

## **Subproject 12SUB05**

Training Secretaries / coordinators ANQA on writing HEI quality audit reports, 13th September 2012

At the 13th of September 2012 a condensed and intensive training session for ANQA secretaries on writing assessment reports will take place. The training will present tools for ANQA coordinators c.q. secretaries to write the panel report with reference to the Armenian procedures as outlined in the ANQA Accreditation Manual. The training will be used as input for the ANQA Handbook (12SUB07). In 2013, a similar workshop is planned for. ANQA staff will then be trained in guiding experts.

### **Participants**

- 15 ANQA coordinators and secretaries HEI

### **Time**

9.00 till 17.00

### **Location**

ANQA?

### **Preparations**

- Reading assignment: Read chapter 5: Decision-making and reporting by the agency, from the 2nd Module [Conducting the process of external quality assurance](http://www.iiep.unesco.org/capacity-development/training/training-materials/external-quality-assurance.html) of the UNESCO Training materials: <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/capacity-development/training/training-materials/external-quality-assurance.html> (You might want to read the whole module).
- Writing assignment: prepare a text for the audit report on Criterion 10. Internal Quality Assurance (see separate description of the assignment and materials needed). Send in the text ten days prior to the workshop.
- One of the ANQA coordinators prepares the presentation of the (Concept) Template for the Institutional Quality Audit Reports (Contents, brief instruction on the content of each part). The (Concept) Template is circulated one week prior to the workshop among all participants. To be organized by ANQA
- Review of the concept Template and prepare contribution to discussion on the template.

### **Moderators**

- Irma Franssen
- Frank Wamelink

### **Deliverables (tools)**

- Capacity building (training ANQA coordinators)
- (tool) Template for ANQA HEI Quality Audit Report
- (tool) Criteria to assess the Audit Report itself
- (tool) Presentation on important aspects of Audit Reports.

### **Programme**

9.00 - 9.10h.

Welcome and introduction to the purpose of this day

9.10 - 9.30h.

Explorative discussion: What makes a Good Audit report?

9.30- 10.30h.

Presentation by moderators: Reporting on Institutional Audits, introduction.

The presentation provides an overview of important aspects of reporting quality audits as presented in the (international) literature.

10.30-12.00h.

Assignment 1: group discussion

Develop a concise and complete list of Criteria to assess Audit reports

- Discussion in small groups

- Plenary discussion on results and
- Drawing conclusions

13.00- 13.30h.

Presentation: Introduction to the (Concept of the) ANQA Template for the Institutional Quality Audit Report. Presentation of the contents of the audit report, discussion of the purpose of each of the parts, substantiating conclusions, convincing argumentation, transparent reporting on procedures and method, etc.

To be prepared by ANQA coordinators

13.30-14.30h.

Discussion of the concept template.

Two ANQA Coordinators draw conclusions on modifications to be made to the template and next steps needed towards a final template.

14.45- 15.30h.

Assignment 2: discussion on the writing assignment

- Comments by participants
- Comments by moderators
- Relevant instructions

15.45 -16.45h.

Assignment 3: Group discussion on criteria to assess the Audit Report

- Small groups: discussing the lessons learned and the modifications needed to the Criteria for a Good Audit Report List.
- Plenary: making up the final list of criteria.

16.45 - 17.00h.

Final questions, evaluation and next steps needed.

## Appendix Writing Assignment

Write a section for the Audit Report on Criterion 10. Internal Quality Assurance based on the information from the Self Evaluation Report. Of the Amsterdam University This is a somewhat artificial activity since the information is limited and the information from an actual site visit is lacking. Put yourself into the position of the expert panel and formulate its findings and conclusions based only on the information from the SER. The text should show what elements should be present in a good audit report. It is allowed to fill in some observations that might result from a site visit.

Keep the report concise and brief. Limit the text to two pages A4 maximum.

Deadline: send in your text before the 27th of August 2012 to: f.wamelink@nvaio.net and i.franssen@nvaio.net

Confidentiality:

Although parts might seem familiar, this SER should not be seen as the SER of an existing university. It should also be treated confidentially. The contributions of the participants will be used for the discussion during the workshop.

