



ASIIN Institutional Accreditation Report

Almaty Technological University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

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Table of Content

A. About the Institutional Accreditation Process	3
B. Characteristics of Almaty Technological University.....	7
C. Analysis and Findings of the Experts	9
I. Definition of Quality	9
Criterion I.1: Objectives	9
Criterion I.2: (Quality-) Management Systems/Governance	12
II. Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings	17
Criterion II.1: Creation and Development of Programmes / Courses / Trainings	17
Criterion II.2: Implementation of Programmes / Courses / Trainings.....	20
Criterion II.3: Cooperation	24
Criterion II.4: Examination Systems and Organisation of Exams	26
Criterion II.5: Recognition of Achievements	28
Criterion II.6: Assistance and Support.....	30
III. Management of Resources	32
Criterion III.1: Material and Human Resources.....	32
Criterion III.2: Human Resources Development	37
Criterion III.3: Interaction with Research	40
Criterion III.4: Interaction with Administration.....	43
IV. Transparency and Documentation.....	45
Criterion IV.1: Rules and Regulations for Programmes / Courses / Trainings	45
Criterion IV.2: Documentation	47
D. Comment of the Higher Education Institution (20.02.2023)	50
E. Summary: Expert Recommendations (10.03.2023).....	51
F. Decision of the Accreditation Commission (24.03.2023).....	55
G. Appendix	58

A. About the Institutional Accreditation Process

Accreditation Subject	Almaty Technological University, Kazakhstan	
Experts	<p>Prof. Dr. Hans-Ulrich Heiss (Technical University of Berlin, Germany)</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Bakhytul Abdizhapparova, Auezov Mukhtar University Syhmkent, Kazakhstan)</p> <p>Dr. Davit Pipoyan, Informational Analytical Centre, NAS, Armenia).</p> <p>Durya Akhmetova, IITU Almaty, student representative, Kazakhstan</p>	
Representative/s of ASIIN Headquarter	Dr. Iring Wasser, Managing Director ASIIN	
Timeline	Date	Milestone
	21.04.2022	Conclusion of Accreditation Contract with Almaty Technological University (ATU)
	09.08.2022	Submission of Final Self-Assessment Report by ATU
	23-26.01.2023	On-site visit of the ASIIN expert team in Ostrava
	22-23.03.2023	Decision by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission
Relevant Criteria and Sources	<p>Criteria for the ASIIN System Seal / Institutional Accreditation / Institutional Assessment: Requirements for Good Teaching and Successful Learning (20/06/2016)</p> <p>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)</p>	

Description and Depiction of ASIIN's Institutional Accreditation Approach

ASIIN considers institutional accreditation as an instrument for organizational development triggered by a two-staged process of an internal evaluation followed by an audit of external experts. In the first stage, members of the evaluated organization will conduct an internal self-reflection process regarding the functionality and effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system. In the course of this exercise, all relevant stakeholders participate. Subsequently, a self-evaluation report (SER) is edited on the part of the reviewed institution containing a shared internal understanding on strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated subject. After receipt of the SER, ASIIN then assembles an independent team of experts representing the required different stakeholder groups (representatives of academia, professional practice, students) and disposing of suitable expertise concerning the evaluated subject. This team reviews the SER and conducts a site visit at the institution, where the SER is validated in discussions with the relevant stakeholders. The findings are compiled in an institutional accreditation report analysing strengths and weaknesses of the internal QA from an external point of view and summarizing recommendations towards its enhancement.

The structure of the SAR as well as the accreditation report are based on the Criteria for the ASIIN System Seal / Institutional Accreditation / Institutional Assessment. ¹This set of criteria is designed for quality development in teaching and learning. It refers to (I) the definition of quality and its management, (II) their application on the educational provisions the Higher Education Institution (HEI) is offering, (III) the management of its resources and (IV) quality related transparency and documentation. Each aspect is considered in an institutional, procedural and cultural perspective or dimension. The approach is furthermore based on a system of so-called maturity levels. This makes for a comprehensive description of the development stage at which the quality management system of the institution presently is. A simplified version of the maturity levels is presented as follows:

0 = non-existent

1 = defined

2 = implemented

3 = established and controlled

4 = predictive and proactive

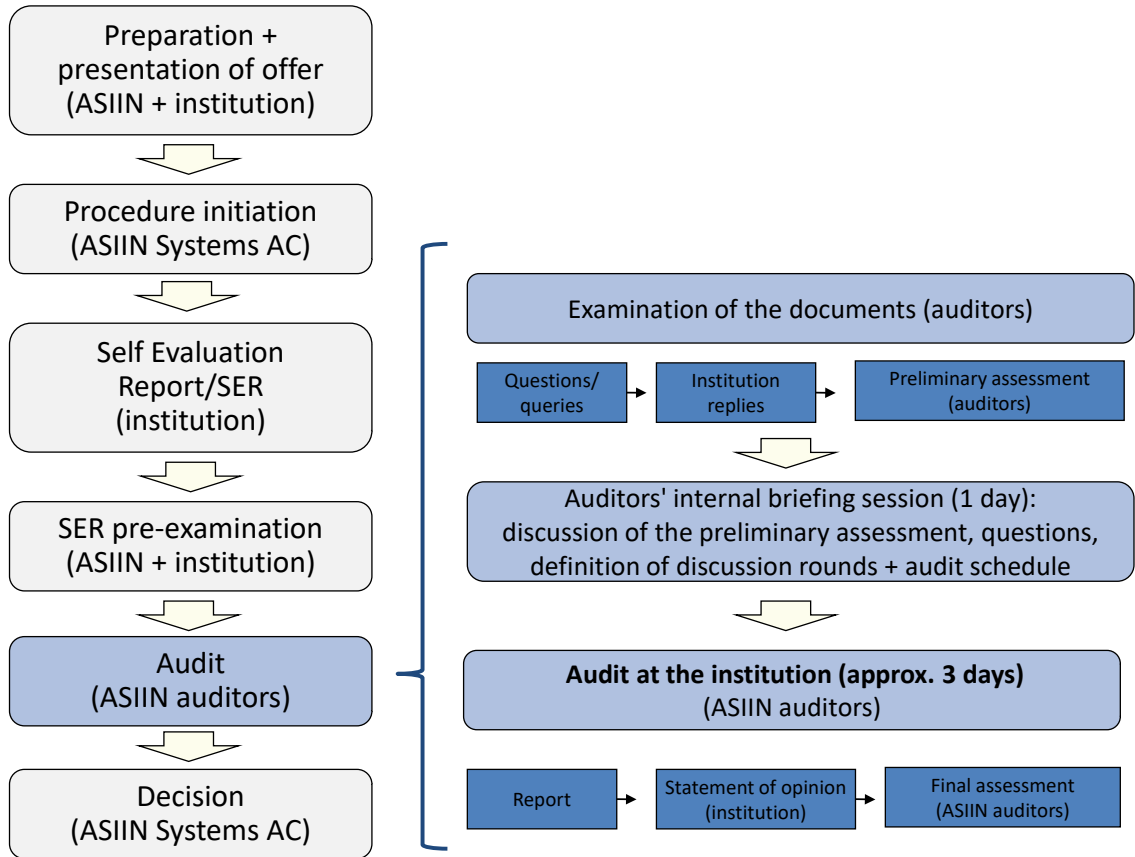
Further information regarding this classification can be found in the above-mentioned ASIIN Criteria. The ensuing ASIIN institutional accreditation report is structured as follows:

