



IQAT



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quality assurance systems and typology using
Bologna process principles
(IQAT)**

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Institutional case study

**Samarkand Agricultural Institute
(SamAI)**

Partner number: 10
Samarkand, Uzbekistan



IQAT



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Samarkand Agricultural Institute

Institutional case study
(September, 2016)

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Introduction

The institutional study is divided into three main parts. The first part is mostly descriptive and represents basic information about given higher education institution from Uzbekistan. Information are presented in the structure which is relevant to the topic of project IQAT, i.e. a significant part is focused on activities, rules and regulations connected with quality assurance issue. Descriptive part of the study is needed as informational and contextual base in which quality assurance takes place. The second part of the study deals with typology U-Map. This typology or classification is used as a tool which allows identifying the institutional profile (for more see xx page). The third, last part is focused exactly on institutional quality assurance elements or systems and its relation to European Standards Guidelines of Quality Assurance (revised version 2015).

Presented institutional case study has limitations which result from the fact of relatively low availability and accessibility of data from Uzbek HEIs. Presented text is based mainly on three types of sources. The first kind of sources are texts from official institutional webpage, institutional presentation from the project IQAT kick-off seminar and some other available national (i.e. Uzbek) documents such as laws, national regulations, etc.. Official websites are in three language versions – Uzbek, Russian and English nevertheless an English version is shorter and from the perspective of language translation not very reliable. The Russian version is richer but it is not the same as Uzbek version. As conclusion the information from different language versions varies in some extent and must be verified carefully and repeatedly. Other used important texts (National Uzbek Study for World Bank and study within Global partnership for education project) are focused not on institutional level but on national level (<http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/central-asia/Uzbekistan-Higher-Education-Report-2014-en.pdf> and <http://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2013-09-Uzbekistan-Education-Sector-Plan-2013-2017.pdf>).

Authors have to take into account a general problem of translation from Uzbek to English (not only for the authors of case study but for the official translation of web page where are used different names for same things) and also cultural differences between Uzbek HE system and European one.

The second way of collecting data and information for case study was individual questionnaire. The questionnaire had three parts: quantitative data about students, graduates, employees, budget; national qualitative part (same for all three Uzbek HEIs) and individually prepared qualitative part which was focused for problematic (not available or not clear) information about HEI.

The last source of data is personal discussions (focus groups).

1) Brief history

Samarkand Agricultural Institute was founded by the decree of Uzbek government (government of Uzbek Socialistic Republic which was a part of Soviet Union) as the first agricultural HEI in Uzbekistan in 1929. It is a university type of higher educational organization under auspice Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and Ministry of Agriculture and Water resources.

Currently, it is one of the largest agricultural higher education institutions in Central Asia. The Institute has five¹ faculties which are focused on education of broad spectrum of agricultural sciences and other complementary streams such are economics and training of teachers. Institute has bachelor and master degree programs. There are together 17 BA degree programs and 12 master programs

According to institutional presentation (available at Capsa/Project IQAT/Events/ Kick-off seminar) there are currently about 5 000 students and more than 350 academic employees. The institute has also a strong research part within agriculture and veterinary.

2) Structure of HEI (faculties, departments)

The institute is divided into five faculties (“fakulteti” in Uzbek language) and each faculty has several departments (“kafedrası”).

Faculty of agronomy has 5 departments: Department of agriculture and amelioration; Department of chemistry, soil science and plant protection, Department of genetics, selection and seed technology; Department of fruit farming and wine growing; only Department of sport is not directly connected with the focus of faculty.

¹ On official web pages there are two different numbers: In English version there is only four faculties. In Russian or Uzbek languages there are five faculties. We follow the original information, i.e. 5 faculties.

Faculty of Management in agriculture has together three departments: Department of economy and management of farming; Department of accounting and audit and Department of mathematics and IT.

Faculty of veterinary medicine, there are: Department of anatomy, physiology, surgery and pharmacology; Department of shepherding and technology of animal feeding, Department of diseases and parasitology; Department of Pasture farming and animal waste technology and Department of Uzbek language and foreign languages, Department of humanities and Department of pedagogy, psychology and teaching methods which are not connected with veterinary but has more general focus.

Faculty of agricultural engineering and food processing (Department of Agricultural production, storage and processing, Department of biological safety, Department of physics and chemistry, Department of agricultural machines)

Faculty of Zoo engineering and Karakul sheep breeding, three departments: Department of zootechnics, animal's genetics and breeding, Department of beekeeping and fish farming and Department of animal hygiene).

Other organizational parts of institute are units or centers (“bo’limi” and “markaz”):

- Educational-methodical centre (which is responsible for organization of teaching and methodic management according to state educational standards)
- Monitoring and internal control centre (for more see part 11 Quality assurance)
- Information centre
- Informational technologic centre
- Human resources centre
- Staff training and re-training centre
- Marketing centre
- Centre for cooperation with academic lyceums and vocational schools (it ensures cooperation between HEIs and secondary education institutions such are 2 academic lyceums and 30 agricultural vocational colleges and other educational institutions in and out of the region. The aim of this cooperation is to increase quality of teaching via new information technologies, to support scientific research of teachers, to share equipment of laboratories, etc., to provide new textbooks, to mediate contacts between graduates and possible employers)

- Master study centre
- Centre for scientific and pedagogic training
- Centre for work with young and talented students

3) Students', graduates and staff's numbers and other basic figures

Statistics on students, graduates and academic employees are not publicly available. Some partial statistic information is available at web pages of Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education – only in Uzbek languages. Most of presented data are from institutional questionnaires.

The academic year 2014/2015

| | Number of students | BA students | MA students | PhD. students |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Students | 5023 | 4888 | 119 | 16 |
| Graduates | 1156 | 1090 | 57 | 9 |

Source: Questionnaire for SAI

Size of student's body is more than 5 000 and university employs 367 employees. Bachelor students prevail dominantly among all students (almost 95 %). According to questionnaire SAI does not provide distant study programs.

Female students represent roughly one quarter of student population at SAI.

According to institutional questionnaire, for admission procedure and requirement for enrolment is fully responsible the Cabinet of Ministers and the State Testing Centre is main organizer, prepares testing and developing testing materials: *"Uzbekistan is in the group of 10 countries using a modern testing system based on multiple choices. The tests are held on 1 August throughout the country for all types of HEIs. The tests require from the applicants a deep knowledge and understanding of subjects, clear logic and other relevant skills.*

There is no procedure for those who pass the test with top marks to choose a particular university or institute: they are admitted to the HEI to which their application was submitted. The Universities decide whom they want to admit through the definition of minimum and maximum total scores in the test. If a student cannot get a state grant, in most cases the contract fee is paid by parents, companies or organizations. It should be emphasized that applicants with lower scores may enroll on a contract-paid basis, but the number of contract-

paid student places is limited by the quotas for entrance to HEIs determined by the Cabinet of Ministers.

The following priority areas of the Uzbek economy are particularly taken into consideration when defining the quotas in the state order for future specialists:

- Agro-industrial complex*
- Energy sector*
- Telecommunications*
- Chemical industry*
- Food industry*

Admission to Master programmes follows a similar procedure: there are state budget funded students (awarded to those with the highest scores) and quotas for contract-based students. Applicants to Master programmes have to take written examinations (held once a year in the period 1-15 August) in a relevant specific subject which depends on the area of specialization and a compulsory examination entitled Basics of the Theory and Practice of the Construction of a Democratic Society.

The holders of Presidential and other governmental personal scholarships are admitted to Master programmes on a state-budget basis without any entrance exams.”(cited from questionnaire).

