvement of stakeholders. 5. Compliance with legal acts and other documents establishing academic or professional requirements or recommendations for the qualifications of specialists trained. 6. Research findings in the respective area of professional practice to support the validity of the intended learning outcomes. 7. The learning outcomes are linked to professional activity areas for which the graduates are trained under the programme. 8. A study of the job and competences market needs was carried out in order to design the program. 9. The program is formally supported by companies / organizations from targeted sectors. 10. The learning outcomes are aligned with the professional competences targeted.
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Curriculum design



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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The curriculum design meets legal requirements; 2. study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive; 3. the content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies; 4. The content of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes; 5. The methods of the subjects/modules are innovative and support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes; 6. The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes; 7. The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in science, art and technologies. 8. Internship is appropriate for achievement of learning outcomes. 9. Different pathways for students exists in the programme. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The study plan; 2. Descriptions of the subjects taught and/or modules (there is a curriculum for each module of the program with learning outcomes and their assessment). 3. The logic of the programme (relationship between the learning outcomes of the programme, learning outcomes of subjects/modules and study methods); 4. Requirements for writing bachelor's and master's final thesis. 5. The link between learning and research is demonstrated through different elements according to the level of studies (e.g. laboratory project or internship, seminars, etc.). 6. There exists optional modules enabling students to adapt their study programme to their personal professional project. The study programme recognises the engagement of student within the university or outside it. 7. Innovative pedagogical methods are used (for ex., project-based learning, serious games, active amphitheatres, use of IT technologies). 8. The awarding of ECTS credits is explained and comply with ECTS users' guide 2015. 9. The study program refers to specific jobs or professional activities.
<p><i>Teaching staff</i></p>	



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1. The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements;
2. The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes;
3. The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes;
4. Teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme;
5. The higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme;
6. The teaching staff of the programme is involved in research (art) directly related to the study programme being reviewed.
7. Recruitment of teaching staff is fair and transparent, taking into account the link between teaching and research.

1. The list of the teaching staff complete with information on each member's academic rank and scientific degree (if any); teaching experience; research interests; subjects taught; practical work experience in the area of the subjects taught;
2. Description of each member's activities;
3. Information on the teaching staff's involvement in applied research, projects and research (artistic) activities directly related to the study programme being evaluated;
4. Student/teacher ratio in the provision of the study programme;
5. Data on the teaching staff mobility (incoming/outgoing teaching staff ratio).
6. Recruitment procedure and requirements.
7. Courses for newly involved staff members have training on pedagogical skills.
8. Percentage of teaching staff working in HEI on full time basis.
9. The teaching staff is clearly identified and known to students in advance.
10. Data to prove compliance of the staff composition with legal requirements.
11. Data on the teaching staff turnover.
12. Data on the participation of the teaching staff in scientific conferences, workshops, exchange programmes, long-term visits, etc.
13. Methods of professional (educational, scientific, practical) development of the staff.
14. Professional development areas and statistics of participation.
15. Age profile of the academic staff.
16. Workload of the academic staff (in the provision of the programme under evaluation and other programmes; time allocated for research and/or other (professional) activities, etc.).



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Facilities and learning resources

1. The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality;
2. The teaching and learning equipment (laboratory and computer equipment, consumables) are adequate both in size and quality;
3. The higher education institution has adequate arrangements for students' practice;
4. Teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible.
5. Financing of the programme is appropriate

1. Data on the facilities used for the delivery of the programme and their capacity.
2. Data on the equipment used for the delivery of the programme.
3. Data on the facilities used for students' practice.
4. Data on the teaching/learning materials available at the institution's library, reading rooms and subject rooms; access to e-publications, etc.
5. Finance allocated for programme provision.
6. Information on the updating and upgrading of the learning resources.