Four chapters are presented for each of the four accreditation criteria. At the beginning of each chapter, the guiding questions are listed, followed by an analysis and findings of the experts as well as the respective maturity level of the organization's structures, processes and their interaction with cultural characteristics observed by the expert team regarding single criteria. Every chapter

¹ Criteria for the ASIIN System Seal / Institutional Accreditation / Institutional Assessment: Requirements for Good Teaching and Successful Learning (20/06/2016). These criteria are in line with the European Standards and Guidelines 2015.

concludes with requirements and recommendations for further enhancement of quality and organizational maturity.

The accreditation procedure is divided into the following **stages**:



Special Framework Condition for the Review of ATU

ASIIN has been operating in Kazakhstan since the year 2006, when the first program accreditation procedures were conducted. Ever since then there has been a strong commitment of ASIIN contributing to the further development of the Kazakh Higher Education system and improving the quality of its services. ASIIN also assisted in bringing Kazakhstan into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which materialized in 2010, when the European Ministers of Higher Education decided to accept the country as 47th member of the EHEA.

This institutional review of the Almaty Technological University based on ASIIN's "Maturity Model" is the second example of this kind of External Quality Assurance in Kazakhstan. ATU currently disposes of a valid national institutional accreditation by a Kazakh accreditation agency, which however is about to run out; the university has intentionally decided to do the follow up with an institutional accreditation procedure by ASIIN, which is listed in the national register of recognized accreditation agencies of the Kazakh Ministry of Education.

Responding to the queries of the ASIIN expert team, the University representatives put on record, that apart from securing the continuation of the national accreditation status, they consider the international review as a suitable and challenging way for self-improvement. At the same time, an ASIIN accreditation is considered instrumental for increasing the reputation of ATU in the country and the region and as a necessary milestone for fulfilling its strategic priorities.

It is also worth noting, that ASIIN expert teams during the past years have executed a number of program accreditations in various faculties of the university; this institutional accreditation thus can build on prior experiences with other reviews conducted by ASIIN.

The following report summarizes the findings of the ASIIN expert team.

B. Characteristics of Almaty Technological University

Almaty Technological University (ATU) is a private University of Applied Sciences in Kazakhstan. It's origins date back as far as 1957, when by the orders of the Ministry of Food Industry of the Soviet Union and the Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR No. 155/548, the Alma-Ata branch of the Institute for the Improvement of Managers and Engineers became the Alma-Ata branch of the All-Union Correspondence Institute of Food Industry. This branch in 1966 was then transferred to the government of the Kazakh SSR for inclusion in the Dzhambul Technological Institute of Light and Food Industry. It was renamed into the Alma-Ata branch of the Dzhambul Technological Institute of Light and Food Industry (AF DTILPP) by Order of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No. 1501 and subsequent Order of the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR No. 1365-r.

The next developmental step occurred in 1996, when by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 573, the Alma-Ata branch of the Dzhambul Technological Institute of Light and Food Industry was reorganized into the Almaty Technological Institute (ATI). On 18 August 18, 1999, by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 1192, the Almaty Institute of Technology was reorganized into a non-profit private organization under the legal status of a closed Joint Stock Company "Almaty Technological University" (JSC "ATU"). In December 2003, based on the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Joint-Stock Companies" No. 415-P dated May 12, 2003, by the decision of the General Meeting of Shareholders (Minutes No. 14), the closed joint-stock company "Almaty Technological University" was re-registered into the Joint-Stock Company "Almaty Technological University".

ATU has during the past decades evolved into a respected Higher Education Institution in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Since its origin more than 60 years ago, it has been training specialists and scientific personnel for the food, processing, textile and light as well as service and hospitality industries. In recent years it has undertaken the process to systematically implementing the principles of the Bologna Declaration; a Diploma Supplement has been delivered to its graduates since 2012, shortly after Kazakhstan became the 47th member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Since 2005, ATU has been operating a Quality Management System (QMS) certified for compliance with the requirements of international standards ISO 9001 — 2008. It also has implemented the Anti-Corruption Management System MS ISO 37001:2016.

According to its own stocktaking, ATU currently enrolls over 7500 students in 5 faculties, offering 25 study programs on the Bachelor, 48 on the Master and 13 on the doctoral level in eight educational fields. The study programs on offer are based on the concept of trilingual education, Russian, Kazakh and English, though the latter currently is only to a small degree the language of instruction (between 5-13%). The JSC ATU implements academic mobility of students and teachers through a number of dual-diploma academic programs as well as international academic exchange programs (ERASMUS+, DAAD and etc.), though the number of incoming (less than 2% of its student body) and outgoing (around 7%) is still comparatively small.

Over the course of the years, ATU has trained more than 50000 graduates in the above-mentioned areas. The graduates of ATU are sought after on the Kazakh labour market, more than 80% find adequate employment in less than a year after graduation.

In spite of being a private HEI, around 50% of the Universities' financially viable budget is secured by State funding, another 45 percent comes from tuition fees and merely 5% by third party funding. Concerning its Human Resources the University can rely on more than 500 full-time teaching staff of which more than half dispose of a doctoral level qualification. The University is located in four locations in the city of Almaty, Kazakhstan's most populous city, encompassing an area of over 70 thousand square meters. Non-resident students are provided with places in four student dormitories.

