

## **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: CONCEPT PAPER<sup>1</sup>**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century education intuitions more than ever have started to function in an international environment by recruiting international students, promoting local students to have international experience, being part of international networks etc. As agreed among the relevant stakeholders, in the globalized world the Armenian education system have to be capable to produce professionals prepared for ever-changing international job market and be ready to address global issues. For that the Armenian education institutions should take a responsibility for the promotion of effective internationalization and its measurement based on intuitions' ambitions, missions and goals on internationalization thus supporting the achievement of the goals set for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Since its establishment the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA) strived to enable the internationalization in all the dimensions of tertiary education as the internationalization is considered to be one of the essential elements of increasing the education and research quality and employability. Though the efforts undertaken by the ANQA have been positively assessed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), however tertiary level institutions (TLIs) have their autonomous responsibility to choose the approaches and corresponding activities while the accreditation criteria and standards support enabling internationalization, and external review processes help to act in a more effective manner.

The results of the institutional accreditation processes organized by ANQA have demonstrated that internationalization activities cannot be effective if not introduced into academic programs. Education institutions should have enough autonomy to develop institutional framework of internationalization which will enable internationalization at the academic program level.

Within the TEMPUS "PICASA" project ("Promoting Internationalization of HEIs in Eastern Neighborhood Countries through Cultural and Structural Adaptations") the element of internationalization has been promoted by the partner institutions stressing the importance of inheriting the elements of internationalization down to academic programs thus enabling the practical outcomes of the internationalization processes to be more tangible.

For the further recognition and promotion of the internationalization processes at the academic program level ANQA is willing to make recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Armenia on cluster audit of academic programs. The indicators of internationalization component should be introduced into each of four criteria for cluster audit: academic program design, teaching/learning/assessment implementation, teaching staff

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& resources development, quality assurance: promoting enhancement. The suggested indicators are as follows:

**1. Academic program:**

***Strategic aspect:***

- application of the strategic plan of the institution on internationalization on the level of the academic program,
- relevance and responsiveness to the global labor market needs to ensure workability of alumnus.

***Student aspect:***

- recruitment strategy and admission policy for foreign applicants in order to attract international students,
- benchmarking of academic programs ensuring comparability of academic programs to enable more flexible student mobility,
- stimulation of student and staff mobility,
- foreign language program and support system for international students,
- co-curricular programs for international students.

***Research aspect:***

- policy on the funding, managing and facilitating of collaborative research.

***Financial aspect:***

- policy aimed at attracting international funds for education, research and services.

***Informational aspect:***

- publicly available information on opportunity for mobility,
- information on study environment, student services and learning opportunities is publicly available. Information on student learning opportunities is published,
- information about tuition fees, scholarships, mobility grants, research grants, etc. is publicly available in international languages.

***Curricular aspect:***

- internationalization of individual courses/ interrelatedness of local, international, intercultural competences: learning outcomes in line with the international trends and perspectives in the field,
- international/intercultural competencies are part of the study programme's targeted learning outcomes and are explicitly mentioned in the curriculum,
- proper introduction of ECTS system into academic programs to properly implement the credit transfer exchange agreements with partner institutions,
- foreign lecturers are part of the curriculum.

## 2. Teaching/learning/assessment:

### *Teaching/learning aspect:*

- international practices in teaching/learning methods: teachers familiar not only with the national but also with the international context/ teaching (pedagogical) methodologies are comparable and are adapted to intercultural sensitivities.

### *Assessment aspect:*

- the assessment system demonstrates that the targeted international and intercultural learning outcomes are achieved.

### *Research aspect:*

- internationalization of research activities to enhance collaboration and research quality (usage of foreign language literature in the thesis (students in BA/MS programs), publications in the international peer reviewed journals (PhD students/teachers), multidisciplinary and joint research activities).

## 3. Teaching staff & resources:

### *Teachers:*

- teachers with international experience (teaching experience at advanced universities),
- academic personnel demonstrates commitment to international professional experience and to the integration of international and intercultural dimensions,
- invited foreign teachers enabling intercultural perspectives in a field of subject for students,
- exchange agreements with partner institutions that enable teachers to work abroad,

- stimulating teachers to become members of international educational organizations and to participate in international events and projects,
- providing release time for teachers to work on university-sponsored development assistance projects as well as on international grants and contracts.

***Resource aspect:***

- sufficient resources allocation for the internationalization activities (financial independence at faculty level to make internationalization activities more efficient).

**4. *Quality assurance:***

- relevant tools to ensure proper planning and implementation of internalization at academic program level,
- involvement of international stakeholders,
- internal performance reviews of internationalization activities annually,
- external reviews of internationalization activities,
- annual reporting system, measurement the impact of internationalization, suggestions for further enhancement, revision of internationalization component in academic programs.

The evaluation by the above-mentioned indicators will help to:

1. accumulate the relevant data,
2. identify the current state of arts in the country in terms of internationalization,
3. examine the value and impact of the internationalization activities undertaken by the Armenian education institutions,
4. assure visibility in rankings (identification of the progress of the Armenian HE system as a whole and of specific universities against international rankings),
5. identify the best practices of the TLIs from the internationalization perspective,
6. identify further development opportunities,
7. develop education Ecosystem,
8. identify the possibilities for performance-based agreements with the Government.