Study process and students' performance assessment



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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme delivery ensures student-centered learning approach encouraging students to take an active role in creating the learning process. 2. The organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes; 3. Students are encouraged to participate in research, artistic and applied research activities; 4. Students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes; 5. The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available; 6. Professional activities of the majority of graduates meets the programme providers' expectations. 7. The study programme has a capacity to offer training to students with particular needs. 8. The study programme has taken into account the life-long learning training. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Average cut-off marks. 2. Student retention ratio. 3. Extent and forms of student participation in research, art and applied research activities. 4. Forms of student support including support for foreign students (academic (e.g. tutors, referent teacher etc.), financial (grants, stipends, etc.), social support (psychologist, sports, cultural events, dormitories, etc.)). Adequate guidance and support from teacher is ensured to encourage students to take active role in creating the learning process. 5. Criteria and methods for student performance assessment are in place and known by students in advance and applied fairly to all students. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback on their performance. 6. List of the master's final thesis for the past two years with the indication of the subject, supervisor and assessment of the project. 7. Ways in which different needs of students are taken in to account (e.g. adaptation of curricula to working students, adaptation of facilities to disabled students, full-time and part-time students, etc.). 8. Procedure of recognition of prior learning (incl. non-formal, informal learning) and number of cases. 9. The study programme offers the moments of learning in at least one foreign language (foreign language subject or a subject(s) which is taught in foreign language). 10. Data on admission to the study programme: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10.1. the number of applications for admission; 10.2. the number of admissions; 10.3. the highest and lowest admission marks;
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11. Data on the students' progress (examination marks) by linking this information to admission marks and attrition (drop-out) rates.
12. Data on drop-out rates (by each year).
13. Causes for drop-out.
14. Proportion of students' time allocated to contact hours, practice and independent work.
15. Number of students participating in mobility programmes (by indicating the number of outgoing and incoming exchange students pursuing studies under the programme).
16. Statistical data on students completing their studies and the need for specialists trained under the study programme (reference to the source of information on the need for specialists must be provided).
17. Data on the time needed for specialists fresh from a higher education institution to find permanent employment in the labour market.
18. Data on the employment of graduates who obtained qualifications under the evaluated study programme (employment (any) and employment according to the specialist qualifications) (including those who were in employment before leaving higher education) are public and available to students.
19. Methods and strategies applied to tackle the problem of plagiarism and cheating, intolerance of any kind of discrimination.
20. Opportunities for selecting optional subjects and/or modules according to need.
21. The delivery of the study program is based on various pedagogical methods (lectures, tutorial classes, project-based learning, etc.) taking into account needs and diversity of students.
22. Pedagogical methods and modes of delivery are regularly evaluated by students and lecturers.



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23. Information on the study program, modules and targeted competences are disseminated and discussed with students.

24. Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner.

Programme management



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1. Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated;
2. Information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed;
3. The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme;
4. The evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders;
5. The internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient.
6. Programme position in the study field among other similar programmes provided in the same and other HEI's.
7. The higher education institution ensures an adequate level of academic and social support;
8. HEI has procedure for dealing with student complaints and appeals.
9. The study programme has identified its partnerships with other institutions.

1. Programme management and decision-taking procedures (there is a council in charge to define the long-term orientations of the study program and to organize the internal assessment).
2. Ways (means) to ensure the quality of the programme.
3. Summary of the last evaluation of the programme (if any) (up to two pages; could be provided as an annex to the self-evaluation report) including level of implementation of experts' recommendations in previous evaluation.
4. Programme steering council including all stakeholders is in place and meets regularly.
5. Documents defining procedure for complaints and appeals.
6. Statistics on complaints and appeals, reasons and outcomes.
7. Partnership agreements with other institutions (external stakeholders of the program are clearly identified and regularly informed about the program life).
8. Justification on how the programme fits among the other programmes of the same study field provided by the higher education institution and other HEIs in the region.
9. Documents defining the responsibilities of the programme providers.
10. Opinion of the programme's administrative and teaching staff on the distribution of responsibilities.
11. Documents regulating internal quality assurance within the higher education institution (e.g. quality policy).
12. Data on information accumulation and analysis for the past 5 years. Where the programme has been provided for a shorter period than that, the report should present data on the entire period of its existence.
13. Data on the involvement of stakeholders in the process of programme evaluation and improvement and their impact on the improvement of the programme.



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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">14. Ways of making the process and outcomes of programme evaluation and improvement accessible to the institution's (faculty's) community and social partners and the impact of such publicity.15. Feedback from the teaching staff, alumni, employers and <i>especially students</i> on the provision of the programme (or subjects/modules).16. Sources of information on the quality of studies.17. Most important changes triggered by the latest evaluation outcomes.18. The diploma is accompanied by a supplement that specifies the learning outcomes acquired by the student.19. The information about the study program and its main objectives are public and available on the faculty / university website. |
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Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan
This project is funded by the European Union

Annex 3:

Guideline for self-assessing the competence-orientedness and student-centeredness of a study programme

1. The principles of a competence-based study programme

A competence-based approach is a pedagogic method centered on the learner instead on the content of the course or the study programme itself. It is an approach in which skills, knowledge and attitudes are specified in order to define, steer and help to achieve professional competence¹. Competence based education focuses on what you can achieve in the workplace after completing a course or a study programme study.

Definition of competences²

« Competences represent a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, and ethical values »

(Tuning definition)

Competence is « the ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development »

(ECTS Users' guide definition)

Fostering these competences is the object of all educational programmes. Competences are developed in all course units and assessed at different stages of a programme.

Some competences are subject-area related (specific to a field of study), others are generic (common to any degree course). It is normally the case that competence development proceeds in an integrated and cyclical manner throughout a programme

Competences define the applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform in professional and educational context. Targeted competences should be then clearly indicated in the course or study programme description.