## SELF EVALUATION REPORT Amsterdam University (AU)

### **Criterion 10: The institution has a set infrastructure for internal quality Assurance which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual development of the institution**

- 10.1 The institutions has internal QA policies and procedures in line with the ESG standards.*
- 10.2 The institution allocates sufficient time, material, human and Financial recourses to manage internal quality Assurance processes.*
- 10.3 The quality Assurance strategy, policy and procedures have a formal status, are publicly available and include a role for students and other stakeholders.*
- 10.4 The internal quality Assurance system is periodically reviewed.*
- 10.5 The internal quality Assurance system provides valid and sufficient background for the success of the external QA processes.*
- 10.6 The internal quality assurance system provides for the transparency of the processes unfolding in the institution through providing valid up to date information on the quality of the latter.*

#### CRITERION 10. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

*The institution has a set infrastructure for internal quality Assurance which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual development of the institution*

The establishment of the internal quality assurance system (IQA) in line with the European Standards and Guidelines at Amsterdam University (AU) started in 2007. Currently it is in the process of implementation and consists of the following components: □

- Quality assurance (QA) of the study programmes;
- QA of the teaching staff;
- QA of the learning resources and support services;
- Transparent student assessment system;
- □QA Internal information systems ;
- Public awareness.

AU provides with all necessary material, financial and human resources for complete implementation of the IQA system. Realizing the importance of continuing improvement of the educational processes the university states its QA policy in the AU Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2014. The AU IQA system formation is based on the QA strategy, QA policy and some other procedures which have official status. The students and external stakeholders also have their certain participation in the process. Some components of the AU IQA system are periodically reviewed. Completion of IQA system formation is planned to finish by 2013 according to the Work plan of the project entitled "Developing the internal quality assurance system and Introducing a Self-Evaluation Process at AU".. Thus the QA conception has periodically been reviewed aiming at continual enhancement of AU educational processes and establishment of quality culture.

At the same time mechanisms safeguarding efficiency and accountability of QA processes are implemented within the frames of the AU IQA system, the self-assessment process and the corresponding report are among them. They aim at providing transparency of AU activities, as they provide trustworthy information on the processes at AU.

1	<i>10.1 The institutions has internal QA policies and procedures in line with the ESG standards.</i>
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The establishment of the internal quality assurance system (IQA) that meets the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs) in Amsterdam University (AU) started in 2008. It should be mentioned, however, that separate elements of quality assurance of education, such as: student surveys, teaching staff development programmes, public information etc., have been in use before.

From 2008 onward missing component of the IQA have been added and all QA activities have been integrated into one common structure and additionally putting these in line with ESGs requirements.

In this part of the analysis a brief description of the AU IQA framework is presented in light of ESC requirements.

The AU QA Strategy is stated in "AU Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2014" (Goal I. Quality Education, Objective I.b) "To introduce an internal quality assurance system in line with the requirements of European Standards). To accomplish this objective the following strategies are envisaged in the Plan:

1. To create new policy for the internal quality assurance system of the University including continual quality enhancement strategy, appropriate procedures and organizational structures, and to identify the roles and responsibilities of the administrative structures and the academic units of the University.
2. To develop self-assessment criteria for the main performance areas of the University based on the standards of international accreditation organizations and National Quality Assurance Center of Professional Education.
3. To undertake and implement self-evaluation (self-study) of the University academic activities with publication of the appropriate report, which will serve as a basis for implementation of external quality assurance (accreditation) processes as well as for development of measures aimed at enhancing quality of education. To prepare the University for external evaluation and accreditation processes taking into account the importance of safeguarding a common state control policy over quality of higher education.
4. To develop and introduce learning outcomes-based new educational standards for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes (qualifications) based on the Qualification Framework of the EHEA and widely used international subject benchmark statements.
5. To create internal criteria and procedures for evaluation of human and resource provision in accordance with the requirements of study programmes, as well as for validation, development, approval, monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes.
6. To create and publish criteria, regulations and procedures for impartial assessment of students' learning outcomes including appeal and complaint mechanisms, and to ensure their publicity and consistent application.
7. To create and publish mechanisms and criteria for assessment of professional competences and teaching skills of the teaching staff.
8. To develop a set of internal data required for the effective management of the study programmes and educational processes .
9. To ensure transparency and publicity of the internal quality evaluation criteria, the self-evaluation process and the appropriate report for the internal and external stakeholders of the University, as well as students participation and feedback in quality evaluation processes".

According to the 1st point of QA strategy in 2010 a new (second) AU QA policy was adopted that focuses more on quality assurance of study programmes and awarded degrees (2nd standard of ESGs). In this sense it has temporary (interim) nature and will have been replaced by a new, more comprehensive document by the end of this academic year, that considers remaining requirements of ESGs as well (please see the part of this analysis related to the Standard 10.3).

