# Assessment of the Education Quality Assurance of "Haybusak" University

## Introduction. Purpose and Methodology of the Assessment

The assessment was conducted in February-March, 2022 with an assessment tool developed by the University's Centre for Development and Education Quality Assurance. It was conducted for the following purposes:

- To identify the effectiveness of YHU functions and regulators (quality assurance policies, procedures, etc.), possible gaps and limitations in quality culture
- To identify needs for quality assurance capacity building, and develop plans for changes
- Encourage the involvement of students and teaching staff in the quality assurance process and provide an objective report on their achievements, thereby developing a culture of accountability.

The appreciative inquiry method was used during the assessment. It was implemented first individually and then in groups. Assessment groups included heads of institutes, members of teaching staff, students, graduates, and other stakeholders. The assessment was carried out at Toros Roslin Academy of Arts and Humanities (1.02.22), the Institute of Law and International Relations (1.03.22), the Institute of Economics, Management and Informatics (4.03.22) and the Medical Institute (18.03.22).

## General Observations

The results obtained during the assessment are presented in the following table.

*Table 1. Assessment Results*

| Sphere | I | II | III | IV | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Quality policy | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 2.25 |
| 2. Academic programmes | 1.5 | 1.5 | 3 | 2.5 | 2.125 |
| 3. Student-centered learning and assessment | 2.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 4. Admission, learning, assessment, qualification | 3 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 5. Academic staff | 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| 6. Learning resources and support | 3 | 3 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.75 |
| 7. Information management | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2.25 |
| 8. Public information | 4 | 3 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 2.75 |
| 9. Monitoring and periodic review of programmes | 1.5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.375 |
| 10. External quality assurance life cycle | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.5 | 3.125 |

The most developed of the mentioned spheres are the external quality assurance life cycle, public information and educational resources, while the quality policy, academic programmes and student-centred education need further development.

## 1. Quality Policy

> "Every employee must realize the importance of their responsibility in the development of quality policy. The process should be continuous and periodic.

<p align="right">Employee of Medical Institute</p>

According to the document, students, and external stakeholders - employers, graduates - are involved in the University Council and quality assurance, and their demands are taken into account. The participants mentioned that the Quality Assurance Center regularly organizes meetings to clarify the importance of quality assurance policy. The academic staff is responsible for ensuring the quality of education, however, not all students are motivated in this regard. The stakeholders are not informed, the quality policy is more of a formal nature, left on paper. This document is outdated, there are points and provisions that no longer correspond to the structure of the University.

## 2. Study Programmes

The learning outcomes in the academic programmes have been clarified according to the National Qualifications Framework. Students participated in the development of some academic programmes. It was also mentioned that most of the academic programmes have not been finalized or approved yet. In some programmes, the demands of the stakeholders were not fully taken into account.

## 3. Student-Centred Learning and Assessment

> "*The academic staff supports the students, takes into account their educational needs, inclinations, and interests; the teachers know and apply different teaching methods.*

*Employee of "Roslin" Academy of Arts and Humanities*

The academic staff encourages students' independence and activity. Students are informed in advance about assessment methods, scales and criteria. According to the students, the teaching methods need to be improved. The Student Council is not formed, students do not actively participate in the process of developing academic programmes. Feedback is not enough, there is no regulation for recording and addressing student complaints and suggestions.

## 4. Admission, Learning, Assessment, Qualification

> "*There is a clear and transparent admission at YHU, full of educational processes; besides, the best example of this is the presence of many international students at YHU.*

*Student of the Institute of Economics, Management and Informatics*

Procedures for collecting and monitoring information on student admission and progress are in place. Graduates are given graduation documents, certifying about the qualifications and level of education obtained, (diploma) and an appendix, which includes all grades and information about professional qualifications, assessment scale, and credit system. Some participants added that no other procedures and tools for collecting and monitoring information on student admission and progress are used, while others believe that student admission, professional development, assessment, and qualification regulations are sufficiently in place.

