



Western Caspian University

Quality Assurance Policy

Approved by the decision of the
Scientific Council of Western Caspian
University dated 12 October 2022
(Protocol No. 02).



Baku-2022

Contents

1. General Provisions.....	3
2. Purpose of the Policy.....	3
3. Scope and Principles.....	3
5. Policy Implementation Guidelines.....	4
6. Quality Assurance Standards.....	5
6.1 Design and Approval of Study Programs	5
6.2 Student-Centered Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.....	6
6.3 Admission, Study, Recognition, and Student Assessment.....	6
6.4 Academic Staff.....	8
6.5 Learning Resources and Student Support.....	8
6.6 Information Management.....	9
6.7 Public Information.....	9
6.8 Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programs.....	10
6.9 Periodic External Quality Assurance.....	10
7. Signature and approval.....	11

1. General Provisions

The Quality Assurance Policy of Western Caspian University (hereinafter referred to as “the University”) is aimed at the development of competent, creative, and innovative individuals, as well as competitive professionals who meet the demands of the modern era. This is achieved through the organization of education that ensures sustainable international competitiveness and enhancement of quality, in accordance with the national education policy of Azerbaijan and the broader socio-economic development priorities of the country.

This policy supports the objectives outlined in the University’s Strategic Development Plan by focusing on ensuring and continuously improving the quality of education.

The development of this policy is based on the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education," the "National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning of the Republic of Azerbaijan," the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)," as well as the normative-legal acts issued by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

This policy is subject to periodic review and revision in alignment with updates to the ESG standards, relevant legal frameworks, the University’s Strategic Development Plan, and the University’s Academic Policies. The University administration is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.

2. Purpose of the Policy

1. To ensure a highly competitive education (degrees) both nationally and internationally through the enhancement of teaching quality;
2. To further strengthen the University’s scientific research potential;
3. To support the professional development of both academic and administrative staff by fostering a healthy working environment and benefiting from international cooperation;
4. To implement advanced and innovative methodologies in the teaching and learning process;
5. To promote the development of 21st-century skills in students by using student-centered, interactive teaching methods and technological tools;
6. To strengthen infrastructure and ensure its sustainability;
7. To meet the needs and expectations of both internal and external stakeholders.

3. Scope and Principles

The Quality Assurance Policy applies to all activities and operations of Western Caspian University (WCU) within the framework of a continuous

improvement cycle. Unless otherwise specified, this policy extends to all internal stakeholders, including students, academic, administrative, and support staff, as well as external stakeholders such as employers and other institutional partners.

The University bases its quality assurance efforts on the following principles:

Transparency: The University ensures transparency regarding its quality assurance policies, processes, and evaluation criteria.

Stakeholder Engagement: The University promotes effective communication with all stakeholders, involves them in internal quality assurance processes, and keeps both internal and external stakeholders informed about the actions undertaken.

Continuous Improvement: The University is committed to the ongoing enhancement of its internal quality assurance system and to fostering a culture of quality.

To ensure the effective implementation of the priorities outlined in this Quality Assurance Policy, Western Caspian University provides a supportive environment. Academic and administrative staff, as well as students, are actively involved in the application and improvement of quality assurance mechanisms. Each university staff member is responsible for the quality of their activities, while students share responsibility for the quality of the education they receive.

5. Policy Implementation Guidelines

The implementation of this policy is ensured through the following measures:

- ▶ Establishment of an appropriate organizational structure within the university, including the definition of the responsibilities of structural units and the rights and duties of personnel responsible for quality assurance;
- ▶ Involvement of stakeholders (students, social partners, employers, alumni, and others) in internal quality assurance processes;
- ▶ Allocation of necessary resources and development of information systems to guarantee quality;
- ▶ Systematic monitoring and evaluation of academic programs;
- ▶ Promotion of student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment, and ensuring equity and fairness for all students;

- ▶ Engagement of all staff in quality assurance and improvement activities, promotion of accountability among personnel, and enhancement of responsibility for assigned tasks;
- ▶ Development of international cooperation in the fields of education and research, and promotion of mobility for students and academic staff.