The course description should also clearly indicate the **learning outcomes**. **Learning outcomes are a very specific statement that describes exactly what a student will be able to do in some measurable way. Learning outcomes represent the minimum performances that must be achieved to successfully complete a course or programme.** There may be more than one measurable outcome defined for a given competence.

¹ Deißinger T., Hellwig S. (2005), « Structures and Functions of Competence-based Education and Training (CBET): a Comparative Perspective », Beiträge aus der Praxis der beruflichen Bildung, Nr. 14, Ed. InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany

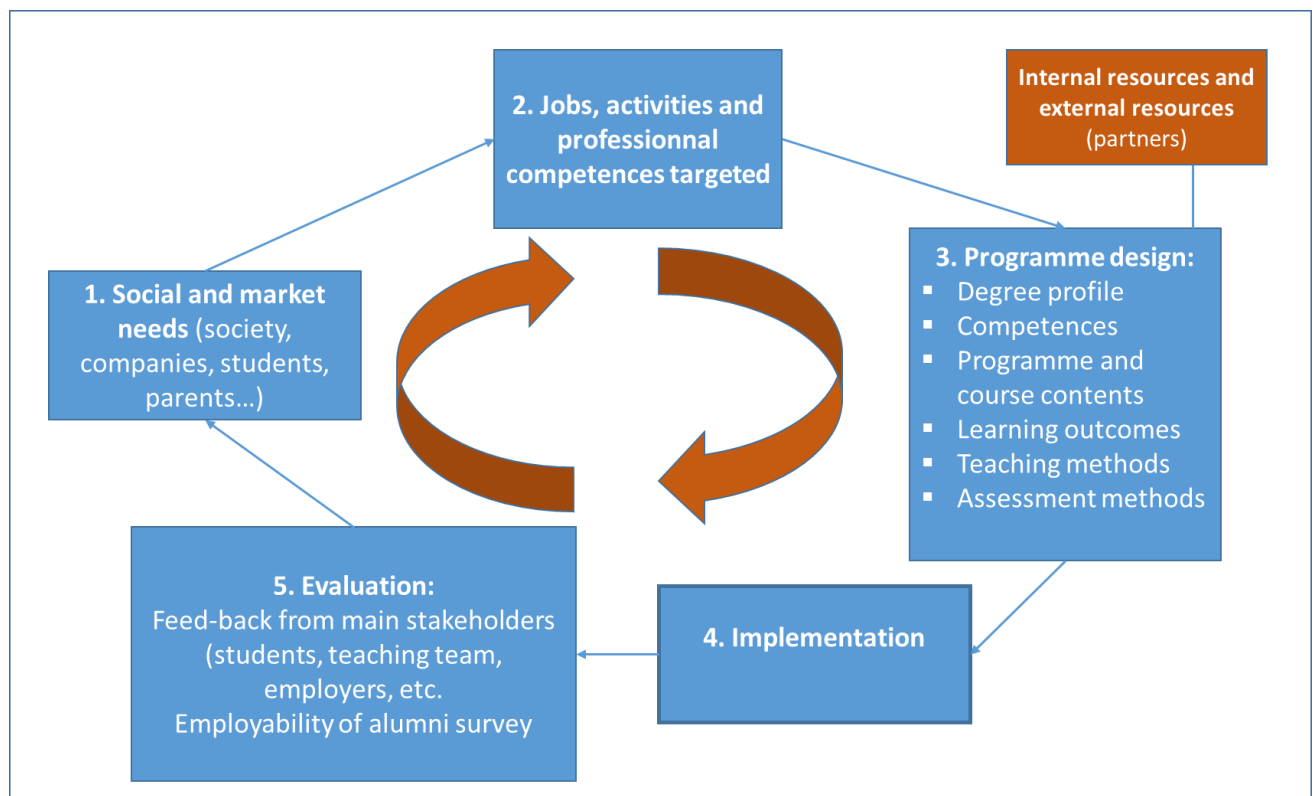
² Mission Report « Short-Term Mission on Activity 1.1. Improvement of concept and methodology for competence-based education standards (September 10 – 14, 2018) », Eliane Kotler & Asnate Kazoka

Competences-based approach invites to rethink the design of the study programmes, the pedagogical methods and the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Competence-based approach means:

- to be centered on the learner;
- to identify the main competences that the learner should have at the end of the learning process (a course or a programme): competences should be aligned with the market needs;
- to design the learning process and the learning content according to the competences targeted ;
- to use some pedagogical methods and tools in which learner has an active position (in order to develop skills and attitudes and not only knowledge) ;
- to use assessment approaches and methods that are adapted to the learning process.

2. Process of designing a competence-based study programme

The process for designing a competence study programme follows several stages starting from the social and job market needs. The study programme profile, content and structure should be aligned with the competences. The process may be different depending on whether we are creating a new programme or adapting an existing programme. On both case, the process should be tailored as a process of continuous improvement.