## 5. Academic Staff

A favourable, supportive environment has been created for the work of the academic staff, which is constantly improving. Lecturers are regularly trained as mentors. The use of innovative teaching methods and new technologies is encouraged. An English course has been organized for the academic and administrative staff. The presence of young personnel in the teaching staff, the implementation of international conferences and the exchange of experience were mentioned. Scientific conferences are organized, the scientific works of the teaching staff are published. They try to involve students in conferences and in the publication of articles. The conducted scientific research is not enough.

## 6. Educational Resources and Support

Existing resources are available and are used purposefully. Students are informed about the services available to them. YHU replenishes educational resources and develops student support mechanisms. The library, as well as the e-library, are being modernized, and the list of literature has been revised. One student stated that there is a small amount of professional literature in the YHU library, and he used the ASUE online library while writing his diploma paper. Resources are available, but not sufficient to provide a fully student-centred education.

## 7. Information Management

According to an employee of the Institute of Law and International Relations, the information management mechanism has been established and is functioning sufficiently; many of the participants in the discussion mentioned that the information management mechanism has not been developed yet. YHU involves students and staff in collecting, analysing information, and planning future activities through a variety of methods, but

there is a need for students and teaching staff to be more thoroughly informed about the Information Management Policy.

## 8. Public Information

On TV, through the press and on social media, YHU informs the public about its academic programmes, education conditions, academic staff, learning outcomes, and awarded qualifications. Information is scarce, sometimes not available. There is no standard operating procedure.

## 9. Monitoring and Review of Programmes

Programmes are analysed, adapted, updated, and aligned with legislative changes. They are reviewed, but the monitoring is not continuous. Lecturers regularly review their lecture materials. Syllabi are regularly reviewed and updated, which is not reflected in the academic programmes. The allocation of the necessary resources, aimed at the solution of the presented problems and implementation of reforms, is slow.

## 10. External quality assurance life cycle

As a result of regular assessment of external quality assurance, the procedures for organizing and implementing the educational process are reviewed. Quality assurance is an ongoing process. The University provides public information on the assessment of the quality of its activities and accreditation. The YHU quality assurance process is carried out with the direct participation and assessment of EKKA (for example, obtaining an accreditation certificate). YHU has successfully passed the international accreditation, however the participants think that the University still has a lot to do.

## Strengths

The participants of the assessment mentioned that the simple  and transparent admission of YHU and the comprehensive educational processes attract many foreign students. The academic staff supports the students, takes into account their educational needs, inclinations, interests; the teachers know and apply different teaching methods. The University organizes scientific conferences, the scientific works of the teaching staff are published.

Academic programmes and syllabi are constantly monitored, regularly reviewed and approved. As a result of regular assessment of external quality assurance, the procedures for organizing and implementing the educational process are reviewed.

The Quality Assurance Centre regularly holds meetings to clarify the importance of quality assurance policy.

## Suggestions

### 1. Quality Policy

- Review, amend, approve and publicize the quality policy, taking into account the development and renaming of new structural units.
- Develop incentives for wide range of student engagement, conduct surveys.
- Involve external stakeholders in the implementation of quality policy, who will professionally contribute to the development of institutes.

### 2. Academic Programmes

- Activate the responsible body for academic programmes, complete the work on academic programmes by the end of the academic year, conduct consultations with experienced specialists in the field, and submit for approval.
- Activate student participation in the development of academic programmes through the Student Council.
- In the academic programmes:
    - o Include assessment criteria, for example in case of internship
    - o Include labour market and employer demands
    - o Promote students' independent research
    - o Pay attention to information technology skills.

- Amend the academic programmes of "Finance" and "Economics" specialties. Add modern IT skills and capacities.

## 3. Student-Centred Education and Assessment

- Establish YHU Student Council and develop rules of student conduct.
- Consider student observations and suggestions when developing academic programmes.
- Develop regulations on addressing student's complaints.
- In student surveys, highlight questions about the effectiveness of student-centered education and assessment objectivity.
- Activate online platforms and educate teachers.