The drop out of students in Uzbekistan is relatively low and concretely, at SAI, 87 % of students successfully finish their studies.

4) Management, leading bodies, role of students, relation university vs. faculty

On the level of whole institution there is a rector (currently OSTONAQULOV TOSHEMIR ESHIMOVICH) as the main leading body of HEI. The role of rector is specified by Law of Education and a rector is appointed at the discretion by the Cabinet of ministers while Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education nominates candidate(s).

Generally (i.e. for all HEIs in Uzbekistan), a rector is fully responsible for results of work of the higher educational institution. His/Her role is given by the legislation of Republic Uzbekistan and he/she acts on behalf of the higher educational institution. According to Law of Education rector is a representative body of HEI in many areas: issues of property, staff and financial affairs (e.g. charges or surcharges for teachers), concluding of agreements,

internal orders and regulations within HEI: *“Each higher education institution is headed by the Rector, who is appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers. The Rector is responsible for ensuring that teaching processes are in accordance with the State Educational Standards and also for the supervision and methodological guidance of academic lyceums or professional colleges established within the HEI.”* (Cited from institutional questionnaire)

A rector has the right to define concrete competencies of vice-rectors. He has currently 5 vice-rectors and this structure seems to be usual as in other Uzbek HEIs:

the first vice-rector for study issues;

the vice-rector for research;

the vice-rector for spiritual-educational work: *“One of the Vice-rectors (manaviyat va marifat) is responsible for social and cultural issues, for external affairs and relations with parents, student and youth organizations, sponsors, public structures and local communities (makhalla). She/he manages the organization of social events, fairs, sport competitions, contents and exhibitions of talented students and, in general, the promotion of a good education for the younger generation based on our national, cultural and historical traditions, as well as virtues common to all mankind.”* (cited from institutional questionnaire);

the vice-rector for work with academic lyceums and vocational schools: In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of higher and secondary specialized education emphasizes close cooperation between Higher educational institutions, vocational colleges and lyceums and the position of vice-rector for these issues is one of the visible result. Nevertheless SAI does not provide concrete data on lyceums and vocational schools they have cooperate with the vice-rector for financial and economic issues.

Rector has also a competency to open and to close faculties and to assign faculty’s deans (respectively vice-deans). Dean is usually selected among doctors, professors and associate professors or candidates of science by the rector of HEI in accordance with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education. His/her term is 5 years. Position of dean and faculty seems to be different in comparison with European situation, because faculties are not dealing with high level of autonomy.

The Academic Council is the highest elected body and consists of the rector, representatives of the faculties, members of the Board of directors, and representatives of other HEI bodies

(Students' council, Labour Union, Women association, etc.). Decisions of the Academic council come into force only after they have been approved by rector.

Board of trustees is an advisory body² and generally comprises representatives of local government, enterprises, finance and public and professional associations.

SAI Board of trustees has together 30 members, who are representatives of region and its institutions (e.g. Veterinary office, director of ZOO, etc.), government, individual people from business sphere and from agriculture (farming, planting).

“There are two bodies within each HEI, the Academic Council and the Board of Trustees, which are responsible for key operational issues and ensure the quality of education. The Board of Trustees is an advisory body to the HEI (regardless of its type of ownership) and comprises representatives of local government, enterprises, finance and science, the mass media, public organizations and professional associations. The Board of Trustees operates on the basis of the legislation and the University Charter. Different faculties and departments, training and research laboratories are established according to the fields of education and types of training provided by the particular HEI.” (cited from institutional questionnaire)

The management structure of a HEI depends on several indicators, such as the: number of teaching staff, students, state budget and off-budget funds. Each HEI receives and manages revenues generated from commercial operations according to regulations defined in the University Charter. The Statute of the University (Ustav) is a document which defines the main objectives, activities and tasks of the university. It includes the part on general provisions and part on main goals and functions which give quite important view on the “mission” of the SamAI (which is not formulated in the separate documents) and the part on other issues.

The role of student's council plays in Uzbekistan organization “Kamolot”. Responsibilities of Kamolot are defined very broadly and they are not focused exclusively on university students. The objectives are rather connected with development and support of national identity as general: *“to unite the youth of our country in order to build free and prosperous Uzbekistan; to assist in rendering the youth that is physically healthy, spiritually mature, with thoughtful and independent-minded outlook, with good command of the principles of market economy, adherent of the democratic principles based on national and universal*

² Generally, there is only possibility to establish Board of Trustees but no obligation of HEIs to do it.

values ; to provide conditions for growing generation to take part in a wide range of long-term socio-economic, cultural and educational processes honoring human rights and values as well as enhancing dignity, image and prestige of our nation.

In order to increase the level of knowledge and talent of youth, activities in the following directions are being carried out:

- The spiritual and educational work;
- Organization and direction of information and analysis;
- Socio-economic;
- Military service completion;
- Legal literacy, sports, health, culture and environmental aspects.

Concretely, “Kamolot” should protect the rights of students within higher education institution and “to know about their suggestions and wishes of the study, to support the first step in the independent life and to create a significant leisure time.”(cited from institutional questionnaire).

Scheme 1: Organizational structure of SAI (in Russian language)



5) Implementation of the Bologna process reforms (structure of studies, ECTS, diploma supplement, ISCED,...)

The Uzbekistan as a country is not a member of Bologna process and, there is no specific mechanism for supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process apart from the Tempus Higher Education Reform Experts, who disseminate information on Bologna to HEIs and Ministries (year 2011). (According to State of the Play of Bologna process in the Tempus partner countries, 2012). So, different structure of studies and credit system and diploma supplement are used comparing to European countries. All these components are under supervision of governmental regulations and laws. The main responsible body is Ministry of higher and secondary specialized education.

Structure of studies is same for all higher education institutions in Uzbekistan and it is as follows:

Bachelor degree (“bakalavr”) – 4+ years (the first 2 years has the same base for all study programs)

Master degree (“magistratura”) – 2+ years (generally, only very little percentage of BA graduates continues in MA programs, MA degree(s) has started in 2000 at SAI.)

From 2013 there was adopted new system of post gradual education. (Presidential decree "On the further improvement of the system of training and certification of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel") Original Uzbek degree “Candidate of Science” has changed into “Doctor of Science” in accordance with generally accepted international requirements and standards. Currently, SAI provides 13 Ph.D. study programs (see list below, 6 Degree programs)

In the country ISCED classification is not used but the national categorization. In Uzbekistan exists currently 6 areas of knowledge: humanities; social area, economics and law; production-technical area; agriculture and water management; healthcare and social security; and services. (In accordance with the Classifier of fields of study and specialties, approved by the Order # 302 of the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education in July 18, 2011).

6) Degree programmes

Generally, bachelors and masters study programs undergo changes and innovations every five years. Supportive higher educational institutions are established in Uzbekistan according to specific areas and specialties. They are responsible for adding news into the curriculum and receive proposals that are put forward by other higher educational institutions.

“The leading universities on study programs are responsible for development, innovation of curriculums. The leading universities, in cooperation with their other HEI on the field develop, revise curriculum, State Educational Standards and Qualification Requirements for each study direction. Samarkand Agricultural Institute is leading for directions on animal sciences and veterinary medicine.”(cited from institutional questionnaire)

Currently, SAI has accredited 17 BA study programs, 12 MA and 13 PH.D study programs.