For each stage, several key points need to be addressed:

Stage	Keys points to be adressed
Social and market needs	What are the main trends on the social and market needs on a regional/national/European level, based on a consultation of stakeholders: employers, professionals and professional bodies? Is it a sustainable need?
Jobs and activities targeted	What are the exact jobs and professional activities targeted by the programme? Do this jobs covered by other study programmes delivered on a local/national level?
Internal and external resources	What are the resource required to meet the social and market needs: teaching capabilities, organisational capabilities, financial capabilities...? Do the university/faculty has these resources? Do the academic team has been involved in the process? What kind of external resources are required: expertise, internships, fundings...?
Study programme design	What are the degree profile (bachelor or master; scientific-oriented or professional-oriented) ? What are the jobs and professional activities targeted? What are the generic competences targeted in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities? What are the specific competences to be acquired that met the professional activities targeted? What are the structure of the study programme: learning process, ECTS design, etc. What are the content, the learning process, the learning outcomes, the teaching methods and the assessment methods of each module of the study programme?
Implementation	How the study programme is concretely delivered? How the teaching team is coordinated? How the students are informed and involved in the learning process? How the learning outcomes and the competences are assessed? How the stakeholders are involved in the study programme (faculty members, teachers, social and business stakeholders...)
Evaluation	An evaluation system has to be developed to enhance its quality constantly: is the learning process efficient in term of competence acquisition? Is the programme efficient in term of meeting the labour market needs? All the stakeholders (internal and external) should be involved in the evaluation process.

3. The quality of the design of a competence-based study programme

The above criteria could help to assess the quality of a competence-base study programme.

<p>Study programme criteria</p> <p>The study programme is recognised to meet competences that are aligned with the job market needs. The competences are defined in connection with external stakeholders: companies, business associations, union trades, etc.</p> <p>The study programme clearly indicate what are the competences that the students should have at the end of the learning process and how those competences will be acquired.</p>
<p>Course outcomes criteria</p> <p>The curriculum gives learners a clear indication of what is expected of them in terms of learning outcomes, performance, conditions and standard. Also, if appropriate, workplace and off-the-job training and assessment responsibilities should be identified.</p>
<p>Delivery criteria</p> <p>Delivery is flexible and students can exercise initiative in the learning process. Learning materials used by teachers indicate the degree to which programme delivery is student-centered.</p>
<p>Assessment criteria</p> <p>Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Measure performance demonstrated against a specified knowledge acquisition and competence standard;▪ Be available for knowledge and competences gained outside the course ; Include workplace or off-the-job components if appropriate.
<p>Reporting / Recording criteria</p> <p>Reports of knowledge and competences gained should be provided to students. Reporting may be in terms of completed modules provided that the relationship between competences and modules is understood.</p>
<p>Graduation criteria</p> <p>Students demonstrating all prescribed knowledge and competences in an accredited course or study programme should obtain a statement of achievement (credits or degrees) which is recognised by the university.</p>

Adapted from: Victorian State Training Board, 1992

4. Self-assessment of the competence-orientedness of a study programme

Self-assessment is not an end in itself. It is a way for the teaching team, the head of the study programme and the programme steering comity to improve the quality of the programme, that is to say:

- its external relevance: adequacy with the job market needs and with the expectations of the students;
- its internal relevance: the adequacy of the teaching methods and the implementation of the programme with the competences and the learning outcomes targeted by the study programme.

The checklist below represent a set of criteria in order to assess:

1. the degree of competence-orientedness of a study programme;
2. the degree of student-orientedness of a study programme;
3. the degree of pedagogical innovation in favour of the professionalization and the competence-orientedness of the study programme ;
4. the governance and the management that supports the programme towards a better competence-orientedness.

The grid is designed so that we can calculate a general score: by setting 0 or 1 to each of the criteria.

The different criteria do not refer to necessarily mandatory provision. In addition, not all criteria are relevant to all study programme. Beyond the score that can be calculated, each criterion must allow the steering comity and the teaching team, to think about the decisions to be taken in order to improve the relevance of the study programme positioning, structure, content and methods.