ATU is governed by a Strategic Plan (currently the one for 2022-2027) and has declared its development into an International Research University its core priority for this period. In terms of ratings and achievement, ATU as of 2023 is ranked #561-570 in the QS World University Rankings, #301-350 in the QS Asia Rankings and #14 in the QS Asia University Rankings Central Asia.

C. Analysis and Findings of the Experts

I. Definition of Quality

Criterion I.1: Objectives

Questions

Institutional dimension: Which quality objectives of the institution have an influence on the quality of teaching and learning? Which of these quality objectives have a high priority, which have a lower priority? Which of the quality objectives reflect existing strengths of the institution? Which of the quality objectives are oriented towards institutional development and are future-oriented? What are the biggest challenges to maintain the achievement of the quality objectives?

Procedural dimension: Which of the objectives related to the quality of teaching and learning have last been *amended*? What were the reasons for amendment? What are the processes to define, to implement, and to review these objectives on a regular basis?

Cultural dimension: Which values and behavioural patterns have the biggest influence on the quality objectives of the institution? Which objectives are of particular importance for the internal stakeholders? Which groups within the institution particularly relate to which of the objectives? Which objectives are rejected by some stakeholders within the institution? Which possibilities exist to discuss among the internal stakeholders different opinions about the quality objectives of the institution?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

Almaty Technological University (ATU) presents ambitious “Vision, Mission and Values” statements. The institution accordingly sees its **Mission** in “providing high-quality education on the level of the best world universities, securing and distributing knowledge, developing talents using innovative spirit and global vision, finding solutions for social issues, providing new knowledge through research and launch new technologies through innovation”.

According to its **Vision statement**, approved by the board of directors on 22 August 2022, “ATU Almaty Technological University is a new model of a HEI based on a modern and efficient system of management and quality management, credit technology and academic mobility of teachers and students, commercialization of results of scientific and innovative activities of teaching staff.”

In its **Self-Assessment Report**, ATU furthermore commits itself to providing “modern infrastructure, an effective system of training and retraining of staff, effective connections with the business sector, modernization of teaching methods, active development of a viable online education system and

the introduction of effective innovative teaching methods”. As part of its education aspirations, it strives “applying the latest technologies in science and education, and becoming one of the best universities in the world”. ATU finally has defined a range of **Values** to be conveyed during the educational process including “personality, knowledge, quality, responsibility, work of the future.”

Next to the Vision, Mission and Value Statements, all of these and other developmental goals and the quality aspirations of ATU are further elaborated in the **successive Strategic Plans (SP)** and corresponding **Annual Strategic Implementation Plans**. They include the objectives of the institution for a period of 5 years each and are linked to the national developmental goals of the Kazakh Ministry for Higher Education.

Regarding the process of elaborating these Strategic Plans, they according to ATU’s own account are elaborated in working groups with the participation of internal as well as external stakeholders. After completion of the stakeholder consultation process, the Strategic Plans and corresponding quality goals are discussed within the Academic Board and on its recommendation approved by the Board of Directors of JSC ATU. Progress in achieving the strategic goals and associated Key Performance Indicators are checked and evaluated on an annual basis. Internal (system of internal auditors) as well External quality assurance systems (ISO reviews as well as external accreditations) are in place to monitor achievements on a regular basis.

Currently, ATU is governed by the Strategic Plan 2022-2027, which has been officially approved on 22 August 2022 by ATU’s Board of Directors. The central goal in line with its Vision and Mission is developing into an “**International Research University**”. To accomplish this goal, ATU has identified a number of indispensable tasks to accomplish and instruments to be developed, such as:

improving the research capacity of the University; improving innovation scientific developments and increasing the quantity of research results implemented in production; developing scientific research and participation in training in the field of food, processing and light industry; encouraging young scientists to conduct researches and talent pool formation; strengthening the material and technical base of the University.

Furthermore it strives to train in-demand personnel with higher and postgraduate education, meeting internal and external market labour requirements; improving the information infrastructure and educational technologies; providing professional development for teaching staff and employees; complying with the main parameters of the Bologna Process; getting licenses for the right to provide online educational services;

The experts as an outcome of the interviews confirm that on the institutional level there is a participatory approach in place to discuss the quality goals and (new) strategic focus of ATU as a recognized international research university.

Internal and external stakeholders are and have been consulted although in the various discussion rounds many interviewees at times had only a sometimes rather vague understanding of the fundamental changes in direction as implied by the Vision statement and the SP 2022-2027. Irrespective of this, stakeholders in general are found to be in agreement with the quality focus of

the institution. QA arrangements and corresponding reporting requirements and documentation rules are in place to monitor the achievement of ATU's quality assurance objectives.

In terms of the ATU's new quality goals, the ASIIN expert team challenges the leadership on the merits and chances of the strategic reorientation of ATU. They at this stage consider ATU to be a well-functioning University of Applied Science, which successfully has provided practitioners of high quality to the regional and national labour market. As will be elaborated in all subsequent criteria/chapters, the experts question the motives and chances of success for the readjustment and repositioning, which they consider to some degree the result of misinterpreted expectations of Kazakh educational policy priorities or at this stage of its development unrealistic ambitions of ATU itself. As the new Strategic Plan is the guiding document of ATU's development for the future, this deviation entails the danger that the ATU's efforts in the near future will be misdirected spoiling the hopes of stakeholder closely associated to ATU.

As regards the Annual Implementation Plans, there is evidence that concerning the preceding Strategic Plan (2017-22) this instrument has been implemented and corresponding roles and responsibilities defined, including the definition of key performance indicator. The experts nevertheless recommend further "operationalizing" these Annual Implementation Plans while putting a renewed focus on concrete measures and corresponding action plans in pursuit of attaining the quality goals of ATU. The experts appreciate the existence of a SWOT analysis, which is guiding ATU's development.

Regarding the cultural dimension, the expert team finds considerable identification of all stakeholders with the university, its quality assurance goals and its educational offer/performance. This is exemplified by the great interest demonstrated and witnessed during the three-day on-site audit, with participation and engagement of numerous representatives of various stakeholder groups. In ASIIN's experience, it is rare to find more than 60 representatives of industry and alumni being present and investing their time to discuss the further development of the university with an expert group. The same can be said for the group of teachers and students, who responded to the challenge of providing their insights during the accreditation visit in big numbers. The experts also positively note the open-minded discussions and reflective responses to critical questions posed to the various groups of interviewees during the three days of the audit.