The objectives of the AU QA Policy are: safeguarding of the AU academic (educational) standards, assurance and continuing enhancement of quality of the study programmes.

Principles relating to the safeguarding of academic standards are as follows:

- Educational standards are at an appropriate level for the qualification, identified by the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and National Qualification Framework (NQF);
- Educational standards satisfy the requirements of relevant governmental, professional & statutory bodies and similar organizations;
- Educational standards are periodically reviewed to ensure their currency and relevance;

- Feedback of recognized independent internal as well as external experts is sought when academic standards are established, monitored or reviewed. Principles relating to the assurance of quality of the study programmes are as follows:
- Study programmes have clearly stated and published aims, expected learning outcomes and defined teaching, learning and assessment methods that promote the achievement of those outcomes by students.
- Quality assurance of the study programmes is informed by robust programme design, approval, annual monitoring and periodic review processes, and student and graduate feedback;
- Students are involved in the processes of programme routine monitoring and periodic review;
- The views of external assessors are taken into account when the quality of programmes is reviewed;
- Quality assurance activities are focused more on areas with a risk of quality decline (newly opened programmes or programmes that continuously demonstrate low performance). Principles relating to the enhancement of quality are as follows:
- Procedures for quality assurance of education are regulated, monitored and periodically reviewed;
- Quality assurance processes are based upon data derived from quality monitoring reports, students, graduates and employers feedbacks, and graduates employment statistics.

AU has developed and adopted several IQA procedures and mechanisms as well, which are aimed at improving quality of the study programmes and teaching staff. These are:

1. Validation, internal peer-review and approval of the AU study programmes,
2. Annual monitoring and periodic review of the AU study programmes,
3. Implementation of the credit based training programme for the development of the AU teaching staff,
4. Student surveys on teaching effectiveness,
5. Graduate satisfaction survey on their study experience at AU.

In 2007 AU revised and upgraded student assessment methods and related regulations in line with the objectives of ECTS credit system and ESGs requirements. It assumes adoption of continuing (interim and final) student assessment process. (This assessment policy is systematically described in one of the appendices).

**2 10.2 The institution allocates sufficient time, material, human and Financial resources to manage internal quality Assurance processes.**

For productive management of Internal Quality Assurance processes (hereinafter IQA) AU has provided human resources engaged in IQA structures that realize processes established by relevant legal acts.

Human resources that are directly involved in these processes are presented below according to their structures and functions:

1. AU Quality Assurance and Control Unit established by AU Academic Council Resolution #4/5 of 18.06.2008 and by the AU Rector's Order #58/7 of 17.05.2008.
2. Permanent Committee of AU Academic Council on Quality Assurance established by AU Academic Council Resolution # 1/1.1 of 09.02.2012.
3. Permanent Committees of faculty level Academic Councils established by paragraph 2 Decree # 1/1 of AU Academic Council of 09.02.2012 and by Decrees of faculty level Academic Councils.
4. AU University Development Unit established by AU Academic Council Resolution #2/3 of 20.03.2008 and by the AU Rector's Order #58/9 of 27.03.2008.
5. Department of Information Technologies within AU Education and Research Centre is established by AU Academic Council Resolution of 06.02.2007.
6. The Deputy Vice-Rector responsible for QA activities within and outside of AU.
7. AU self-assessment steering Committee and relevant working groups established by the AU Rector's Order# 43 § 23 of 07.03.2012.

1. Quality Assurance and Control Unit (hereinafter referred to as QACU) under AU Department of Instruction and Methodology plays an important role in the management of AU IQA

There are 5 full-time employees in QACU staff (the head of the unit and 4 senior inspectors), whose work-loads and functions are clearly differentiated. The Unit is provided with a separate office, necessary furniture, equipment and technical resources (such as computers, a server, network printer, network printer-scanner/copier, color printer, scanner, projector, projector screen, UPS-s, with total value of 1.5 million AMD).

2. AU Academic Council (AC) plays an important role in IQA processes as it approves legal acts on IQA. Each semester and each year AC hears the reports on the results of student and graduate surveys respectively and upon necessity makes appropriate decisions for further improvement of the IQA processes. Permanent Committee of AU AC on Quality Assurance was established by AC Resolution #1/1 of 09.02.2012. It consists of 7 members appointed from the representatives of administration, faculty and students. The Committee has already begun its work, developed and established its "Rules of procedure" (Resolution # 3/4 of AU AC of April 20).