BA study programs (specialties)

- Vocational Education (Agriculture)
- Professional Education (Veterinary)
- Professional Education (Animal Science)
- Economics (on branches and spheres)
- Accounting and Auditing (in agriculture)
- Agricultural Chemistry and Soil
- Agronomy (by product of agriculture)
- Plant Protection and Quarantine
- Selection and seed crops
- Dog breeding
- Sericulture
- Technology of storage and processing of agricultural products
- Animal husbandry (by type)
- Technological Karakul breeding
- Management and farming
- Mechanization of Agriculture
- Veterinary

MA degree programs (specialties) according to faculties:

| |
|--|
| Faculty of Agronomy (Total) |
| Agro chemistry |
| Plant growing (according to crop group) |
| Selection and Seed production (according to crop group) |
| Faculty of Agro engineering (Total) |
| Agricultural Mechanization (according to the branches) |
| Faculty of Veterinary (Total) |
| Diagnosis and treatment of animals |
| Veterinary surgery |

| |
|--|
| Veterinary pharmacology and toxicology |
| Veterinary sanitary, veterinary and sanitary examination and hygiene of animal products processing |
| Veterinary microbiology, virology, disease, mycology and Immunology |
| Parasitic and infectious diseases of animals |
| Faculty of Zoo engineering and Karakul sheep breeding (Total) |
| Farm animals mating, breeding and selection (according to types of animals) |
| Faculty of Management in agriculture (Total) |
| Farm Management |

PhD study programs

| |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Botany -Physiology of Human and Animals -Parasitology -Mechanization of agricultural -Common Agriculture -Agro chemistry -Selection and seed culturing -Planting -Animal husbandry and Production technology of livestock products -Agricultural Economics -Therapy and diagnostics of animals -Pathology, oncology and morphology of animals |
| -Pharmacology and toxicology of Veterinary |

7) Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is provided mainly in form of further education of HEI teachers, so as an increasing of qualification of teachers. For teachers at HEIs there is an obligation to gain qualification according to national qualification framework. It stands that this type of lifelong learning is closely connected with quality assurance at Uzbek HEIs.

Monitoring of Quality of Teaching

Two presidential acts connected to quality of teaching have been adopted recently («About measures on the further perfection of system of retraining and improvement of professional skill of the pedagogical staff of the Higher and Secondary Specialized educational institutions» and "On the introduction of the rating system of higher educational institutions of the republic.").

Academic staff has to apply for the position regularly.

Firstly, academic staff goes for two-month retraining outside their home institution every three years of employment. Secondly, the staff is evaluated in terms of scientific publication activity, open lectures, foreigner language skills, expertise, teaching abroad, internationalisation, and sometimes also teacher's evaluation from the side of students is included (but not very often). (According to our discussion with Uzbek partners)

Cumulatively, academic staff is evaluated up to 100 points; overall score can be checked on the electronic portfolio. The academic staff successfully passes and is awarded with the certificate if he/she has got more than 60 points. In case of failure the teacher is obliged to take retraining again and covers it from own budget. If the failure is repeated, the job contract is terminated.

The final attestation is held in front of the committee – rector, members of scientific board. The positions /assoc. prof., prof/ are elected by the Academic Council.

Internally, there exist also ratings of teachers/academic employees and administrative employees (in two different lists). Each person has exact number of points. (available at <http://www.samqxi.uz/index.php/uz/2014-12-19-06-19-13/2014-12-20-12-13-06/professional-o-gituvchilar-reytingi> and <http://www.samqxi.uz/index.php/uz/2014-12-19-06-19-13/2014-12-20-18-15-35/rahbar-xodimlar-reytingi>).

8) Research (main areas, grants etc.)

According to institutional questionnaire, the role of higher educational institutions in the area of research and science is laid down in the Education Act, the NPPT and a new Charter on Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies. The MHSSE and sectoral ministries are responsible for organization, admission to postgraduate and doctorate programmes and monitoring and analysis of the activities concerned and provide information and methodological support to researchers. There is an on-going programme to support talented youth which ensures the necessary conditions for successful development of the potential of the younger generation and, in particular, young researchers.

There are 3 types of grants in Uzbekistan: fundamental, practical and innovational. Among them fundamental grants are more prestigious. Fundamental grants are designed for 4

years, practical ones are for 2 years and innovation grants are intended for 1 or 2 years which are totally financed by the government.

Only partial information about research and publication activities is provided within web pages, nevertheless it gives some basic understanding of research size or extent: 20 doctoral and 106 master's theses were defended at SAI during the last 22 years. Professorial-teaching staff of SAI have published 26 monographs, 70 recommendations and 34 articles in international scientific journals, received 56 patents and 20 patents.

“In Uzbekistan a new system of research has been established which envisages specific measures to involve students, undergraduates, postgraduates and doctoral students in research at all HEIs. The established structure ensures the necessary conditions for attracting the younger generation into research and the exploitation of its potential for the further development of society and the economy. In order to ensure fruitful interaction between the research activities at the HEIs and scientific–research institutes of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, a joint Regulation of the MHSSE and the Academy to attract and encourage students into scientific research and development work has been adopted and is fully operational.

The Government of Uzbekistan considers scientific research activities and the introduction of innovations in specific branches of the national economy as the most valuable and important way of further modernizing higher education. The MHSSE has issued a number of regulations to implement and facilitate realization of the tasks envisaged by the above legislation, including a database of planned, on-going and completed innovative projects of all Uzbek HEIs. One effective way of strengthening university-science-industry cooperation is the regular participation of HEIs in the Republican Fair of Innovative Ideas and Projects.” (cited from questionnaire)

9) International activities, students mobility, international services

Strategy **“Programme for the Development of International Relations at Samarkand Agricultural Institute in 2015-2017”** is focused mainly into effort to develop institutional cooperation with HEIs of developed countries especially in areas of teaching and research. Collaborative projects are seen as a good instrument for strengthening and supporting of teacher’s knowledge. This entails also emphasis on education of foreign languages and ICT.

At SAI there has been carried out several international projects recently (Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus +). (see the List of projects)

The list of projects

Tempus projects

CIBILES: "Curriculum Invoking Bologna-aligned Education Leading to reform in Environmental Studies"

EPASAT: "Environment Protection Through Development And Application Of Sustainable Agriculture Technologies"

UZWATER: "Master Program in Environmental Science and Sustainable Development with Focus on Water Management for Uzbekistan Higher Education"

SAMUZ: "Sustainable Agrarian Management studies in Uzbekistan" (for more see part 12)

UZHELTH: "Enhancing Public Health Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan"

Erasmus Mundus

TOSCA: Coordinator- Adam Mickiewicz University, PL

EU partners: University of L'Aquila, IT; Alexander Technological Educational Institution of Thessaloniki, GR; University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, AT; Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, DE; University of Borås, SE; University of Porto, PT.

eASTANA: Coordinator-Warsaw University of Technology

EU partners: Ecole Centrale Nantes; Czech Technical University; Dublin Institute of Technology; University of the Basque Country; Università degli Studi di Genova.