As regards student involvement into QA matters, ATU has an "open system" of participation, in the framework of which students (and all other stakeholders) are invited to open discussions round e.g. with the rector, participated in QA bodies on the level of the faculty as well as the University. The same can be observed in terms of engagement of the employer's side, which are consulted on various levels of the educational process.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 2

The experts acknowledge the existence of a well-drafted Vision and Mission Statement describing the identity of ATU, its role and functions for the Kazakh educational system as well as its contribution to the development of the city, region and country. The quality management goals of the institution, generally speaking, are defined and prioritized. Instruments and key documents such as Strategic Plans as well as various Annual Implementation and Monitoring Systems with corresponding reporting system are in place. The definition of quality has been developed together with the institution's internal and external stakeholders. On the institutional level, the experts support the findings of the universities own SWOT analysis. The central problem at the institutional level remains the fundamental change of orientation, as formulated in the new Strategic Plan of ATU, which according to the expert's opinion unnecessarily deviates from its foundations, and is currently not based on the necessary resources for this fundamental transformation. ATU needs to revise its Strategic Plan, formulating realistic goals to be achieved in the next 5 years and supporting them by appropriate resources.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 2

The experts find that reliable procedures and QA systems are in place to monitor the achievement of the ATUs institutional quality aspirations. They take note of the fact that the Institutions' Strategic Plans are underpinned by supporting Annual Implementation Plans, Key Performance Indicators and a SWOT Analysis while making use of various data sources for the strategic management of the organisation. This data is provided by ATU's quality assurance department and a well-developed system of internal as well as external QA reviews. Responsibilities for the attainment of quality goals within the organization are clearly defined.

Generally speaking, the procedures to implement the prior quality goals of ATU are convincing in the expert's eye and would merit a higher maturity grade. However, the new institutional quality definition as expressed by the new Strategic Plans and its key notion of transforming ATU into an internationally recognized research institution within the next 5 years negatively impact on defining the right procedures and providing the necessary resources for a currently unrealistic goal. It is before this background, that the experts' teams sees a necessity to reconsider the central quality assurance goals of the institution.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts observe a high degree of understanding of quality assurance measures among ATU's stakeholders. The experts commend ATU's on its capacity to engage its stakeholder groups on various levels. This is further exemplified by very constructive and solution oriented discussion culture witnessed during the onsite visit.

Criterion I.2: (Quality-) Management Systems/Governance

Questions

Institutional dimension: What works well with regard to the organisational settings (responsibilities), structures, physical and human resources of the quality-management of the institution? Who is involved, who is responsible, and who is informed? Which changes are planned for the near future with regard to the set-up, structure and resources for quality management – and why? How is the collaboration between the different organizational units (teaching, research, administration) assessed by the different departments, faculties, etc., and by the central management? Which facets of the collaboration are considered useful, which are considered obstructive?

Procedural dimension: Which procedures (processes) for the implementation of the quality-related policy work well? Which processes for the implementation of quality policies need to be improved by the responsible actors? Are further changes in the processes planned? If yes, why?

Cultural dimension: Which typical values and behavioural patterns of the internal stakeholders have a positive effect on the quality management for teaching and learning? Which stakeholder groups particularly support the quality management for teaching and learning? Which groups are less involved? What are the reasons for higher or lower levels of involvement? What are typical situations leading to changes in the structures and procedures of the quality management system? Who is involved in such changes?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

As regards its *institutional structures*, the main governing bodies of ATU are the Rectorate, the Academic as well as the Scientific and Methodological Council. Furthermore, there is a Board of Trustees in place, which was established in 2015 and whose important roles are described further below.

The *Rectorate* is formed by the rector and altogether 5 vice-rectors with different areas of responsibility (the first vice-rector as well as the vice-rectors for academic affairs, science and innovation, administrative and economic issues, and student services). It meets on a weekly basis and is responsible for the operational management of ATU's activities, supported by the universities' administration.

The *Academic Council* consists of the rector (simultaneously assuming the role of the Chairman), the vice-rectors, the deans of the 5 faculties, the heads of departments as well the chairman of the student council, a representative of the trade union as well as a specialist of the youth council. Among its main responsibilities figure the approval of the organizational structure of ATU and dealing with all aspects related to matters of teaching and research.

Members of the *Board of Trustees* are leading representatives of companies/enterprises mainly in the area of food and light industry, hospitality, accounting etc. The Board of Trustees provides financial, material, level, organizational and informational assistance to the University and assumes an advisory role. It reportedly also takes an active part in reviewing curricula, providing internships, serving as guest lecturers and supporting ATU in various other ways (the organizational structure of the University can be seen in the appendix to this report).

On the level of administration Quality Assurance responsibilities, they are vested in the **Department of Quality and Accreditation** with its two sub-departments on “accreditation and rating” as well as “education quality management”. On the level of the faculties and the university, there are Quality Assurance Committees in place, in which quality related matters are discussed.

On the procedural level, ATU has developed a comprehensive set of internal quality assurance policies and procedures, defining the required level of quality of services provided and monitoring their achievement. These policies and procedures are described in the "Album of Process Information Cards".

The Deming Circle (PDCA cycle) has been chosen as preferred instrument of ATU’s quality management and the optimization of its services and products. In terms of planning, goal setting and implementation, next to the Strategic Plan, annual plans are consistently elaborated for all sorts of activities. The verification of the achieved result is executed by a broad range of analytical tools, monitoring devices and systematic collection of data in various areas such as the performance level in each study program/the rating of specialties for participation in the competition for obtaining a state order. ATU also analyses the outcomes of examinations in its various disciplines and faculties, documenting them each semester. Statistics regarding the progression and dropout rates for all student cohorts are elaborated. ATU also looks into the results of the final attestation of students (control of updating the topics of graduation projects, the results of passing state exams and defending graduation projects, etc.). There is equally a system in place to update and publish the syllabi of each program as well as other important documents.

Furthermore, ATU has developed manifold questionnaires to evaluate the satisfaction of students and their parents, graduates/alumni and employers with the quality of the educational offerings and the student experience. A particular focus has been placed on the introduction of distance learning technologies during the pandemic. ATU not only monitors the quality of its teaching and learning processes, but also analyses the outcomes of its R&D activities by its teaching staff.