Self-assessment of the competence-orientedness and student-orientedness of a study programme

Criteria		Assessment (0 / 1)	Comments
1. Competence-orientedness of the study programme			
1	a survey of the job market needs and the competences required was carried out in order to design the programme		
2	the study programme refers to specific business sectors		
3	the study programme refers to specific jobs or professional activities		
4	the professional skills targeted by the programme are clearly established		
5	external professionals has been involved in the study programme design process		
6	the programme is formally supported by companies / organizations from targeted sectors		
7	the professional skills targeted by the programme are organized in homogeneous blocks		
8	the programme learning outcomes are clearly established		
9	the learning outcomes of each module of the study programme are clearly established		
10	the learning outcomes are aligned with the professional competences targeted		
11	the study programme objectives are aligned with the faculty / university strategy		
2. Student-centeredness of the study programme			
1	information on the study programme, modules and targeted competences are disseminated and discussed with students		
2	the student work time is taken into account in the general planning of the study programme		
3	adequate guidance and support from teacher is ensured to encourage students to take active role in creating the learning process		
4	the criteria for and method of assessment are published in advance, known to students and applied fairly to all students		
5	the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved		
6	where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner		
7	students are given feedback on their performance		
8	a formal procedure for student appeals is in place		
9	regular meetings are organized with students or their delegates around pedagogical issues		
10	delegates represent students to the Head of the programme Director or programme steering committee		
11	evaluation of the modules and study programme are carried out by the students		

Criteria		Assessment (0 / 1)	Comments
3. Implementation and method of delivering the study programme			
1	the delivery of the study programme is adapted to various kind of recipient (full time students, part time students, continuing education...)		
2	the delivery of the study programme is based on various pedagogical methods (lectures, tutorial classes, project-based learning...) taking into account needs and diversity of students		
3	the delivery of courses are based on ITC tools (e-learning, video, serious games...)		
4	the delivery of courses are based on innovative pedagogical methods (flipped classroom, case studies, active student-centered pedagogy...)		
5	the teaching team profile is aligned with the competence orientation and professional orientation of the study programme		
6	external professionals are involved in the study programme modules (when it is appropriate)		
7	the study programme provides for a mandatory practical internship for students		
8	events related to professional activities are organized during the programme (forum, conferences, company visits...)		
9	pedagogical methods and modes of delivery are regularly evaluated by students and lecturers		
4. Study programme governance and management			
1	a steering comity is in charge to define the long-term orientations of the study programme and to organise the internal assessment		
2	students representatives are involved in the study programme steering comity		
3	external professionals are involved in the study programme steering comity (when it is appropriate)		
4	an academic staff is in charge of the study programme, its functioning and the coordination of the teaching staff		
5	an administrative staff is in charge of the administrative life of the study programme		
6	the information about the study programme and its main objectives are public and available on the faculty / university website		
7	there is a document presenting the study programme, the pedagogical objectives, the competences and the jobs targeted		
8	there is a curriculum for each module of the programme with learning outcomes and their assessment		
9	external stakeholders of the programme are clearly identified (list is available)		
10	partner companies or institutions are involved in the programme life (classes, internship supervisor, thesis supervisor, jury members...)		
11	external stakeholders are regularly informed about the programme life		
12	a survey of alumni occupational integration is carried out every year		
13	a monitoring of sectors and competences related to study programme is carried out		
14	feed-back from the main stakeholders of the study programme (students, employers, business association...) is regularly collected		
15	the study programme content and structure are adapted taking into account feedback from stakeholders		
Score calculation		0	

Key strengths of the study programme

Key weaknesses of the study programme

Main objectives / décisions taken for the next accreditation period

Annex 1. TUNING fiche for the short presentation of a study programme of Bachelor of Sciences in Physics

This is a concrete but fictive example of how Tuning methodology can help formulating degree programme profiles; the template is complete, but it may be reduced³. **In any case, Tuning recommends that the presentation of a degree programme profile does not surpass 2 A4 pages.**

BACHELOR OF PHYSICS GENERAL STUDIES	
Type of degree & length	<i>Single degree / 240 ECTS (= 8 semesters)</i>
Institution	<i>Title of HEI: to be completed</i>
Accreditation. Organisations(s)	<i>Ministry of Education, Department of Accreditation and Nostrification</i>
Period of Reference	<i>The study programme is validated for x years starting from 2018</i>
	<i>QF for EHEA: 1st cycle; EQF level 6 NQF level: to be completed</i>
A	Purpose
	The purpose of this bachelor programme is to provide education in physics, by considering various types of jobs and careers. Prepare students with a special interest in specialty of Physics in pursuit of higher education areas.
B	Characteristics
1	Discipline(s)/ Subject areas The main discipline is general physics. The partition is: physics, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, other (50: 18: 8: 7: 17)=B. Physics@Uni. Strasbourg
2	General/ Specialist Focus General education in experimental and theoretical physics.
3	Orientation Based on previous research and exposed to current research but with specializations considering opportunities specific to job / career: (subjects of theoretical physics and applied physics) physics, biophysics, medical physics, informatics.
4	Distinctive Features
C	Employability and further Education
	Employability Positions in companies / businesses and institutions (research / quality assurance, trade) in the areas of technology and Informatics, biomedical and pharmaceutical, the sector of the environment. Positions in financial institutions. Positions in education.
	Further Education Master's programmes in Physics (theoretical physics, applied physics), interdisciplinary programmes related to Physics (Biophysics, medical physics, geophysics), master's programmes in engineering / physics technology or computer science.