MARCO XXI: GEORG-AUGUST GÖTTINGEN UNIVERSITÄT, Germany

EU partners: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, Uctm - Sofia, Bulgaria, Masaryk University, Czech Republic, International School Of Law And Business, Lithuania, Life Sciences University Of Warsaw, Poland, Universidad Santiago De Compostela, Spain, Uppsala University, Sweden, Sweden

CASEU: University of Barcelona, Spain

EU partners: Université de Poitiers, France; Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands; Universidade do Porto, Portugal; Universitat Politècnica de València

Erasmus + KA2 project (instead of IQAT)

ACADEMICA: Accessibility and Harmonization of Higher Education In Central Asia through Curriculum Modernization and Development

Generally speaking, level of academic and student foreign mobility is relatively low, if we compare it with the European HEIs average. The document “Institute in the years of Independence” (Capsa/IQAT/WP1/KZ and UZ documents/UZ/ Samarkand) declares that: *“The SAI has made the international exchange of 145 teachers and 376 students from foreign universities. 11 students have become masters of the German VaenStefano’s University, and 6 go on to study a master's degree. Under the program, UOM Erasmus Mundus is an exchange with European universities. Under the program LOGO - 163 students, in farms in Bavaria - 22 people, Russian - Chelyabinsk Agro engineering Academy - 118 students passed practice. Of the teaching staff of 18 people traveled in Germany, two in Poland, three in the Czech Republic, three in Italy, two in Hungary, two in Russia, one in the US, one in China, one in Belgium, one in Greece and in other countries.”*

10) Information systems

Uzbekistan as a country adopted strategy for e-government and the focus on using of new information technologies is visible also on the level of HEIs. SAI uses the information system MOODLE. And besides it SAI provides a broad spectrum of electronic-based services (such as library, electronic admission, and other). Some statistical information about students and academic employees of individual HEIs is available at web pages of the State testing centre or portal Pedagogik portfolio (teachers) - <https://portfolio.bimm.uz/uz/>

| Indicator | Value |
|---|--|
| Teaching e-platform accessible to support general teaching activities | Yes |
| On-line platform for non-presential education courses | Under development |
| Number of software products used for educational purposes | There are several software (SW) products available for being used at TUIT on/during the educational process (both from the teacher and student perspective): 1. Depending on specific purposes and courseware of discipline the depth of using the SW varies and can cover the usage of proprietary software and open-source software systems and products, e.g. virtual laboratory complexes for physics (currently almost full range of |

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|---|---|
| | <p>practices and laboratory works), CISCO company educational SW tools for telecommunications disciplines, open-source SW kits for software and computer engineering disciplines: roughly 8 SW products can be identified.</p> <p>2. The SW for distributing materials, collecting the results and displaying progress (including testing): several attempts have been demonstrated to launch information system and on-line tools to facilitate the educational process (e.g. Moodle based system developed, special SW for departments et.): 4 SW products can be identified.</p> <p>3. Specific purposes SW (research/ development, simulation/ emulation, design/testing etc.): 10 SW products can be identified (e.g. MatLab, AutoCad, SkyLab, Oracle, Java, VMWare, Tomcat, VisualStudio etc.).</p> |
| E-learning materials (e-based content) based on e-platform (i.e. Moodle, Sakai, Caroline, etc.) | The possibility exists to use e-platform based learning/teaching (including Moodle-based), however the ratio of those who use this tool(s) periodically is not enough (appr. one-quarter of teaching staff and one-fifths of students' number). |
| Web based learning-MOOCs | <p>This type of learning for TUIT requires attentive and separate consideration and clarifying of some positions, namely:</p> <p>-if there the legislation is set for within the MinHSE defining e-education/distance education statements, e.g. licensing of this activity, recognition of documents received, payment issues etc.</p> <p>Although there are no obvious evidences of using MOOC at TUIT the possibility exist within separate course which are already ready to be 'set' on e-platform or in the form of distance learning for separate disciplines with preliminary administrative compliance.</p> |
| Students evaluation methods | <p>(Traditional exam, online tests, portfolio, one-minute questions, multiple choice tests, etc.)</p> <p>Students in the directions of bachelor and master degrees are assessed according to following types of evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal control: is performed by the university, in accordance with the rating system of evaluation; - Final state control: includes the defense of final qualifying work and state attestation on the disciplines within the standard of education; - State-public control: is conducted in the manner specified by the customer of personnel, social organizations, accredited public institutions; - External control: is performed by the Office of Certification and Accreditation of State Testing Centre under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Uzbekistan, which conducts certification of high school in every 5 years. |
| Other non-traditional evaluation methods for transversal competences | No |

Source: Institutional Questionnaire

11) Students services, sport, culture

The SAI has five school buildings, 174 study rooms, 21 renovated laboratories which are equipped with 500 visual aids. Lecture halls are equipped with modern technical equipment: 36 video projectors, 40 laptops, 20 projectors and 10 modern SSD - chamber microscopes.

For study of the English there is also language laboratory, which is equipped with modern computers totaling 29 thousand euros.

In laboratories are at disposal modern teaching aids, e.g. electron microscopes, microtomes, autoclave, laminar flow cabinets, and refractometers, ionomers, electronic scales, germicidal lamps etc.

On experimental plots are used different fertilizers and conducted experiments grown and ennobled more than 32 plant species, derived 10 new species in animal husbandry.

SAI has a sport complex - a gym and a hall for wrestling ("Kurash") - for sports clubs and physical training. In the courtyard of the hostel, there is a gym town; outdoor sports complex features a football field size 40x60, volleyball court, treadmills, a platform for the long jump and height. Among the athletes are champions of the Institute, the winners of the Asian Games and the World Championships.

There are also many cultural events for students which are connected mainly with supporting of national identity.

12) Quality assurance

a) national accreditation

State (concretely **MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND SECONDARY SPECIALIZED EDUCATION** and its bodies) is fully responsible for quality of teaching (from the both sides **teachers** and **students (or graduates)** as well) and quality of institutions and its degree programs (i.e. in the form of institutional and program accreditations).

The main document which is used for quality of teaching in Uzbek HEIs is “**STATE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS**” (SES). SES are prepared by Ministry and they must be registered at national agency “Uzstandard” which is the main metrology office in Uzbekistan. Currently there are almost 200 BA directions and more than 400 MA directions in higher education which are described within SES and each five years innovation of these directions takes place. SES represent basic criteria for quality assurance within educational process. Consequently, HEIs have only little flexibility in curriculum management and may introduce only a 5 percent change in the standard curriculum. The SES also have essentially no provision for optional subjects and do not allow for double majors or the possibility of having majors and minors (according to World bank study from 2014 <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/central-asia/Uzbekistan-Higher-Education-Report-2014-en.pdf>)

The main administrative body for quality assurance and accreditation is **STATE TESTING CENTER (under the auspice of government; STC)**. The STC deals with higher and secondary educational levels and it entails testing for teachers, students, graduates, participate in admission procedure, and accreditation of whole HEIs.

It has several main functions:

- develop and submit for approval by the State Commission for accreditation to educational institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan proposed to the procedure and the rules of accreditation to educational institutions;
- together with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan develops criteria for evaluating the test results;
- develop a test material, the level of which correspond to the educational programs, and on that basis conducts test trials entrants to the educational institution;
- based on the analysis of the current and final assessment of students' knowledge and students evaluate the objectivity of the test and rating points, the quality of education, training, curricula and programs in all educational institutions in the country and submit proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers;
- develop and publish training manuals for people undergoing test trials.

Duties of STC are:

- implementation of the state policy in the field of selection test for admission to educational institutions of the Republic,
- monitoring the quality of training and objective assessment of the effectiveness of the educational process;
- analysis of the consistency of knowledge of applicants, students with state educational standards and government regulations of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- improvement of the search and selection of talented young people;
- development of test materials, the level of which corresponds to the educational programs and conduct on the basis of their test runs entrants to the educational institution;
- ensuring the objectivity, reliability and validity of test results.

State attestation and accreditation of HEIs is organized each five years and it consists of comprehensive analysis of educational activities in previous 3 years and how these activities meet State educational standards.