3. All 19 AU faculties have established QA committees under faculty level Academic Councils which consist of 5 members, including a student representative.

4. The objectives and functions of AU Faculty Development Department are stated in the Charter of the department (approved by AC Resolution # 2/4 of 20.03.2008).

It is noteworthy that AU Faculty Development Department carries out its functions through study and comparative analysis of advanced international and especially European educational systems experience and trends of development. The mentioned department cooperates with 21 AU structural units (19 faculties and 2 scientific-educational centres) and with almost 100 chairs of these structures determined on developing Course Catalogs and Credit-based Study Guides. There are 3 full-time employees and 2 equipped offices (computers, printer-scanner-copier, scanner etc.) in the department

5. The Department of Information Technologies under AU Education and Research Centre was established by AU Academic Council Resolution of 06.02.2007. It includes Information system Department established to develop and implement information systems in the management of university education quality assurance. The Charter of Department of Information Technologies under AU Education and Research Centre (approved AU AC resolution of 06.02.2007) states the functions of the Department of information systems, which include, e.g.: the development and implementation of software for student and graduate surveys, prepare the questionnaires and summarize survey results; to install and maintain "Supervision" software in all AU units ; create and update a database of necessary information; to develop and implement software for preparation of Diploma Supplement ; and to check on the statistical data concerning students' progress.

7 full-time employees work in the Department which has 2 offices with technical base of 1 server; 10 computers; 2 printer-scanner-copiers; and 2 scanners.

6. The overall coordination of IQA processes is carried out by AU Vice-rector on educational affairs; Deputy Vice-rector is directly responsible for management of IQA processes. He supervises the activities of AU Development department the functions of which are directly related to IQA. Deputy vice-rector coordinates also the activities of the QA and Control Unit in the framework of his liabilities. As a member of the Permanent Committee on QA of AU AC he ex officio contributes to the increase of efficiency of the activities carried out by the Committee, as well as coordinates and controls the faculty level activities of QA committees. By the AU rector's Order N 43 § 23 of 07.03.2012, the AU Self-Assessment (Self- Evaluation) Steering Committee was established. It consists of 7 members and includes 1 representative from external stakeholders (graduates) and 1 student representative. The Committee has set the basic trends and methodology of self-analysis; as well as chosen the members of self-assessment working groups according to appropriate directions (criteria of self assessment).

AU allocates considerable human, material, financial and time resources to carry out students semesterly and graduates yearly surveys. Human resources are engaged not only from direct QA structures (QA Unit, information systems' department), but also from other AU structures assuring educational process (staff members of AU educational methodological structures, faculty and deanery members, employees of administrative departments of scientific educational research centers), responsibilities of which do not officially include IQA processes.

AU IQA system faces some challenges, particularly  lack of highly competent and experienced specialists in QA processes;  lack of additional financial support for effective implementation of QA processes.

<p>3    <i>10.3 The quality Assurance strategy, policy and procedures have a formal status, are publicly available and include a role for students and other stakeholders.</i></p>
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The QA strategy of AU is formulated in the AU Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2014, is published both in Armenian (500 copies) and in English (1000 copies), distributed among all AU units; the electronic version is posted on the University website.

AU IQA strategy emphasizes the role of the students and other stakeholders in the processes of QA. It mainly suggests that AU should assure transparency and publicity of internal quality assessment criteria and that of the process of self-assessment for internal and external stakeholders for implementation of IQA system in accordance with European standards; furthermore, it should assure students' participation and feedback in quality assessment processes.

All QA related procedures at AU have formal status and are available for all stakeholders of AU. Thus "Regulations for Approval of AU Study Programmes" and " Regulations for monitoring and Review of AU Study Programmes" are published in 300 copies and distributed to all units, faculties and educational centres involved in educational processes of AU.

In the above mentioned procedures AU external stakeholders also play a distinct role. Particularly, according to Regulations for Approval of AU Study Programs minimum 2 external experts should be included in the

committees of expertise. They should be experts in the field related to the program. Their experience and skills will be valuable for objective investigation and research.

The role of students and other stakeholders is evident as one of the most important objectives of reviewing educational programmes is examination of students' and graduates' attitudes on the quality of suggested programmes; and examination of satisfaction of main employers of AU graduates.