³ From Tuning, *A guide to formulating degree programme profiles*, Bilbao, Groningen and the Hague, 2010, p. 80-82.

D		Educational style
	Learning/ teaching approaches	Lectures, classes of lab, tutorials, individual study based on text books and reading notes, individual consultations with teachers, internship in a research lab on a given topic.
	Assessment method	Written tests, oral tests, lab reports, oral presentations, ongoing evaluation, public presentation and defence of the internship project
E		Programme competences
1	GENERIC	<p>The programme includes the generic competences (or key skills) expected of first cycle graduates. The students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish their role and mission within an organization to adapt and take initiatives. Identify the process of production, dissemination and enhancement of knowledge. Respect the principles of ethics, ethical and environmental responsibility. Working as part of a team while being independent and responsible with respect to a project. Identify the professional fields potentially in relation to the achievements of the bachelor curriculum. Characterize and enhance their identity, their skills and their professional project according to a context. Able to step back from a situation, self-evaluate and questioning himself in order to improve knowledge <p><i>Transverse and language competences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use digital tools of reference and the rules of computer security to acquire, process, produce and disseminate information as well as to collaborate internally and externally. Identify and select various specialized resources to document a subject. Analyse and summarize data for their treatment. Develop an argument with critical mind. Use easily the different registers of written and oral Azeri expression. Understand, speak and write currently in at least one foreign language.
2	SUBJECT SPECIFIC	<p>Within the context of the student's field of professional practice, the graduate is able to demonstrate capability in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize the basic concepts in order to: simulate, analyse and solve simple problems Address a complex problem and solve it step by step Identify the different steps of an experimental approach and perform it. Use the measurement devices and measurement techniques commonly used in the lab and in different areas of physics. Interpret the experimental data in order to be able to simulate them. Probe a model upon comparing its predictions to experimental results and assess its validity range. Identify the sources of errors for an experimental result in order to assess its uncertainty range. Suggest analogies, estimate orders of magnitude, and be able to understand their meaning. Use the main mathematical tools relevant for physics. Handle the basic mechanisms at the microscopic scale, simulate the macroscopic phenomena, and make the bridge between macro and micro. Make a sound use of some data acquisition and analysis software Use an up-to-date programming language Identify the currently used techniques in the areas of: fluid mechanics and solid state mechanics, materials science, chemistry, geosciences, thermodynamics and thermal

	<p>engineering, computer sciences, astronomy / Note: this should be related to each HEIs specific fields, e.g. excellence fields</p> <p>Identify the peculiar regulations and implement the main preventive measures regarding health and safety system.</p>
F	Programme learning outcomes
	<p>Within the context of the student's field of professional practice, the graduate is able to demonstrate capability in:</p> <p>Knowledge of basic mathematics and related subjects (including mathematical methods for physics; computing; numerical analysis)</p> <p>Knowledge of basic physics (introduction to physics; mechanics, vibrations and waves, acoustics, optics, thermodynamics, electromagnetism; quantum physics)</p> <p>Knowledge of experimental methods (asking the right questions, measurement theory and treatment of experimental errors, instrumentation) and awareness about professional integrity and how to avoid plagiarism</p> <p>Knowledge of basic elements in theoretical physics (analytical mechanics; classical electromagnetism, relativity, etc.; quantum mechanics / theory; statistical physics)</p> <p>Knowledge of elements of applied physics and related subjects (chemistry; electronics & related; etc.)</p> <p>Knowledge of basic elements in modern physics (atomic, nuclear and sub-nuclear, solid state, astrophysics)</p> <p>Small intermediate or final physics project(s)</p> <p>Other essential elements, in varying amount depending on the institution (e.g. Knowledge of topics «chosen from list(s)D; presenting a lab report, taking active part in a seminar)</p> <p>Some knowledge/abilities in non-standard subjects, in varying amount depending on the institution (e.g. vocational training, skills development, placement, etc.)</p>

Annex 2. How to write a Learner-Centered course description ⁴

The learner-centered course syllabus presents the course from the learner's perspective and stresses learning knowledge, skills and attitudes to obtain the competencies requested in the jobs and professional activities targeted by the study programme.

The learner-centered course syllabus provides for the student answers to these questions:

- What will the student learn and be able to do by the end of the course?
- Why should the student learn this material?
- How does the course material promote the student obtaining the competencies to become a professional?
- How does this course relate to other courses the student is taking?
- How does the student succeed in the course?