Basis on the generated data and results, ATU has established a system of internal audit for all areas of activity and in all structural subdivisions of ATU. This internal audit is carried out on an annual basis in line with the ISO 9001:2015 guidelines. In a parallel second process, each faculty/department also on an annual basis conducts a performance evaluation against the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for all its programs on offer.

Apart from the evaluation of the various questionnaires on student satisfaction with their educational experience and the quality of their lecturers, monitoring visits to training sessions are executed by the vice-rector of teaching and research as well as the deans and heads of departments to assess the quality of the lectures, seminars and laboratories. The results of these exercises are summarized in annual reports and are discussed at meetings of decision-making bodies in the faculties as well as in the Academic Council.

The ASIIN expert team attests that ATU has come a long way in establishing a comprehensive quality management system that has been upgraded in recent years and that these efforts have paid off. In terms of outcomes and the evidence provided, it confirms that in general stakeholders of ATU

(particularly students, alumni and the employer representatives) are satisfied with the educational experience, the quality of teaching, and the performance level of the graduates.

On the institutional and procedural level, relevant policies, procedures, criteria and the assignment of responsibilities are clearly defined and implemented. The results of the educational process are adequately documented and the relevant data collected, analysed and discussed in a participatory, transparent process in various bodies of ATU. While the experts commend ATU on this thorough internal evaluation system, the nevertheless see the risk of “an overkill” of QA measures in place and recommend streamlining the two parallel ISO and ESG processes to not duplicate the work and relieve the burden on the administrative and teaching staff involved in these processes.

On a cultural level, the experts witness a participatory approach with the engagement of major stakeholder groups including the employers’ side within but also outside of the Board of Trustees. Students are invited to take part in all relevant discussions on the faculty and central level in the Quality Assurance Commissions. Critical thinking skills are high on demand and need to be further developed for jointly steering ATU into a fruitful future.

As regards the issue of governance, the expert team witnesses a team spirit among the various bodies involved. The experts appreciate the existence and implementation of Strategic and their annual follow up plans, which list the measures needed to implement the goals and contain a certain number of Key Performance Indicators. The experts, after studying these plans, nevertheless believe that a further operationalization of these annual activity plans, concretising the measures to be implemented would be of value.

Having said all these positive things regarding the governance structure and the quality management systems, the experts currently see a fundamental problem with regard to the strategic positioning of ATU for the upcoming years, which already has been mentioned in the criterion before.

On the institutional level, ATU leadership has declared the development of ATU into an international research university as top strategic priorities. As far as these new quality goals are concerned, the ASIIN expert team challenges the leadership on the merit and chances of this strategic reorientation of ATU. They at this stage consider ATU to be a well-functioning University of Applied Science, which successfully has provided practitioners of high quality to the regional and national labour market. As will be elaborated in all subsequent criteria/chapters, the experts at this stage seriously question the motives and chances of success for a major readjustment and repositioning.

From a governance and QA point of view, the ASIIN experts point to the far-reaching consequences of such a realignment and consider the university and its stakeholders currently not well prepared to implement its new vision and strategic priorities. This finding is based on the expert’s opinion, that the human, financial and material base and corresponding planning and quality assurance arrangements are currently not in place to support the transformation process implied by the notion of an international research university. They encourage the leadership and stakeholders to think of alternative, better- suited quality aspirations and recommend thinking along the lines of becoming an “Entrepreneurial University” as an alternative notion of becoming a research institution. The experts also point to the imminent cultural implications of this new focus, which has a potential of

cleavage and disruption to the ATU's operations in the future without enough time for preparation (more on this topic can be found in the section on human resources).

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts see multiple evidence of a very committed university leadership. ATU in its Self-Assessment Report and during the discussions on-site presents a comprehensive set of internal regulations and governing acts, which define and regulate the rights and responsibilities of all official bodies of the institution. The various university bodies work well together and especially the participation and commitment of the employers are exemplary. Students have multiple chance to be part of the institutional governing system.

ATU also has come a long way in establishing a comprehensive quality management system that has been markedly upgraded especially in recent years. Relevant policies, procedures, criteria and the assignment of responsibilities are clearly defined. The ASIIN experts recognise the efforts of the university management in developing intersections of communication between and within the various governance level, which are regularly monitoring the success of the ATU's operations on many levels.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 2

The experts note that comprehensive procedures and systems are in place to monitor the success of ATU as an institution as well as the individual satisfaction and perspectives of its staff, students and graduates. While the experts commend ATU on its efforts to collect extensive data on the success of the institution and its students/graduates, they recommend reviewing the double system currently in place with the annual ISO and ESG internal reviews. They see potential for streamlining these processing and freeing human resources, which might be better used for other purposes.

Regarding the procedural implementation (see for more information also the sections on human resource, finances and interaction with research e.g.), the experts do not find enough evidence that the procedural foundations and substructures are in place to implement the new strategic plan and justify the claims to become a fully-fledged international research university.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed:

The experts laud ATU for its participatory approach regarding quality assurance matter. They commend the institutions for the fact that it is open minded to external quality assurance, accreditation as well as benchmarking as a tool for further improvement. The ASIIN experts during their discussions with the university leadership and different stakeholder groups acknowledge that ATU is an ambitious institution with strong objectives. These are clearly verbalised in the strategic plan. In all discussion rounds, the experts have met representatives of the UO with a high commitment and interest in the advancement of the institution. The experts recommend further

investing in the development of critical thinking skills to prepare the universities for the challenges ahead.

II. Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings

Criterion II.1: Creation and Development of Programmes / Courses / Trainings

Questions

Institutional dimension: Which aspects in terms of organisational settings (responsibilities), structures, physical and human resources have an impact on the effectiveness of creation or further developing programmes? Who normally initiates the further development of programmes? What challenges exist with regard to the further development of the full portfolio of programmes? Which educational offers are considered fit for the future and why??

Procedural dimension: Are the processes to create and further develop educational offers considered effective and efficient? What works well and what should be improved? Where does the incorporation of external requirements (legal, social, professional) work well; where could it be improved? What are the reasons? Which processes exist in order to systematically collect stimuli for the further development of programmes?