The participation of students is evident also in the processes of review of educational programmes, since they provide feedback semesterly assessing the effectiveness of teaching at AU

Amendments mainly deal with the regulations of conducting surveys and with the content of questionnaires. The graduates of AU bachelor's and master's programmes participate in the process of educational programmes review and reorganization of the QA processes as well. They participate in graduate satisfaction surveys after graduation. The importance of surveys becomes more obvious, considering the fact that the results are discussed by faculty level academic councils and in AU AC in order to develop and take measures aimed at improving different aspects of AU QA.

Development of an online information system (virtual resource database) for IQA/accreditation is also envisaged.

AU external stakeholders are engaged in the QA processes as chairs and members of final exam and thesis defence commissions. Thus, according to Paragraph 13 of "Regulations of Conducting Final Attestation of Graduates of Higher Education Institutions of RA" (approved by order # 1197-N of the RA Minister of Education and Sciences of 31.10.2011, , ), "At least 50% of final exam and thesis defence commission members should not be the employees of the given institution". The fact that 50% of members of the mentioned commissions are external stakeholders gives AU an opportunity to form a feedback on effectiveness of AU educational programs and quality estimated by leading specialists and main employers of the given field.

#### **4** *10.4 The internal quality Assurance system is periodically reviewed.*

The AU system of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is still in the process of being worked out. Some components of IQA have existed previously, but the establishment process of AU IQA system complying with all requirements of European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs) started in 2008. Before that the existing separate components of IQA system had periodically been reviewed.

It's worth mentioning that besides the changes of the charter, the content of the students' survey forms has been renewed for several times (the informative part of the inquiry form is annually reviewed and the questionnaire was completely worked out in 2010). Changes made in the inquiries mainly were aimed at specifying the information concerning teaching quality and making questions more perceptible for students. In the result of the changes made in the surveys the procedure and the timetable for providing surveys as well as the types and the mechanisms for reviewing, preserving and using the results were established. The surveys of graduates' satisfaction from education got at university have been held at AU since 2008.

The questionnaire of the surveys has been subjected to additional changes for several times since 2008, in the result of which the information got from the evaluations has become more objective and trustful.

The other important component of IQA system of AU is the system of teaching staff qualification improvement. An important task was put forward in AU strategic development program for 2010 – 2014: "To upgrade and retrain the teaching staff in line with international standards of quality assurance / see AU strategic development program 2010 – 2014 objective 4 ), which necessitated revision of the acting projects on raising the quality level of the teaching staff. Thus the AU Academic Council adopted the document on "the structure and content of the educational-scientific program on the teaching staff qualification improvement by credit system".

#### **5** *10.5 The internal quality Assurance system provides valid and sufficient background for the success of the external QA processes.*

Self-assessment of AU internal quality assurance processes has great importance for successful implementation of external quality assurance processes. This provision is stated in AU 2010-2014 Strategic Development Plan.

Self study contributes to the improvement of the quality assurance processes, as since the assessment reveals problems, difficulties and sets still undiscovered opportunities. For implementation of this strategy in 2012 in the AU general management committee for self study/self assessment processes headed by Vice-Rector on Educational Activities and Self Assessment Working Groups were created (more detailed see section related to the 10.2 selfassessment standard). Self-assessment process has already started, and the assessment is carried out in accordance with "Accreditation Standards of Professional Education in the Republic of Armenia"

Self-assessment process will be concluded with the publication of an analytical report,

which will be available to all internal stakeholders of the University, as well as external stakeholders, including external assessment, or accreditation organizations (ANQAA, MES, etc.).

It could be noted, that accepted in the University and for many years existing “bottom-up” reporting procedure could significantly contribute to the QA external processes. The Reporting process includes annual reports of departments and other units about the results of their activities and Annual Activity Report of the Rector of the AU, which is published and widely distributed at the University.

6	<i>10.6 The internal quality assurance system provides for the transparency of the processes unfolding in the institution through providing valid up to date information on the quality of the latter.</i>
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The establishment of a centralized information system for the effective management of AU activities is in fact a strategic objective, which is reflected in the AU strategic development plan for 2010-2014. To create a AU centralized information system and ensure its accessibility for all university students and employees.