The learner-centered syllabus will be customized for each course, but it will basically have these components:

- 1. Title Page**
- 2. Table of Contents**
- 3. Contact Information**
- 4. Course Description**
 41. Importance
 42. Link to profesional competences
 43. Learning outcomes
 44. Format
 45. Prerequisites
- 5. Roles and Responsibilities for Learning**
- 6. Schedule**
- 7. Course Content**
- 8. Assignments**
- 9. Tips for Learning**
- 10. Assessment**
- 11. Student Evaluations**
- 12. Learning Resources**

⁴ Document based on « Focusing Your Course Syllabus on the Learner », Faculty Development Program, Office of Medical Education, Boston University School of Medicine, 2005

1. Title Page: *What is the name and date for the course? Who is the Course manager(s) and how do I contact him/her?*

The title page identifies the “Syllabus” with:

- The name of the course
- The date (e.g., Fall 2019)
- Course manager(s) name and contact information

2. Table of Contents: *How do I find information about this course?*

A Table of Contents assists the student in navigating and accessing the course information as needed.

3. Contact Information: *Who can give me course information not contained in the syllabus?*

Contact information is very important to the student because it tells the students where to get answers to their questions not provided in the syllabus.

Contact information also includes a listing for the Lecturers, Facilitators or Resource People with a description of their areas of expertise. If applicable, give the name and location of the course website as a source of information.

List this contact information for the Course Manager(s) and Administrative Support: Name and title, Department, Office location and hours, Preferred contact number (phone number & email)

4. Course Description:

A course Learning Objective is a clear, concise and specific statement of observable student behaviors that can be evaluated at the conclusion of the learning activities and contributes to reaching the course goal. It is important to differentiate a course goal and instructional objective from a learning objective. A course goal is a broad statement of learning outcomes. A course objective or instructional objective is a specific statement of teacher-centered performance, whereas a learning objective or performance objective is a specific statement of learner-centered performance.

Where applicable, use higher-level thinking objectives that require students to apply, analyse synthesize and evaluate information.

41. Importance: *Why am I taking this course?*

The purpose of this section is to tell the student the value of the course in the “big picture” of the curriculum. How does the course relate to other courses taken in the same semester and how does the course fit into the rest of the curriculum?

42. Links to professional competencies: *How does this course contribute to my progression toward attaining competences in the professional fields?*

The purpose is to indicate to the student the generic competences (knowledge, skills, abilities...) and the specific competences (related to some professional activities and fields) targeted by this courses

43. Learning outcomes: *What do I need to know and / or to do in order to succeed in this course?*

A course learning outcomes is a clear, concise and specific statement of observable student behaviours that can be evaluated at the conclusion of the learning activities and contributes to reaching the course goal. It is important to differentiate a course goal and instructional objective from learning outcomes. A course goal is a broad statement of learning outcomes. A course objective or instructional objective is a specific statement of teacher-centered performance, whereas a learning objective or performance objective is a specific statement of learner-centered performance.

44. Format: *How is the course structured?*

A curriculum designed to support student learning expands from the lecture format to include small group discussions, problem based learning, case studies learning, simulated exercises, team based learning, serious games, off campus sites, etc. Various kinds of pedagogical methods and tools can be used in order to reach the objectives of learning.

It is also important to provide the amount of expected contact hours in the various learning formats so that the student can schedule their learning time.

45. Prerequisites: *What do I need to know and do before I start this course?*

This section describes what prior knowledge and skills are necessary to be successful in the course. In addition, the importance of the prerequisite knowledge and skills is explained. If they do not have the prerequisites, the student should be directed to learning resources where they can acquire this knowledge or skills.

5. Roles and responsibilities in learning: *What can I expect of myself and the faculty in this course?*

The syllabus defines the role of the student in learning and gives examples. Depending upon the type of course, the student will be required to: ask questions, challenge ideas, attend all sessions, participate actively in small group discussions, reference web pages, complete self-directed study, behave professionally, etc.

In addition, the syllabus states the teacher's role in the course such as: teaching, content expert, facilitator, advisor, resource, etc.

6. Schedule: *When and where will the course meet and what will I learn each time?*

The course schedule gives the topics, meeting times, dates, class location, facilitator, assignment due dates and testing dates and location. Also, it states what to do if the time/location changes.

7. Course Content: *What will I learn and need to study in this course?*

The information listed in this section will vary depending upon the nature of the course and the nature of the pedagogical methods adopted. It should contain information like:

- Unit/topic with the learning objectives for that course material
- Course content outline or summary
- Reading references
- Study questions

8. Assignments: *What am I expected to do outside of class?*

Reading assignments are usually done outside of class, but it important to expand the assignments to inquiry-based and/or evidence-based activity. Such activities would be done individually or in small groups and involve: posing questions, searching for evidence from multiple sources, defending conclusions, reviewing and critiquing research, literature, etc.

9. Tips for Learning: *What are the best ways to learn for this course?*

In this section, the teacher can provide different suggestions for learning that has been successful for other students: completing assignments, study tips outside of class, small group interaction, time management, preparation for assessment, etc. The course manager can also include study questions,

sample tests, a learning style inventory to help student diagnose their study strategies, and resources that will help.

