

# Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan



Twinning project ENI/2018/395-401

## Mission Report

**Short-Term Mission on Activity 3.2 Undertake capacity building activities for relevant stakeholders (Education Quality Assurance Agency) to enhance their accreditation-related capacities**

**(June 15, 17, 18 June 2020)**

**1. Name and Function of the Expert:**

Full name of expert

**Ms. Jolita Butkiene, Lithuania**



Signature

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 3.2 Undertake capacity building activities for relevant stakeholders to enhance their accreditation-related capacities

Benchmarks for this activity are:

- Evaluation criteria for study programme accreditation is finalized.

3. Time schedule of mission:

Date and Time	Activity
Monday 15 June 2020	<p><b>Deskwork.</b> STE works on relevant documents sent by the Accreditation and Licensing Department of Education Quality Assurance Agency.</p>
Wednesday – 17 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b></p> <p>Online Zoom meeting with staff of Accreditation and Licensing Department of newly established Education Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Participants:  <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova</i>, Head of Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA  <i>Ms. Nisa Idrisova</i>, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA  <i>Mr. Asiman Ilyasov</i>, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA  <i>Mr. Javid Ibadov</i>, Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA</p>
Thursday – 18 June 2020	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b></p> <p>Online meeting with staff of Accreditation and Licensing Department of newly established Education Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Participants:  <i>Ms. Lala Abbasova</i>, Head of Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA  <i>Ms. Nisa Idrisova</i>, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA  <i>Mr. Asiman Ilyasov</i>, Senior Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA  <i>Mr. Javid Ibadov</i>, Advisor at Accreditation and Licensing Department, EQAA</p>

#### **4. Relevant Background Information/State of Affairs regarding the mission**

The recently created and restructured Education Quality Assurance Agency has asked for providing additional EU expertise to learn best EU practices in the field of quality assurance. The aim of this mission was to help Accreditation and Licensing Department of the Agency to finalize the evaluation criteria for study programme accreditation.

The suggestions for the final evaluation criteria for study programmes evaluation were based on the examination of the experts' programme evaluation reports and their suggestions regarding the evaluation criteria, current legal documents regulating study programmes in Azerbaijan, discussions with Quality Assurance Agency, also taking into account European experience and ESG.

#### **5. Achievement of the Expected Results**

*Planned action was achieved, the list of the suggestions to amend evaluation criteria and indicators provided.*

#### **6. Unexpected Results**

*State if any unexpected results were identified during the mission. Add any relevant comments.  
Not applicable.*

#### **7. Issues Left Open After the Mission**

*State if any issues were left open. Add any relevant comments.  
Not applicable.*

#### **8. Recommendations (including recommendation for future missions).**

These recommendations relate either to the criteria or the indicators related to the programme evaluation.

1. Evaluation criteria and indicators should take into account the current situation in higher education, current legal documents regulating studies in Azerbaijan.
2. The first area of evaluation Programme aims and learning outcomes should be changed into the Programme aims and competences as higher education institutions are guided by the State Standards in the delivery of the study programmes.
3. Higher education institutions are not in the position to develop learning outcomes on the programme level, however they should be able to demonstrate how course/module level learning outcomes contribute to the development of Programme level competences.

4. A mapping table should be provided to demonstrate how this alignment has been achieved.
5. The Programme should also demonstrate that different aspects of the Programme contribute to the achievement of the HEI's strategic priorities (e.g., internationalization, modernization, innovation, fulfilling the needs of the business, society, state, etc.).
6. The programme should also demonstrate that they have examined educational market of similar programmes and identified advantages of their programme (e.g. opportunities for staff and student mobility, close relationship with the professional world, invited international staff, employment of their graduates, etc.). Also to define the field of their programme, explain how the programme is different from the same field similar programmes provided by the institution.
7. In the curriculum design area, it is important to include the following criteria and indicators
  - The curriculum design meets legal requirements – the evidence that the number of ECTS for the compulsory, elective subjects, internship, final attestation corresponds to the state requirements. ECTS is allocated in line with the ECTS manual(2015).
  - Theory and practice are systematically interrelated throughout the curriculum: the programme plan and course/module descriptions should demonstrate how the learning outcomes are divided between knowledge and application, and how hours within the course are split between the theory and practice (e.g. laboratory work, projects, group-work, presentations, case studies, etc.).
  - The HEI should demonstrate that internship/practice is appropriate for the achievement of programme level competences by providing course module description with the clearly described learning outcomes and assessment methods.
8. The teaching staff area should include, among other criteria, requirement to have staff whose research is affiliated with the institution/programme under the review.
9. Facilities and learning resources part might include indicators related to:
  - Data on the agreements with organizations/companies for student practice.
  - Information on the updating and upgrading of the learning resources over the reporting period.
  - Information on library working hours.
  - Data on the programme financing: state financed places, tuition, research, business support, alumni support, other.
10. Study process area might include such criteria as:
  - Information on the course/module LO, teaching and assessment methods are disseminated and discussed with students.
  - Assessment criteria for students' performance assessment are in place, are known by students in advance and are applied fairly to all students.
  - Demonstration of the appropriate range of assessment methods, e.g. individual examinations, course work, group assignments, projects, presentations to make sure module/course learning outcomes are achieved.
  - Students are given a regular feedback on their performance.

11. In the Programme management and quality assurance area inclusion of the following indicators might be considered:

- Programme management and decision-taking procedures are defined and documented (e.g., there is a council in charge to define the long-term orientation of the study program and to organize internal evaluation).
- Programme steering council (or any other body) includes all relevant stakeholders is in place and meets regularly.
- Sources of information on the quality of studies.
- Feedback from the teaching staff, alumni, employers and *especially students* on the provision of the programme (or subjects/modules).
- Data on the involvement of stakeholders in the process of programme evaluation and improvement and their impact.
- Changes in the Programme related to the results of internal and external evaluations.
- Ways of making programme evaluation results and improvement plans are accessible to the institution's community and social partners.
- The program has procedure for dealing with student complaints and appeals.

12. It is also not recommended to assign points to each sub-area but rather to evaluate the whole area.

#### **9. Acknowledgments (if any)**

I would like to exchange my appreciation to everyone, who supported the work of the experts throughout the whole project.

#### **Annexes**