For the implementation of this strategic objective the following is required:

1. To develop and modernize computer network of the University in accordance with modern requirements of productivity, reliability and security for creation of a unified information system.
2. To form a centralized information system of University management based on creation and integration of databases containing data on different aspects of University activities.
3. To create and implement an automated data processing and information management software package.
4. To conduct training for users of centralized information system in order to assure effective work of the latter.
5. To expand the body of tools for handling internet resources.
6. To improve the provision of information for management system.

Providing information on current processes in the University to internal and external stakeholders is a matter of paramount importance for AU. This is also evidenced by the fact that the necessity of stakeholders' participation and feedback in the processes of AU activities and assessment is predetermined in AU Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2014: “To ensure the transparency and publicity of quality internal assessment criteria and the process of self-assessment for internal and external stakeholders of the University, and feedback in the processes of quality assessment as well”.

The information concerning all spheres of AU activities is presented in Annual reports of AU. Here the main results of activities of AU academic, research and administrative units during previous years are summarized.

These reports comprise data on particular faculties of University as well Information on AU annual activities is also presented by University Rector in his annual report submitted to AC. Here, particularly, performance of AU Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2014 is presented yearly.

Periodic peer-reviews and evaluations of academic and research activities of particular faculties of AU are conducted by special committees established for this particular purpose upon necessity. The results and conclusions of their examination are discussed first on faculty level AC and then on AC AU; appropriate recommendations are given concerning improving operations.

The usage of AU Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set is aimed to present the results of University activities and their “health” status by means of quantitative data, which also guides the process of implementation of AU Strategic Development Plan. One of the important mechanisms providing transparency and publicity of the processes in AU is the booklet “Key Performance Indicators for Assessment of AU).

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

1. AU has a clear quality assurance (QA) strategy with detailed worked out objectives and planned actions tent to their solution. AU internal quality assurance (IQA) strategy is stated in AU Strategic Development Plan for 2010-2014 (Goal 1, Objective 2 “To introduce an internal quality assurance system in line with the requirements of European Standards and Guidelines”). 9 strategies now being implemented are envisaged in the Plan for the accomplishment of this objective.
2. AU has 9-year experience (since 2003) in semesterly carrying out Student Surveys on effectiveness of teaching and learning. Throughout these 9 years the inquiry system has been continually improved, the survey charter and the content of inquiry forms have been reviewed. Students' inquiry long-lasting practice has definitely contributed to the formation of quality culture.
3. AU has certain (4-year) experience (since 2008) in Graduate Satisfaction Surveys carried out on an annual basis. During this period the inquiry forms have already been amended twice (in 2010 and 2011) resulting considerable improvement. Graduate inquiry process is also regulated.



4. A well-organized system of Key Performance Indicators (KPI-s) also contributes to more targeted and effective organization of University performance. Since 2009 AU publishes its KPI-s booklet on biannual basis.
5. The bottom-up accountability system in AU is expressed through annual reports of each academic unit to its superior body on results of its performance. In particular, the AU rector annually reports to the AU Board on the results of the HEI performance in accordance with the provisions of AU Strategic Development Plan. This accountability system too helps to reveal the strong and weak points in order to work out some measures to improve the state of affairs. It is also a particular framework to provide the external stakeholders' and students' involvement in the University's evaluation processes.
6. The AU IQA system has been formed in the frames of TEMPUS program, which gave a chance to make a direct use of advanced experience of European partner universities. Virtually, AU has borrowed the best experience and practice of IQA systems construction from the TEMPUS partner (mainly British) universities.
7. Transparent performance is one of AU's most important principles. It contributes to the formation of feedback with interested parties (stakeholders) hence contributing to the continual improvement of University's performance. Some of the transparency providing mechanisms of AU are: open sessions of the boards and councils of University and its academic units (AU Academic Council's sessions are elucidated by university and Board's sessions by republic media); reports represented there; the network information system; University website; academic process organization guides and module directories etc.
8. An internal QA network system has been established consisting of permanent QA Committee of AU Academic Council, 19 faculty level Committees, Quality Assurance and Control Unit (Department). The combined performance of this QA network system is coordinated by the AU Vice-Rector on Academic Affairs. The system will give an opportunity to locate the effective implementation of adopted QA procedures in faculty and chair levels.
9. AU charter gives an opportunity to involve the students in decision making and quality assurance processes on various levels. They are involved in AU and faculty level boards and academic councils. The students are also involved in all permanent committees (committees on quality assurance; competition; elaboration and expertise of legal acts projects etc) and almost all interim committees (committees on revision (investigation) and optimization of University's financial incomes and outcomes; elaboration of principles of formation of chair structure and staff list etc) of university and faculty level academic councils. The Students participate in the work of the AU Committee on self-analysis management and relevant working groups implementing this analysis as well. The students' participation in QA activities is also carried out through their participation in student surveys. Student involvement in quality assurance and assessment processes enables to enforce these processes taking into consideration students' needs and viewpoints.
10. AU has internal and external information systems, which provide reliable information for QA processes (see analysis parts referring to 10.5 and 10.6 standards).