Central **SCIENTIFIC-METHODIC CENTER (SMC)** is the national administrative body for professional development of academic and executive staff in Higher education under the ministry of Higher and secondary specialized education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It has been organized by the decision of the Cabinet of Republic Uzbekistan n. 278 from September 26th, 2012 «About measures on the further perfection of system of retraining and improvement of professional skill of the pedagogical staff of the Higher and Secondary Specialized educational institutions».

SMC develops educational programs, teaching and legal material for retraining and professional development of teaching staff of HEIs, evaluates the results of their work to ensure the required level of training and education of highly qualified personnel and advanced international educational experience with the use of modern techniques.

- SMC conducts a systematic analysis, monitoring the quality and outcomes of the educational process, training, assessment of the development dynamics of professional skills and competencies of teachers needed to ensure the quality of higher education in accordance with modern requirements;

- SMC together with the HEIs provides preparation of teaching materials and the development of effective methods for teaching foreign languages and modern information and communication technologies, taking into account best international practices, and also organizes seminar-trainings in the regional and branch centers in these areas;
- SMC familiarizes teachers with the modern achievements of science, the priority areas of development for the respective specialties, effective scientific methods and research, establishes cooperation with research organizations (scientific institutions of the Academy of Sciences, industrial research institutes, centers and laboratories, etc.), improves training programs in relevant areas in order to ensure the integration of education with production develops programs for use as basic objects of domestic enterprises in various sectors of the economy, equipped with advanced technology and modern equipment for the organization of refresher and advanced training of teachers;
- Coordinates the activity of 5 regional and 10 branch centers, organizes and conducts training courses senior university staff.

For Samarkand region (and Samarkand Agricultural Institute as well) there is one regional SMC at Samarkand state university.

b) international accreditation/quality assurance

Currently there is no any international accreditation or quality assurance in Uzbekistan.

Internal quality assurance system is not developed on the level of institution, but it is regulated and created by state and that is why main features of this are same in all Uzbek HEIs. So, following parts (Teaching Quality Assessment System and Student Assessment) are same for all three Uzbek case studies and they are based on information from World Bank study of Uzbekistan and Education sector plan 2013-2017 (Global partnership) (for more see Introduction).

Teaching Quality Assessment System

Prior to the start of the academic year, each teacher in an HEI is required to develop an individual work plan that indicates the activities to be performed and outcomes to be achieved. The total normative annual workload should be 1,540 hours which are distributed among five areas:(i) the delivery of training;(ii) the development of training materials;(iii)

scientific research;(iv) organization and management activities: and (v) civics and the moral upbringing of students. The main part of the workload is devoted to teaching, and each category of teaching staff has a recommended distribution of contact teaching hours. On average, professors and associate professors are required to have approximately 20 hours a week of contact teaching, while senior teachers and teachers are required to have approximately 25 contact hours per week. In comparison, most active researchers at US universities teach one course a semester or have only three contact hours per week.

These individual plans are reported to the Department of Monitoring under the office of the Rector. During the academic year, the implementation of individual faculty plans is monitored by the head of the department. The quality of the lectures is monitored and assessed using open lessons and peer review. The department head also prepares a plan for each faculty member to deliver open lessons with demonstrations of best practices and student research outcomes. Peer reviewers assess these open lessons in terms of their content, methodology, assessment, student performance, and compliance with the SES. Specialists in a particular field may choose to deliver open lessons to their colleagues in the faculty meeting, including the presentation of scientific problems and results of their research.

The reviews of the open lessons are then reviewed by the department head.

One of the main indicators of teacher quality is the scores obtained by the students in the annual assessment. By the end of the academic year, each faculty member is required to prepare a report on the implementation of his or her individual plan. In parallel, the performance of every teacher is assessed through anonymous survey of students. The results of the implementation of annual plans are accumulated in a Teacher Rating System to produce a score for each faculty member. The threshold score of 1,540 determines if a faculty member will be recommended for promotion and a salary supplement or if the faculty members' contract will be terminated.

Students assessment

All students of Uzbekistan's HEIs in any subject area are assessed annually on a 100 - point scale in terms of their knowledge, skills, and abilities relative to the State Educational Standards. The students' scores determine their rankings as Excellent (more than 86 marks),

Good (71 to 85 marks), Satisfactory (55 to 70 marks), or Fail (less than 54 marks). The regulation adopted according to Minister Order #204 on October 11, 2009 governs the student assessment methodology. Each student's score is obtained by combining different assessments of his or her work including oral questioning, a multiple choice test, a discussion, a written assessment of class assignments, and written homework as well as final examinations. Students that receive a failing score are given an opportunity to improve their score and may not progress to the next phase of their degree until they have obtained a satisfactory score. It is given a scholarship according to student's score.

SAI has approved rating system of students by MHSSE from the year 2012 where are described concrete forms of control, levels of knowledge, skills and competencies which are needed for specific score(s), publication date of results etc. (for more see Capsa IQAT/ WP1/KZ and UZ documents/UZ/ Samarkand/ Rating system-Charter.docx)

As an example of international cooperation between SAI and European HEIs within area of quality assurance it is possible to mention the project SAMUz — Устойчивая образовательная программа аграрного управления для Узбекистана (Sustainable Agrarian Management Studies for Uzbekistan) between 2013 and 2015 (Erasmus +). The project had been focused on 5 agricultural HEIs in Uzbekistan and Samarkand Agricultural institute was one of them. The main tasks had been:

- to revamp educational materials as well as to modernize teaching methods until January 2015;
- to develop and implement quality assurance policies and procedures of educational programs in line with European quality standards until December 2014;
- to modernize curricula programs in the direction of undergraduate and graduate studies by June 2015;
- to establish a master's specialty of "Agricultural Management" until September 2015;
- to build up scientific methodological base of doctoral studies in the field of agricultural policy and agricultural economics.

As a result of the project, SES, curricula plans, curricula programs and methodical sets are expected to be re-made up for directions of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies in

the field of farm management in the system of higher education in Uzbekistan based on the best practices of new European higher educational institutions on the assumption of local conditions and opportunities.

Directly at SAI there are several units which are dealing with quality assurance. The units are in close relation to national quality assurance level.

- ▶ Educational-methodological department
 - Assurance of quality of curriculum and syllabi

This organizational unit ensures quality of pedagogic process in accordance with National educational standards

- ▶ Internal control and monitoring department
 - Monitoring and control of educational process

The monitoring and control is implemented in form of rankings of teachers (academic employees) and non-academic employees. The procedure of this control and monitoring is not described on web pages but it is clearly connected with the activities of central State testing centre which is the main responsible body for testing and monitoring.

- ▶ Professional development and retraining center
 - Development and retraining of faculty
- ▶ Marketing services center
 - Links with job market
- ▶ Quality commissions within faculties

d) rankings

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the introduction of the rating system of higher educational institutions of the republic." from December 29, 2012 established Uzbek HEIs national ranking (For details of rating of higher educational institutions of the republic see on the website lex.uz/pages/GetAct.aspx?lact_id=2111002).

The purpose of this decision is to encourage the increase of the level and quality of research and teaching universities in Uzbekistan, to reach high levels of use of the scientific potential of the teaching staff, the quality of teaching and training of qualified personnel, sought in the sectors of the real economy, as well as expansion of international cooperation in the field of education.

Functions of the creation of the annual ranking of higher education institutions and assessment assigned to the State Testing Center under the Cabinet of Ministers.

The rating will be based on "systematic selection and formation of a database describing the level and quality of scientific and pedagogical activity" of universities. The rating results will be published before March 1, in the media.