Cultural dimension: What is expected from the stakeholder groups involved in the design and further development of educational offers? Who is expected to participate? Does the involvement take place as expected? What happens if conflicts between involved stakeholders occur? To which extent are the relevant stakeholders willing to participate and what is their level of information?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU can look back on a successful history of diversifying and increasing the portfolio of study programs offered in its various faculties. Today, it offers a substantial number of educational programs for its approximately 7500 enrolled students. Students can choose among 25 Bachelor programs, 48 Master programs and 14 Ph.D. programs. There are multiple impulses for establishing new educational offerings. Some of them are external, as the Kazakh ministry of education encourages the creation of new study programs in innovative fields; others are intrinsic with academic staff or other ATU stakeholders initiating new study program.

Study programs at ATU are developed in compliance with the State compulsory standards of higher and postgraduate education, the Kazakh national qualifications framework as well as disciplinary qualifications frameworks and vocational standards, where applicable. After initiation, the new study programs are included into the Kazakh ministerial database of study programs and presented on ATU's website.

The process of developing a new program follows a predefined and documented procedure, which includes the development of appropriate program and course learning outcomes as well as a market research on the need and perspectives of an educational offering and its future graduates. For each new program, an expert group is assembled, which includes teaching staff, students, employers and alumni and in some instances professional bodies. Based on the recommendations and conclusions of these expert groups, it is then the Faculty Quality Assurance Commission, next the central University Quality Assurance Council and thirdly the Academic Council and in the final instance ATU's Board of Directors, who approve the decision. After passing through all stages of this approval process, an application is submitted to the Kazakh ministry of education to include the study program into the national Kazakh database of study programs.

Regarding the modernization of existing programs, ATU's thorough process has already been described and analysed in prior parts of this report. ATU uses the results of its annually conducted internal review processes (one coming out of the ISO system, the other one emanating from the ESG reviews) as well as periodical external quality assurance processes (e.g. program accreditations conducted by various EQA bodies) to upgrade and further develop its programs. The experts see evidence in minutes and protocols provided, in which various stakeholders groups provide their input for the further improvement of study programs on offer.

As regards the process of introducing new programs and modernizing existing programs, the experts commend ATU for following the above described multi-layered approval process. In the discussion, the experts learn about the recent development of new programs in software programming, robots and robotic systems, machines and apparatuses of light industry etc.. At the same time, the ASIIN experts question the existence of the sizeable number of different programs especially on the Master and doctoral level. They see a mismatch, given the fact that for more than 7000 Bachelor students there are 25 programs on offer, whereas for little more than 300 Master and Ph.D. students there are more than 60 programs on offer. In a substantial number of programs, there is little or no enrolment. In the discussions, the experts take note of ATU's comments, that a notable number of programs especially at the Master level have meanwhile been closed due to this exact reason. The experts nevertheless recommend continuously monitoring the situation to save scarce resources and establish a "critical mass" for each program on offer. A concern in this regard relates to the fact that currently the demand for study offers on level 7-8 of the Kazakh qualification framework is limited due to financial restraints on the part of potential applicants and that the Kazakh labour market currently is still focused on employing graduates with a Bachelor level qualification.

In view of external reference points for modern learning outcomes, the experts point additionally to the set of international competence frameworks which have been developed by the European Alliance of Professional and Specialised QA Networks EASPA, in which pan-European disciplinary networks have defined LO for level 6-8 of the European Qualification Framework. They see also value in engaging in benchmarking activities with European universities of a similar size and structure.

The experts also see untapped potential in developing new "short cycle" study programs to diversify ATU's portfolio and respond to new market needs in the area of professional development and continuous education (e.g. in the area of accounting, which was explicitly mentioned in the

discussions). During the discussions with the employers and alumni, the experts explicitly inquired whether there is a market for these new offers based on microcredentials and whether there is a willingness to pay for these new offers. The answer in both cases has been overwhelmingly positive.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that ATU has a reliable system for the creation of new programs and the further development for its manifold existing study programs in place. They confirm that internal and external stakeholders are involved and cyclical reviews to modernize existing programmes operate. There is a fixed and published protocol in place with a multi-layered process for internal program validation with the support of external experts. From an institutional point of view, the university leadership is challenged to coordinate the overall direction of the university educational development and to find the right balance in offering Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. courses, given the fact that the demand for offers on level 7-9 of the Kazakh qualification level currently is limited and internal resources scarce. On the other hand, the experts recommend looking into the issue of responding to new market needs for short cycle programs in the area of professional development and continuous education. This would contribute to diversifying the income structure of the university and increase much needed third party funding.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts commend ATU on its manifold and comprehensive planning processes geared to the further improvement of its study programs. Before the initiation of a new program, its requirements and perspectives are comprehensively discussed on practically all levels of the faculty in question. The experts recommend using more actively the instrument of benchmarking with regard to European disciplinary learning outcome conventions and programs offered at comparable institutions in other countries.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The ASIIN experts witness manifold examples of a quality assurance culture focusing on initiating new study programs and modernizing existing ones. On frequent occasions, program initiators are reaching out to various internal as well as external stakeholder groups actively seeking their input for the design of its educational offerings. External and Internal experts are working together in the process of modernizing educational offerings, students are participating in the process as part of the respective faculties quality assurance commissions.

Criterion II.2: Implementation of Programmes / Courses / Trainings

Questions

Institutional dimension: What are the strengths with regard to structures as well as to physical and human resources in the *implementation* of educational offers? What are the weaknesses with regard to the structures (e.g. organisational set-up, decision-making paths) and to the resources in the day-to-day work?

Procedural dimension: Which procedures in the implementation of programmes (i.e. the delivery of programmes, i.e. the teaching processes) work well? Which can be considered good practice? Which processes need the particular attention of those responsible? What are the reasons? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: How does the collaboration between the different units work in the day to day implementation of teaching? Do typical areas of conflict exist and how are they dealt with? Do all stakeholder groups involved in the implementation of teaching provide the expected input? What are the reasons if expectations are not met?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU offers a broad range of programs for its approximately 7500 students. The university identifies its strongpoints in specific disciplines such as food science and light industries.

One of the specific features of the implementation of study programs in Kazakhstan is the fact ***that instruction is offered in a trilingual mode*** with courses being delivered in Kazakh, Russian and English language. In the case of ATU, the language of instruction is primarily Kazakh and Russian with only 5-13% of the teaching being delivered in English (with few notable exceptions such as a popular dual degree program in hospitality with Switzerland).