#### SHORTCOMINGS

1. Internal quality culture in the university has not been formed yet, conditioned by a number of subjective and objective factors. Low level of involvement of faculty professors and students in the QA processes due to the level of QA, as well as the fact that appropriate structures are in the stage of formation up till now are to be mentioned among them.
2. Students are not always demanding about quality education. It is conditioned by the not yet formed professional labor market in the country and the fact, that the probability of finding a job often depends on different subjective factors rather than professional qualities. This factor causes decline of motivation among a great number of students, and consequently the absence of quality education demanding.
3. The process of establishment of IQA holistic system at the university has not been completed so far. As mentioned in the section of self-evaluation of standard 10.1, the process of establishment of IQA system in AU in line with requirements of European standards and guidelines is in the stage of formation and development. Particularly at present not all processes of QA are implemented, especially those related to students evaluation, teaching staff quality, learning resources, research activities etc. This demands the establishment of QA new components alongside the existing ones and their splice. The successful realization of the process requires additional financial, human and technical resources.
4. The AU current IQA Policy corresponds to only few requirements of European standards and is a subject to further elaboration. Such components as students' evaluation, teaching staff quality assurance, learning resources and student support, internal and external information systems etc. need to be reflected in the AU QA policy
5. There is lack of improving operations arising from the results of students' and graduates' surveys aiming at raising the teaching staff quality, study programs and learning resources. Although the above mentioned survey results are discussed in University and faculty level Academic Councils and appropriate instructions are given, they are not often implemented resulting from imperfection of appropriate monitoring and supervision mechanisms, and sometimes lack of corresponding persistency.
6. The staff of AU Quality Assurance and Control Unit and the members of central and Faculty level QA Committees do not have sufficient knowledge and experience on the processes related to quality assurance. For more effective management of the QA processes there is lack of competent human

resources and international consultation. There is also lack of motivation among teaching and administrative staff members to be completely involved in the processes of QA.

7. AU does not have a comprehensive centralized information system (database) in order to manage its essential functions operatively. The information on activities in different spheres of AU is not installed in a common system. Internal information is gathered and processed with the assistance of separate subsystems.
8. Financial resources needed for realization and effective management of quality assurance processes are scarce. The assurance of quality education greatly depends on proper remuneration of the teaching staff. Despite the fact that more than 65% of the AU budget is directed on the teaching staff remuneration merely, however due to very low level of state financing and low tariffs of tuition fees it is impossible to bring professors remuneration to an acceptable level. This factor first of all negatively affects the quality of teaching.
9. The most important external stakeholders of AU (former graduates; basic employee organizations; representatives of labor market, etc.) are not motivated and interested in participation in the University QA processes. This problem perhaps reflects unsatisfactory level of quality culture in the external environment. Former graduates of the University and employee organizations are not committed to participate in the processes of study programs elaboration, improvement and expertise and in establishing university-labor market cooperation as well.

NOTES BY EXPERTS

<b>Strong points</b>	
<b>Weak points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design of the report makes it hard to understand it quickly: a lot of reading is needed to get to the analysis of strong and weak points, and actions to solve the weak points.</li> <li>• The tendency in the report is to tell how good they are and how impressive, without really giving evidence for this (for example, page 3: '... provides high-quality education... p. 5: ' ...one of the leaders of education...'). In general, leave out how good you are, just let the facts talk, not your perception of those facts.</li> <li>• As a panel member I would like to see a report in which I first see the facts of the university itself (short), followed by the analyses of the strong and weak points, referring the facts that show the strong and weak points), and this followed by the concrete action plans that describe how the weak points will be solved (including a time line when it will be finished and who will do it). For instance, as a reader I would like to know: are there student evaluations of the educational programs? Of all programs? Are they frequently measured? Who is analyzing them? What happens with the results? Etc. Now I need to search for it and I am still not sure, which makes me conclude that the student evaluations are not organized very well, though this might be a wrong conclusion.</li> </ul>