10. Assessment: *How will I monitor my learning during the course, what is the final exam, and how is the final grade determined?*

A competency-based curriculum uses criterion-referenced testing and grading. Students are assessed their work against pre-determined criteria and standards for excellence. This compares to normreferenced testing where a student's achievement is compared to others in the class. If a student evaluation form is used, display it in this section so the students know how they will be assessed.

11. Student Evaluations: *What course improvements have been made as a result of previous student evaluations? What and when will student evaluations be expected?*

This section of the syllabus shows the course improvements already made for the students and identifies why they were made. By relating these improvements to student evaluations, the course manager documents responsiveness to student feedback. This would be a good place to include a copy of the course student evaluation.

13. Learning Resources: *What resources will help me learn in this course?*

The last component of the syllabus provides different kinds of sources to learn to supplement course materials. Resources can include: Web pages, Journal articles, Reference lists, Learning or media centers, Study questions or cases, Experts (librarians, faculty, alumni), etc.

Annex 3. Principles Underlying Student Centered Learning (SCL)

Source: Time for a new paradigm in education: student Centered Learning
Student-Centered Learning SCL Toolkit - The European Students' Union

Full document can be downloaded here:

<https://www.esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/100814-SCL.pdf>

Student-Centered Learning represents both a mindset and a culture within a given higher education institution and is a learning approach which is broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. It is characterised by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking.

SCL approach includes:

- Flexibility and freedom in terms of the time and structure of learning;
- More and better quality teachers who strive to share their knowledge;
- A clear understanding of students by teachers;
- A flat hierarchy within higher education institutions;
- Teacher responsibility for student empowerment;
- A continuous ongoing improvement process;
- A positive attitude by teachers and students with the aim of improving the learning experience;
- A relationship of mutual assertiveness between students and teachers; and
- A focus on learning outcomes which enable genuine learning and deep understanding.

The general principles underlying SCL are:

Principle I: SCL requires an Ongoing Reflexive Process.

Part of the underlying philosophy of SCL is that no one context can have one SCL style that can remain applicable through time. The philosophy of SCL is such that teachers, students and institutions need to continuously reflect of their teaching, learning and infrastructural systems in such a way that would continuously improve the learning experience of students and ensure that the intended learning outcomes of a given course or programme component are achieved in a way that stimulates learners' critical thinking and transferable skills.

Principle II: SCL does not have a « One-Size-Fits-All » Solution.

A key concept underlying SCL is the realisation that all higher education institutions are different, all teachers are different and all students are different. These all operate in very diverse contexts and deal with various subject-disciplines. Therefore SCL is a learning approach that requires learning support structures which are appropriate to each given context and teaching and learning styles appropriate to those undertaking them.

Principle III: Students have Different Learning Styles.

SCL recognises that students have different pedagogical needs. Some learn better through trial and error, others learn through practical experience. For some learners much is learned by reading literature, others need to debate and discuss theory in order to understand it.

Principle IV: Students have Different Needs and Interests.

All students have needs that extend beyond the classroom. Some are interested in cultural activities, others in sports or in representative organisations. Students can have children or can be faced with psychological conditions, illness or disability.

Principle V: Choice is Central to Effective Learning in SCL.

Students like to learn different things and hence any offer should involve a reasonable amount of choice. Learning can be organised in liberal formats, such as at colleges of liberal arts or choice can be offered in a more traditional, disciplinary style.

Principle VI: Students have Different Experiences and Background Knowledge.

Learning needs to be adapted to the life and professional experience of the individual concerned. For instance, if students already have considerable experience in using it, there is no point in trying to teach them the same thing again; if they already have considerable research skills, perhaps it would be better to help them in theory. Personal experience can also be used to motivate students, for instance, by allowing students to share a personal story to illustrate a point.

Principle VII: Students should have Control Over their Learning.

Students should be given the opportunity to be involved in the design of courses, curricula and their evaluation. Students should be seen as active partners who have a stake in the way that higher education functions. The best way to ensure that learning focuses more on students is by engaging students themselves in how their learning should be shaped.

Principle VIII: SCL is about Enabling « not » Telling.

In simply imparting facts and knowledge to students (telling) the initiative, preparation and content comes mainly from the teacher. The SCL approach aims to give the student greater responsibility enabling the student to think, process, analyse, synthesise, criticise, apply, solve problems, etc.

Principle IX: Learning needs Cooperation between Students and Staff. It is important that students and staff cooperate to develop a shared understanding both of the problems experienced in learning, as well as their problems as stakeholders within their given institution, jointly proposing solutions that might work for both groups. In the classroom, such cooperation will have a positive effect as the two groups increasingly come to consider each other as partners. Such a partnership is central to the philosophy of SCL which sees learning as taking place in a constructive interaction between the two groups.