Rating criteria are grouped into four categories - the index of the quality of teaching level (35%), students and alumni qualification index (20%), the scientific potential of high school (35%) and other indicators (10%).

Among the indicators taken into account are the proportion of teachers with a foreign degree PhD, quality of teaching on the basis of a survey of students, the proportion of foreign professors and students, evaluation of qualifications of graduates by employers cited publications of the university teachers, provision of educational literature, the degree of use of ICT in the learning process, and others.

Methodology of the rating plan should be improving continuously through qualitative interviews with experts and employers, as well as the progressive experience leading international rating organizations and following the priorities for the development of higher education system in Uzbekistan.

As mentioned earlier, SAI uses rating systems of academic and non-academic employees and rating system of students. All ratings are annually published on web pages of SAI (there is included name, position and overall score of individual).

"One of the main indicators of teacher quality is the scores obtained by the students in the annual assessment. By the end of the academic year, each faculty member is required to prepare a report on the implementation of his or her individual plan. In parallel, the performance of every teacher is assessed through anonymous survey of students. The results of the implementation of annual plans are accumulated in a Teacher Rating System to produce a score for each faculty member. The threshold score of 1,540 determines if a faculty member will be recommended for promotion and a salary supplement or if the faculty members' contract will be terminated.

<http://www.samqxi.uz/index.php/uz/2015-05-28-11-54-21/professor-o-qituvchilar-reytingi>

(cited from institutional questionnaire)

13. Analysis of internal activities on quality assurance

A) Typology

U-Map as a tool for profiling of higher education institution allows us to identify what is the focus of concrete HEI. With regards to our project, recognition of HEI focus enables inter alia³ to start developing of institutional quality assurance system effectively and to contribute to institutional case study as well.

U-Map methodology is transparent and that is why we can use it also for the purpose of institutional case study. U-Map provides overview of 6 different dimensions. These dimensions illustrate HEI activities. (for more information about methodology see: <http://about.u-map.org/background/methodology/>)

Dimensions of U-Map are:

- 1) teaching and learning = dark blue
- 2) student profile = green
- 3) research involvement = red
- 4) regional engagement = purple
- 5) involvement in knowledge exchange = light blue
- 6) international orientation = yellow

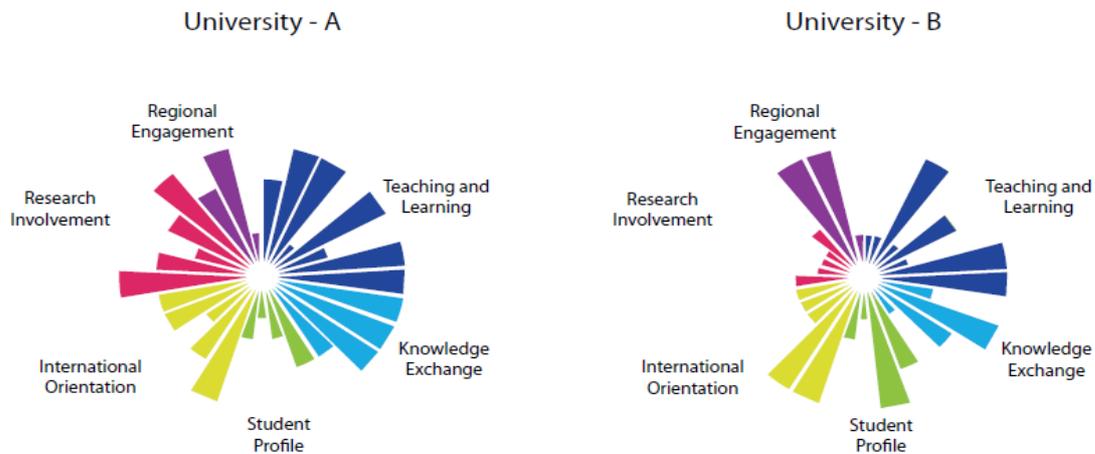
U-Map form is a picture of flower or solar disk with petals /rays of different length where longer ray/petal means more activities within given indicator.

One flower = one HEI
One colour = one dimension
One ray/ petal = one indicator

However application of U-Map has some limitations that must be taken into account. Two of the main features of original U-Map seem to be transparency and reliability of data which are included into profile “flower”. This condition is crucial. It is better to have incomplete profile than to use unreliable data. Other important issues are definitions and understanding of indicators. In case of Uzbek HE institutions we are facing differences of HE systems – “cultures” of HEIs could distinguish from original U-Map. So, for the purpose of this study we did some changes which arise from problems with availability and reliability of data. All changes on comparison with original data are explained in the next figure.

³ The main message of U-Map profiling is to show diversity of focuses and missions of HEIs.

Picture 1 Examples of two different HEIs in U-Map profiles



Source: http://about.u-map.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/U-Map_2011_update_report_print.pdf

Table_Dimensions and indicators for SamAI

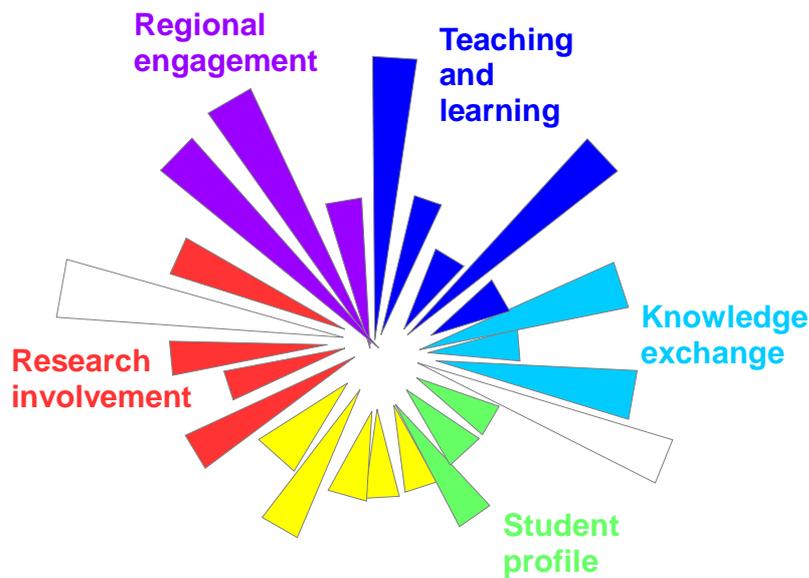
| Dimension | Indicators: original /modified | Indicators: availability |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Teaching and learning | All indicators are original | Some data are available + expert estimation |
| Student profile | All indicators are original | All data are available |
| Research involvement | Most of indicators are modified | Not clear definition of indicators on publications (peer review, professional, other) |
| Regional engagement | Some indicators are modified | Most of data are available |
| Involvement in knowledge exchange | All indicators are modified | Not clear definition of indicators + no data available |
| International orientation | All indicators are original | Most of data are available |

So, following picture of U-Map (institutional “flower”) respects all limitations we mentioned above, nevertheless even in this limited form it is possible to find out focus of given institution.

Explanatory notes:

All displayed data are related to the academic year 2014/2015 unless otherwise specified.