Another challenge remains the ongoing adaptations ***regarding online-and blended learning models introduced during the COVID-pandemic***. In order to cope with these difficult boundary conditions and unfamiliar learning environment, ATU has managed to secure substantial European funding and in the process has created the Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies (CIET). CIET has subsequently provided and continues to provide substantive support services to teaching staff at ATU on a considerable scale.

Research-based education is an important goal according to the documentation provided to the ASIIN expert team. This topic also is placed highly on the agenda within the new Strategic Plan. As a result, ATU has greatly increased the number of study programs on the Master and Ph.D level and currently contemplates the introduction of a new type of staff category, which is the “research professorship” (more on this topic can be found under the criterion “human resources” and “staff development”).

ATU has put in place ***both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information regarding the student life cycle***, such as student admission, progression, drop-out rates and the deviation from standard periods of study and the success of its students on the labour market. Among the topics

on the current agenda figure the relatively low enrolment rate in some of the Master and especially in doctoral programs, which is not conducive to stimulate scientific exchange among students.

As regards the ***area of internationalization***, currently there is no culture of incoming and outgoing student mobility on a bigger scale even when considering the impact of the Covid pandemic. Currently, only about six percent of the ATU's student body uses the chance to study abroad. There is a limited number of pathways available to do so: one is the dual degree programs, which are offered in cooperation with a number of international partners (see more under the subsequent criterion on Cooperation). The same can be said for incoming students, where the numbers are even lower, less than 2 percent of the student population comes from outside Kazakhstan. Most of the students are coming from neighbouring countries such as Russia and the Ukraine, which can enrol in the study tracks offered in Russian. There are practically no students studying programs in English. One of the impeding factors is the limited number of English speaking (tuition revenue creating) or bilingual study programs geared towards students from non-Slavic Countries. Procedures for the recognition of credits for study transfer are in place.

The ASIIN expert team in the discussions raise the issue of internationalization with various stakeholder groups. Given the fact that internationalization is one the core priorities of ATU, they come to mixed conclusions. Offering a trilingual education in theory gives ample chances to attract students with various language backgrounds. In reality, it is however more a bilingual education offered mainly in Kazakh and Russian language, as English language capabilities are currently limited among ATU's staff and students and practically no students are coming from western countries. A much more promising market are students from Russia, Ukraine and other Slavic speaking countries, which find sufficient offers in Russian study tracks at ATU. The experts recommend defining the notion of an "international university" more narrowly and focusing on increased marketing efforts geared toward Russian-speaking countries, which already provide the bulk of the international student take-in. Becoming an international university with a diverse student population would however require massive investments in English language education and the additional recruitment of internationally experienced staff.

Concerning outgoing mobility, the experts understand that sometimes there are restraints for international mobility due to financial issues. They nevertheless see considerable potential in making better use of European mobility programs in the framework of ERASMUS Plus and other programs. The implementation of formal windows of mobility in each study program might also be instrumental in increasing the percentage of outgoing students. As regards the recognition of credits, is in an appropriate condition at ATU.

The experts commend ATU for its success to manage the necessary educational reform processes caused by the pandemic. The university has proactively reacted to this crisis by establishing the Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies, which has become a hub for facilitating the transformation to virtual online-education formats within and beyond the boundaries of ATT. The expert team has taken note of the impressive work plan of the CIET for the upcoming years, which will contribute to making the necessary adjustments in the delivery of university education sustainable and permanent.

As regards the strengthening of a “research based” education as integral part for the aspirations of ATU to become an international research university, the expert found some evidence while visiting food laboratories. Students demonstrated to experts their novel foods. The experts also visited an accredited food safety research laboratory where students (mostly master and doctoral students) can test their developed foods. Additionally, leading researchers from research institutes are appointed as scientific supervisors of doctoral students

In spite of these positive examples, the experts currently see considerable room for improvement and the need for additional investment. This nexus is further elaborated under subsequent sections of this accreditation report related to the “interaction with research”. Suffice to say, that the introduction of a “Humboldtian” approach to teaching and learning is currently at best work in progress and adjustment on multiple switches are needed to substantiate the claim. Currently, there is comparatively little third party research funding, the teaching load is high with limited time left to do research, the publication statistics are also not in line with the high-flying goals.

Checking student success at various levels of the student life cycle by contrast is definitely a strength of ATU. The expert team commends the institution for having the appropriate monitoring instruments in place. ATU students generally graduate on time and find appropriate employment shortly after leaving their Alma Mater. Stakeholders are generally highly satisfied with the professional profile and competences of ATU’s graduates, which is undoubtedly a success story for the institution. In the discussions with more than 60 representatives from the employment sector as well as Alumni, the representatives of industry as well as the former graduates are predominantly satisfied with the quality of graduates irrespective of a wide spread habit among employers to further train the graduates once they commence their employment in a company.

ATU has identified a fundamental reform of its teaching philosophy as well as corresponding examination systems as top priorities. The same applies to the examination system, where it is currently the privilege of each faculty and each lecturer to implement its own system, which makes a system-wide shift towards an outcome based examination without thorough training a challenge. Regarding outcome-based education, the experts in the course in their discussions with relevant stakeholders come across some encouraging evidence of supporting elements. In the course handbooks, the course learning outcomes have been formulated in an outcome-based manner, showing that the teaching staff at the ATU has been introduced to the theoretical underpinnings of this approach (e.g. Bloom’s taxonomy). The expert team salute and encourage these efforts. It recognizes however, that delivering high quality teaching and learning experiences is a work in progress and welcomes reinforced efforts further stimulating active learning. It also finds that the experience of being required to teach online the Covid-19 pandemic has opened new doors to make teaching more engaging and has served as a catalyst for staff members to become more innovative in their teaching styles, exploiting the many features of the new modes of teaching and learning.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts can confirm that students and graduates are highly satisfied with the quality of study programs they enroll in or have graduated from. The same finding emerges from the discussions with employers.

As an institution, AUT has been dealing well with the difficult boundary conditions during the Pandemic in implementing its programs and providing a conducive learning environment. The creation of the CIET has proven instrumental for preparing teachers and students alike in an exemplary manner. Given ATU's goal to develop into an international research university, the experts recommend to continuously investing in the proliferation of a "research-based" education and stimulating "critical thinking"-capacities of students and staff wherever possible.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts acknowledge that the UO has put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression for its various educational offerings. Student progression, dropout rates and the deviation from standard periods of study as well as student success are regularly monitored, the corresponding statistics show that student at ATU usually study within the standard period of study and that the dropout rates are comparatively low.