## 4. Admission, Learning, Assessment, Qualification

- Set certain standards in the admission procedure for higher entrance requirements. Basic knowledge is important to achieve the learning outcomes of the syllabi and academic programmes.
- Involve the experienced staff of the Institute of Law and International Relations in the Admissions Committee for the specialty of International Relations.
- Regularly review the regulations of students' professional development, knowledge and skills assessment and awarding qualifications.
- Create an online platform and organize open door days to provide students with even more transparent and complete information. Provide prospective students with a guide to the University's history, current status, accreditation process and information on admission and assessment procedure, academic programmes, as well as student rights and responsibilities.

## 5. Academic Staff

- Develop scientific research: create internal resources for implementing research.
- Organize trainings, meetings with other universities and well-known specialists in their field.
- Improve the mechanisms for evaluating the work of the academic staff and providing financial support. Encourage lecturers who publish scientific articles, present reports, and organize events.
- Add practical courses and carry out applied research.

## 6. Educational Resources and Support

- Students need to become more aware of the educational services provided by the University in terms of access to and targeted use of educational resources.
- Increase technical equipment (auditoriums, library, computer room, psychological service center, dean's office). Acquire literature, smart boards, create conditions in laboratories so that students can solve problems in the economy or enterprises.
- Add demonstration posters in the Physiology Laboratory. Acquire professional literature on law and international relations and additional supporting materials (collections of court decisions, contracts and agreements).
- Provide high-speed internet connection, as without it, it becomes impossible to use the lesson effectively, as well as update computer software. Provide SPSS or R software, Armsoft, or 1C for economics education at the University.

## 7. Information Management

- Develop a mechanism for informing students and teaching staff about information management policies.
- Appoint a person responsible for collecting, processing and publishing data on the activities of the Institute.
- Provide graduate employment support based on the re-formation of the Career Center.
- Conduct open and transparent discussions to address the existing issues.

## 8. Public Information

- The public part of the information should be comprehensive and updated frequently.

- It is necessary to develop a clear procedure for disclosing information, criteria, mechanisms, and tools for processing information.
- In order to expand the dissemination of information on the activities of the Institute, it is desirable to organize debates, seminars-discussions, tours, and interviews.
- Effective organization of "Open Door Days" event.
- Organize meetings with college and high school students and professional orientation visits to Yerevan and the regions.

## 9. Monitoring and Review of Programmes

- Involve students in program development to make ongoing monitoring and regular review of the programs effective.
- Ensure harmony in the field of modernization and review of academic programmes and syllabi .
- Respond promptly to the suggestions and changes made as a result of the monitoring, especially in providing the necessary educational resources.

## 10. External Quality Assurance Life Cycle

- Inform the academic staff and students about the results of the external quality assessment.
- The University should become a research center. It is necessary to pay special attention to research and scientific activities.
- Make the accreditation process more participatory.
- Regularly conduct internal quality assurance observations with the participation of students and summarize the results in the University Council.

## Summary. Further Steps

The main suggestions are (by assessment fields):

1. Amend, approve and publicize **quality policy**.

2. Complete the work on **academic programmes** by the end of the academic year with the participation of experienced specialists and students.

3. **Student-centered education**: Feedback is not enough, there is no regulation on recording and addressing student complaints and suggestions. The Student Council will play an important role in this issue.

4. **Admission, learning, assessment, qualification**: Create an online platform, organize open door days, provide students with more transparent and complete information. Prepare a guideline, which will present the history of the University, the current status, information on admission, assessment procedure, academic programmes, students' rights and responsibilities.

5. **Academic staff**: Encourage lecturers who publish scientific articles, present reports, organize events with student participation.

6. **Educational Resources**: Increase the technical equipment of auditoriums, libraries, computer rooms. Acquire literature, smart boards.

7. **Information Management**: Develop a mechanism for informing students and teaching staff about information management policies.

8. **Public Information**: Develop a clear procedure for disclosing information, criteria, mechanisms, and tools for processing information.

9. **Monitoring and review of programmes**: Respond promptly to suggestions and changes as a result of the monitoring, especially in providing the necessary educational resources.

10. **External quality assurance**: Make the accreditation process more participatory.