SamAI – Institutional profile



1. Dimension : Teaching and learning profile

a) Degree level focus (structure of graduates according to types of study)

BA graduates 1090 → 94.3% from all awarded degrees = (main focus) bachelor focus $\geq 40\%$

bachelor degrees = **major**

MA graduates 57 → 4.9 % from all awarded degrees = **none**

PhD graduates 9 → 0.8 % from all awarded degrees - **none**

categories

main focuses:

doctorate focus $\geq 5\%$ of all qualifications awarded are doctorate degrees

master focus $\geq 25\%$ master degrees

bachelor focus $\geq 40\%$ bachelor degrees

multiple focuses

doctorate degrees: >5 = major ; between 5 and 2= substantial; between 1 and 2= some; less than 1= none

master degrees: >25 = major; between 25 and 15 =substantial; Between 15 and 5= some; less than 5 = none

bachelor degrees: >40 = major; between 40 and 10= substantial; Between 10 and 5= some; less than 5= none

b) *expenditure on teaching (from overall expenditures, in %, expert estimation)*

expert estimation → 75% of the overall budget =major

categories

more than 40 % = major

between 20 and 40 = substantial

between 5 and 20 = some

between 0 and 5 = none

c) range of subjects (expert estimation because Kazakhstan doesn't use ISCED classification, all areas are linked with agriculture = specialized)

categories

areas covered ≤ 3 specialised
3 < areas covered ≤ 6 broad
areas covered > 6 comprehensive

2. Student profile

a) distance learning students

number of students 0 → not applicable

categories

more than 20% = predominant
between 10 and 20 = substantial
between 5 and 10 = some
less than 5 = none

b) mature students

number of mature students ? → less than 5% = none

categories

more than 20% = predominant
between 10 and 20 = substantial
between 5 and 10 = some
less than 5 = none

c) part time students

number of part time students ? → less than 5% = none

categories

more than 20%: predominant
between 10 and 20: substantial
between 5 and 10: some
less than 5: none

d) size of student body

5023 students between → 5,000- 15.000 = medium

categories

very large = more than 30,000
large = between 15,000 and 30,000
medium sized = between 5,000 and 15,000
small = less than 5,000

3) Research involvement

a) doctorate production

number of PhD graduates 9 / number of academic employees 367 → 0.02 → between 0 and 0.15 = some

categories

more than 0.15 = major
between 0.05 and 0.15 = substantial
between 0 and 0.15 = some
0 = none

b) expenditure on research (from overall expenditures, in %, expert estimation)

expert estimation → 1.7 % → between 0 and 5 = none

categories

more than 40% = major
between 20 and 40 = substantial
between 5 and 20 = some
between 0 and 5 = none

c) peer reviewed academic publications (annual number of peer reviewed academic publications relative to the total number of academic staff (FTE))

expert estimation → 0.5 % → 0.1 and 0.75 = some

categories

more than 1.5 = major
between 0.75 and 1.5 = substantial
between 0.1 and 0.75 = some
less than 0.1 = none

d) Peer reviewed other research products

(number of research outputs other than peer reviewed publications and professional publications per fte academic staff)

not clear definition of publication (indicator is not included into institutional profile)

categories

more than 1.5 = major
between 0.75 and 1.5 = substantial
between 0.1 and 0.75 = some
less than 0.1 = none

e) Professional publications (All publications published in journals/ books/ proceedings that are addressed to a professional audience and that can be traced bibliographically per fte academic staff)

expert estimation → 1.2 % → 0.5 and 3.75 = some

categories

more than 7.5 = major
between 3.75 and 7.5 = substantial
between 0.5 and 3.75 = some
less than 0.5 = none

4. Regional engagement

a) number of BA students from your region

expert estimation → most of the total number (70%) = major

categories

more than 10% = major
between 5 and 10% = substantial

between 1 and 5% = some
0 = none

b) graduates working in region (it could be expert estimation)

expert estimation → most of the total number = major

categories

more than 10% = major
between 5 and 10% = substantial
between 1 and 5% = some
0 = none

c) importance of local/regional income (from overall expenditures, in %, expert estimation)

1.7 % from overall budget → between 1 and 5% = some

Categories

more than 10% major
between 5 and 10% substantial
between 1 and 5% some
between 1 and 0 none

5) involvement in knowledge exchange

a) cultural activities

number of cultural activities (exhibitions, concerts, etc.) → expert estimation 50-100 = substantial

categories

more than 100 = major
between 50 and 100 = substantial
between 10 and 50 = some
less than 10 = none

b) patents (last five years) (expert estimation)

number of patents (national + international) 12 / number of academic employees 367 x 100⁴ → 3.2 = none

categories

more than 50 = major
between 50 and 10 = substantial
between 10 and 5 = some
less than 5 = none

c) number of start-up firms (expert estimation)

expert estimation → 5-10 = substantial

categories

more than 10 = major
between 5 and 10 = substantial
between 1 and 5 = some
less than 1 = none

⁴ Construction of indicator.

6) international orientation

a) foreign degree seeking students

number of students 0 → 0 % from all enrolled students = none

categories

more than 7.5% major
between 2.5 and 7.5% substantial
between 0.5 and 2.5% some
less than 0.5% none.

b) incoming students in international exchange programs

number of incoming students 2 → 0.04 % from all enrolled students = none

categories

more than 2% = major
between 1 and 2% = substantial
between 0,5 and 1% = some
less than 0,5% = none

c) international academic staff

number of foreign academic employees 0 → 0 % from all academic employees = none

Categories

More than 10% major
Between 5 and 10% substantial
Between 1 and 5% some
Between 1 and 0 none

Explanation: There are international teachers but they are not employed (visiting teachers)

d) international income (from overall expenditures, in %, expert estimation)

expert estimation between 1 and 5% = some

categories

more than 10% = major
between 5 and 10% = substantial
between 1 and 5% = some
between 1 and 0 = none

e) students sent out in international exchange programs

number of students 2 → 1.8 % from all enrolled students = none

categories

more than 2% = major
between 1 and 2% = substantial
between 0.5 and 1% = some
less than 5% = none

B) Existing activities related internal quality assurance

SamAI, similarly as other UZ universities, comes under the external quality assurance system developed at the national level. The principal authorities responsible for the quality evaluation of HEIs and educational programmes are the Ministry of Higher and Secondary

Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (RU) and several other bodies operating at the national level

In this sense, internal quality assurance at SamAI, similarly as in other UZ HEIs, has not been developed yet almost at all because the whole system of QA is based on governmental decisions in forms of law and other normative regulations. So, the whole QA activities which is running in SamAI is subordinated to the external requirements and influence and it follows the national rules and there has not been supported the internal (bottom up) initiative yet.

The aim of the analysis in the IQAT project framework is to find activities that would serve as a base for the internal quality assurance system of the university developed step by step in the future and which would meet also the international principles formulated in the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA et al, 2015).

As the quality of higher education concerns, it is recommended to use the notion of quality as suitability for given purpose (Santiago et al, 2008). This notion views the quality as compliance with specific goals set by the individual HEI, whereas it holds that quality is directly proportionate to the level of achievement of these goals.

The internal quality assurance from the international point of view is the responsibility of HEIs themselves (Higher Education in Kazakhstan, 2010) which is fully compatible situation with that suggested for HEIs in Europe by the European University Association (EUA Statement, 2010).

It is usual that the internal quality assurance systems are preferably designed as formative processes focusing for improvement. They are usually supported by the facilitative administration structure which is effective from the point of view of the required working load of those academics included in the system and of the necessary financial sources. It uses both qualitative and quantitative indicators with the focus on the latter ones, and it aims at identification of strength and weaknesses through the peer review evaluations (Santiago et al, 2008, Šebková, Kohoutek, 2013). These basic characteristics can be considered also in the internal quality assurance elements development at SamAI.