This policy, which forms part of the university's strategic management, is publicly accessible.

The university assumes full responsibility for the internal quality assurance of education, the services provided, and their continuous improvement. It is committed to fostering a culture of quality among all academic staff, students, and administrative personnel. Internal quality assurance processes and standards are implemented through this policy, and participation from all university units is actively supported.

To implement the internal quality assurance system, the university establishes Quality Control Commissions.

6. Quality Assurance Standards

6.1. Design and Approval of Study Programs

The University defines clear procedures for the design and approval of academic programs. Programs must be aligned with the National Qualifications Framework of Azerbaijan and the descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework. Additionally, the intended learning outcomes must correspond to the defined objectives.

- Each academic program should reflect a unified structure encompassing learning objectives, outcomes, content, the organization of the educational process, methods of delivery, and criteria for assessing learning outcomes.
- Study programs must be aligned with labor market demands and should be revised regularly in terms of required learning outcomes.
- The design and approval of academic programs are carried out by Program Committees (expert groups) specific to each specialization. These committees include program directors, stakeholder representatives, and students. Programs are developed with the participation of students and other stakeholders, taking into account their needs and expectations.
- Programs must comply with the State Standards of the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), specifically Standard 1.2 on program design and approval.

6.2. Student-Centered Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

Student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment practices are based on Article 6.3.7 and 6.3.11 of the National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning of the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved by Cabinet of Ministers Decision No. 311, dated July 18, 2018), and ESG Standard 1.3.

Student-focused education and teaching play a crucial role in enhancing student motivation, encouraging self-reflection, and promoting active participation in the learning process. For this reason, the design, delivery, and assessment of study programs must be carefully considered.

- Implementation of student-centered learning and teaching includes:
- Utilizing new teaching methods that address students' needs;
- Applying diverse interactive teaching strategies where appropriate;
- Organizing sports and cultural events, supporting the creation of student clubs, and encouraging voluntary participation;
- Enhancing students' engagement with local and international civil organizations;
- Continuously evaluating and adapting teaching forms and pedagogical methods;
- Promoting mutual respect in student–faculty relationships;
- Establishing clear procedures for handling student complaints;
- Systematizing internships and strengthening links to the labor market.

Given the importance of assessment for tracking student progress and shaping future careers, quality assurance processes in assessment should consider the following:

- Assessors must be familiar with existing examination and testing methods, and support should be provided for improving their skills in this area;
- Assessment criteria and grading methods must be published in advance;
- Assessment processes should enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes;

- Where needed, academic guidance should be provided to students during the learning process;
- Wherever possible, multiple assessors should participate in evaluation;
- Provisions for mitigating circumstances should be defined;
- Assessments must be consistent, objective, and free from discrimination, conducted according to pre-announced procedures;
- Formal procedures for students to appeal assessments must be in place.

6.3. Admission, Study, Recognition, and Student Assessment

- Student admission to Western Caspian University is carried out by the State Examination Center (SEC) based on the university's proposed admission plan. WCU recognizes entrance exam results, previous academic qualifications, and levels of education obtained from other institutions. The university offers educational services across all levels and forms of study (excluding distance education). When determining quotas for majors and specializations, societal needs, labor market demands, and educational standards are considered.
- Admission of international students to higher education levels at WCU is conducted through a unified electronic platform on a paid basis. To ensure timely arrival of international students (excluding preparatory courses), the final deadline for admission is set as September 30.
- WCU allows the transfer of students between universities or programs, reinstatement after withdrawal, and dismissal from student status according to institutional regulations.
- All student activities and academic achievements are recorded and stored by the university in a format defined by institutional policies.
- Student assessment is conducted according to established procedures. Graduates are awarded diplomas and diploma supplements.
- State attestation is conducted through final state exams and the defense of graduation theses, depending on the program.
- The level and quality of program mastery are evaluated through ongoing, interim, and final assessments as per current regulations.

Recognition procedures are based on the following principles:

- a. The university ensures that the recognition of academic qualifications, durations of study, and prior learning is in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

b. In line with the Bologna Process, the university implements academic mobility programs and procedures to recognize prior learning achievements obtained at other institutions.