There are various activities/documents and bodies operating in quality assurance at the state level, but nevertheless influencing the quality assurance of all activities at the institutional level:

- Study programmes are innovated/changed regularly within the five year time period. The leading universities in particular teaching/learning are responsible for curriculum development in accordance with State Educational Standards and Qualification Requirements
- Higher education teachers are monitored in accordance with two presidential acts connected to quality of teaching. The overall score of points received is decisive for the stability of the academic position. Less points of the required minimum means obligatory re-training, failure in it might be the reason for the termination of the contract.
- There are State educational standards prepared by the Ministry, obligatory for Uzbek HEIs, including basic criteria for quality assurance of the education process.
- The state attestation and accreditation of HEIs organized in five year period represent the comprehensive analysis of education activities in comparison with the set standards (responsibility of State testing center subordinated to the UZ government).

- The Scientific-methodic center established as the national administrative body (on the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan) has played also very important role in many aspects of quality assurance of UZ higher education and thus it influence continuously its quality.
- It is necessary to mentioned also the rankings managed on the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan which should not substitute any kind of quality evaluation (see for example the EUA Statement, 2010) but it can influence the development of some of important activities of HEIs.

As the internal level of SamAI concerns, there are several departments/units (Educational-methodological department, Internal control and monitoring department, Professional development and retraining center, Marketing service center) which deal at least to some extend with tasks related to the quality of university activities.

Some results of the discussions taking place during the training seminar in Prague

There are strategy goals of SamAI for the near future:

- Education:
 - * Currently SamAI is focused on bachelor studies. Goals for the future are to increase numbers of master students and following to that also the numbers of doctoral students. It should be done through step by step approach.
 - * Highly qualified graduates will be needed for the broaden focus of the university (see below – veterinary medicine, etc.)
 - * One of the basic goals is to improve the students’ knowledge, i.e. to improve quality of education.
 - * Introduction of the distance learning will be the reflection of the fact the Faculty of veterinary medicine the only one providing the education this field in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the intention is to provide with the study opportunity to all interested applicants.
 - * Connected to that there is the goal to broaden the current veterinary area by the veterinary medicine. The agriculture sector would like to focus on livestock breeding. This specialization is supported by the Ministry.
- Internationalisation
 - * Internationalization is the area not extensively developed until current time.
 - * The vision is to attract more international students. It is necessary to mention some students from Karapalkastan, which is the autonomous part of Uzbekistan, with its language different from Uzbek language, so the exchange of students is a kind of international mobility.
 - * There are 2 PhD candidates from Italy and Portugal studying veterinary, agricultural
 - * The intention is to increase the students’ exchange with Russia
 - * The students from South Korea are interested in studies in RU and the idea is to increase their numbers in future
 - * The ambitious goal it to became Agrarian Academy
- Quality matters:
 - * Education and methodological department approves changes in degree programmes which are in final stage approved by the rector

* Marketing center, Monitoring and control department, other units of SamAI are there, all of them are involved into quality matters somehow. They are interlinked with information where the university website is the most important source of general information for public

Suggested areas for internal quality assurance supported by the IQAT project

From the practical point of view the areas of SamAI activities convenient for first steps on internal quality assurance development suggested during the training seminar are as follows:

- ***Evaluation of teaching and learning considering the views of teachers as well students.***

As the main tool the questionnaire will be used. It will be prepared using the

- * examples of good practice from CULS (results of presentation at the training seminar)
- * help of experts of the UKF in Nitra (SK) who are willing to share their experience and to provide SamAI team with the template of the questionnaire used for the UKF purposes,
- * own SamAI experience gained from the quality assessment system of teaching and from the students' surveys related quality of teaching.

It was suggested to start with the surveys at one faculty (Faculty of management in agriculture). The design of the questionnaire will contain questions on the same (similar) matters of teaching/learning and thus their evaluation might bring very interesting results the teachers' motivate to improve their work and suggestions for students how to improve their learning processes.

In the case of successful results there will be welcome possibility to enlarge the evaluation to another faculty.

- ***Evaluation of services (of SamAI) for students.***

This suggestion came from the project consortium members. The services for students (health care, accommodation and related services, culture activities, sports facilities available for students and various activities in this field) are very rich and perhaps much broader than it is usual in the Czech Republic and some other European countries.

There are already plans (updated) and so it will be possible to identify the important goals in this area and to monitor how (to what extend) they are met (it will completely meet the "soft" mechanism of quality assurance recommended by the theoretical studies on internal quality assurance, by the EUA Statement and by the ESG). The findings in most cases not probably will meet the goals but sometimes they might even overcome the planned goals. It will be highly motivating for students themselves, for the managers of these activities as well as for the top university leaders and they will support further improvements.

The tool may be also the questionnaire and similarly as mentioned above, the students would be asked for their views (may be also interested teacher) and administrative, financial and management persons who take care for these activities will be asked for their views.

- ***Qualification standards for teachers.***

The qualification standards are elaborated at the national level and they are currently under preparation at the institutional level. In current period it is elaborated in institutional level and approves in national level. It will be useful to evaluate the work on the standards and, importantly, to evaluate how (to what extend) the standards are reached by the particular teacher. If a kind of questionnaire will be used, the results would see where are the problems and of what kind they are. The role of the "soft" evaluation principles would be helpful for the teachers to overcome the found problems.

- ***ESG implementation***

The UZ has not been the member of the Bologna process yet and so the ESG implementation is not the area of the basic interest neither at the national nor at the institutional levels. On the other side, there are elements/ideas of ESG implicitly included into the quality assurance at the national level and at the institutional level as well (intention of introduction distance learning and/or student-centred teaching and learning, to improve public information, to continue with ECTS implementation, and the like).

The debate at the seminar approved that there is the intention to motivate HEIs to develop the internal evaluation of quality even if this is not specified in details and national strategy does not include the recommendation to do it.

Considering this situation it might be useful to include the area of the ESG, Part 1 (internal quality assurance) as the theme for monitoring. It means that all or some of the ESG standards for internal quality assurance will be taken as the goals to be met in the near future. Any mechanisms, for example the questionnaires, the interviews round tables and the like for the university teachers can be used to see if the implementation of the ESG will be seen as useful for the university or if there will be the reservations of even the negative views. The open questions related the ESG implementation can bring very interesting ideas and the completely new views on this documents gained outside the European Higher Education Area.

C) Recommendations for IQAT activities at SamAI

Some of these recommendation resulted from the debate during the workshops of the training seminar, some of them are based on the EUA quality statement (EUA, 2010).

- To elaborate the proposal of coordination of internal QA components. Currently, too many documents include the objectives and goals to be achieved, too many sectors/activities are being evaluated from the point of view of the quality, too many university units are involved into the quality matters. The situation is rather unclear which would prevent to gain the intended improvements. It would be worthwhile to find an institutional “umbrella” which would harmonize and integrate (where possible) the quality assurance activities;
- to bring together the responsible persons/teams into one department or into one team,
- to simplify the activities which would allow to design them with the limited working load of the responsible persons as well as the financial sources for QA activities and to make them more “user friendly”,
- To focus the internal quality evaluation on the goals related the students’ services in accordance with the EUA recommendation that the quality assurance should be contextual (EUA, 2010). This part of the SamAI activities seems to be excellent one and to include it among the areas of the internal QA will meet another European recommendation which warn from student services current underestimation and calls for their better involvement into the QA systems.
- To be sensitive while implementing the improvements or developing the new internal QA elements. Step by step approach while having a clear mid-term strategy of improvement is strongly recommended.
- to inform about and/or to include in the quality evaluations as many academic, non-academic employees and students as it would be possible so that they feel they can contribute and they take the system into their “ownership”.

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