6.4. Academic Staff

One of the university's key resources is its highly qualified academic staff. WCU assumes full responsibility for the professional competence of its instructors and ensures the implementation of fair and transparent procedures for recruitment and professional development.

The university:

- ✓ Provides and encourages opportunities for professional development of academic staff;
- ✓ Promotes research activities to strengthen the link between teaching and research;
- ✓ Supports innovations in teaching methods and the integration of new technologies.

6.5. Learning Resources and Student Support

To ensure a high-quality and effective educational process, the university provides students with the following learning resources:

- ✓ Textbooks and teaching materials, including electronic resources;
- ✓ Access to national and other academic libraries;
- ✓ Classrooms, specialized laboratories, sports halls, and auditoriums;
- ✓ Laboratory equipment, computers, and software tools;
- ✓ Course syllabi and digital educational resources.

Student access to learning and support resources is guided by the following principles:

- ✓ The provision of resources is aligned with the university's declared mission, objectives, and is accessible to both students and academic staff;
- ✓ The financial strategy supports the implementation of the university's strategic development plan and ensures financial sustainability;

The university provides access to dining facilities, medical rooms, mentors (advisors, tutors), academic and administrative staff, and the Student Information Center.

To support students with special needs, the university promotes inclusive education aimed at identifying and removing barriers to ensure equitable access and participation in the learning process.

Psychological support services are also offered through the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology to assist students during their academic journey.

6.6. Information Management

The university defines procedures for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data related to academic activities to ensure the effective management of educational programs and other institutional operations. The university ensures that the data it manages is measurable, reliable, accurate, timely, and complete.

To maintain and develop the internal quality assurance system in education, it is necessary to collect the following data:

- ✓ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
- ✓ Student demographic and academic profiles;
- ✓ Student progress, success, and dropout rates;
- ✓ Student satisfaction with academic programs;
- ✓ Availability of learning resources and student support services;
- ✓ Graduate career pathways.

6.7. Public Information

To keep the public informed about its activities, the university maintains an official website and social media accounts. The university's website is available in three languages: Azerbaijani, Russian, and English. All information published on the official website and social media is reliable, objective, and accessible.

The following information is available on the official website:

1. Admission procedures for international students into undergraduate and graduate programs;
2. Detailed descriptions of academic programs;
3. Information about academic staff;

4. Overview of the university's infrastructure and educational support resources;
5. Ongoing research activities;
6. Extracurricular student activities;
7. Initiatives promoting student social responsibility;
8. Assessment and evaluation procedures.

Internal regulatory documents that students and faculty are required to review are also published on the university website.

6.8. Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programs

The regular monitoring, review, and updating of academic programs aim to ensure their effective implementation and to create a favorable learning environment for students.

Program evaluation includes:

- Content based on the latest scientific achievements in the specific field;
- Alignment with evolving societal and labor market needs;
- Student achievement and program completion rates;
- Effectiveness of student assessment procedures;
- Student expectations, needs, and satisfaction;
- Teaching and support services and their alignment with program goals.

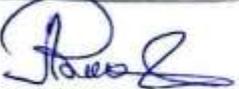
Programs are reviewed and revised regularly with the involvement of students and other stakeholders. Collected data is analyzed, and adjustments are made to ensure program relevance. Revised versions of the programs are published accordingly.

6.9. Periodic External Quality Assurance

The university must periodically undergo external quality assurance in accordance with ESG standards. External quality assurance bodies, through various mechanisms, assess the effectiveness of internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement, and offer new perspectives to the institution. These evaluations also provide transparency and accountability to the public regarding the university's performance.

Quality assurance is a continuous process that extends beyond external reports and reviews. Therefore, when preparing for the next external evaluation, the university ensures that progress made since the last external review is taken into account.

7. Signature and approval

Ad	Təyinat	İmza	Tarix
Anar Rzayev	Hüquq şöbəsi		07.10.2022
Rəşad Bağirov	İcraçı prorektor		07.10.2022