In terms of internationalization and in view of ATU's aspiration to become an international university, the experts recommend concentrating on the following measure: as regards the aspect of incoming mobility, there should be a further focus on attracting more students from Russian speaking countries. Prospectively, investments need to be secured to provide additional educational offerings in English. Regarding outgoing mobility, a systematic advertisement and use of European mobility programs will contribute to giving more ATU students an international study opportunity.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

While acknowledging the difficult boundary conditions during the time of the Pandemic, the experts nevertheless challenge ATU leadership for providing a more conducive international learning environment for its students.

Becoming an international research university, as stipulated by the ATU's Strategic plans, requires not only additional resources on all level but a change of mind-set on the part of stakeholders engaged in the further development of the universities' future.

In spite of the fact that the expert team has encountered evidence that an active, student-centred learning philosophy is becoming established the experts nevertheless suggest that the ATU reinforces its support for a modern teaching philosophy ensuring that interactive, student-centred learning and teaching become the norm for all educational offerings and throughout all faculties fostering critical thinking capacities wherever possible.

Criterion II.3: Cooperation

Questions

Institutional dimension: How is the cooperation with other institutions and between different internal units organized with regard to the implementation of programmes (structures and regulations)? What works well in the case of internal or external collaborations, what could be improved? How do such collaborations for programmes usually come into being within the institution?

Procedural dimension: Which factors are critical for the smooth organization and implementation of collaborations? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: What principles does the institution have in place for internal and external cooperation for educational offers? Are the existing rules and standards accepted by those affected by them? How are conflicts dealt with? What are the challenges with regard to collaborations?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

In its Self-Assessment Report and during the discussion with all stakeholders the experts learn about the broad range of cooperation agreements, which ATU entertains with various partners from the field of industry and academia nationally as well as internationally.

ATU benefits from its embeddedness in the region and its excellent contacts to external stakeholders in the city, region and country. As regards the cooperation with the business community, ATU has institutionalized this collaboration by e.g. creating its Board of Trustees, in which leading representatives of Kazakh companies and corporations, business networks and professional bodies are represented. Business stakeholders engage with ATU on practically all activities. They consult the university regarding the creation of new and modernization of running programs, provide internship and employment, suggest topics for thesis work and cooperate in common projects.

In the documentation provided to the experts, the University in addition provides further statistics regard the recruitment of guest lecturers from the business community, the regular conduct of round tables with representatives of the employers' side to discuss current and future requirements of the labour market as well as the establishment of new forms of dual trainings. This is of particular importance given the nature of ATU as a University of Applied Sciences with a strong focus on providing skilled practitioners and professionals (mainly with a Bachelor qualification) for the Kazakh market.

As regards the aspect of inter-university cooperation, ATU has concluded a sizeable number of cooperation agreement/MOUs with altogether 117 partner universities from Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal and CIS. A notable success story has been the creation of joint study offers with the Swiss Institute of Hospitality and Tourist Management, the European Institute of Design (Italy), the Russian Economic University as well as the Polish University of Food

Technologies in Plovdiv and two examples of cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz state technical as well as the economic university

The experts are impressed by the broad range of cooperation agreements in place. They attest a very strong connection of ATU with the business community. This is exemplified by the big number of representatives, which were present during the time of the interviews. Almost all representatives of the employer side during the interviews were highly satisfied with the work of the university and the role, the university is playing for the development of the country. Its graduates are widely welcomed and appreciated. Suitable communications channels have been established over the years with multiple opportunities for the partners to engage. The Board of trustees is playing a crucial positive role in fostering this relationship. In spite of their high degree of satisfaction, employers suggest further increasing practice hours/time for internships so that students receive more applied skills, which will make it easier for them to find a job.

While, generally speaking, the level of engagement is high, the ASIIN experts see considerable room for further cooperation especially in the area of continuous professional development. Challenged by the expert team, the employers' side declare their interest in sending their employees for further (paid) training, provided ATU would offer these short cycle/professional development courses. The training centres in ATU's Technopark could be instrumental to that regard, as especially in the area of food science and technology there is great potential for (certified) training.

Another area of untapped potential relates to cooperative efforts in joint research and development projects. The experts find, that the amount of third party funding currently is comparatively low, as it contributes only 5% to the income of ATU. The experts recommend having another entrepreneurial look at the business partnership and see room for increased collaborative economic activities.

Regarding the international inter-university cooperation, the experts commend ATU on its vast university network and the creation of a number of double degree programs. They however equally find, that it has, as of now, not contributed to a sufficient level of international cooperation in the area of students exchange (with less than 2% of its student intake coming from abroad and less than 6% having an international study experience). They see potential for an increased exchange of lecturers outside of the "Slavic" education space (mainly Ukraine and Russia) especially before the background, that ATU wants to become an "international university" and is in need to upgrade its programs offered in English). The same finding applies to the conduct of joint projects (with some notable exceptions such the HiEdTech-project, described in later parts of this report).

The experts positively note the creation of the ATU Alumni Association, which was established back in 2016 and which has a very positive impact on the university's operations.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The expert teams finds that ATU has institutionalized a well-established system of cooperation within the business community as well as with its academic environment nationally as well as internationally. The university has a very good standing in the Kazakh economic and academic ecosystems. Institutional arrangement to foster further research collaboration however is needed, if the University wants to proceed on its path to become an internationally recognized research university.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 2

The experts commend ATU on its successful implementation of its extensive networks with its surrounding business community, its alumni and partner universities within Kazakhstan and internationally. The formal creation of an Alumni organization has been an important step forward for the university. Regarding the manifold partnerships with international university, the experts recommend making better use of existing partnership in terms of student and staff exchange, joint projects and collaboration in research activities instead of further augmenting the sheer number of academic partnerships on paper.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

From a cultural point of view, the experts witness an atmosphere of collaboration and good will of all parties involved. Personal relations as well as formal communication channels are in place to foster collaboration between the university and its partner from the sphere of industry and academia. The Board of Trustees best encapsulates this spirit of cooperation among and between the different stakeholders.

Criterion II.4: Examination Systems and Organisation of Exams**Questions**

Institutional dimension: Which rules and structural provisions have an effect on the design of exams in the programmes? What works well, what should be improved?

Procedural dimension: Which procedures for the exam methodology and exam organisation (including assessment criteria) work well? Which procedures do those responsible have to take particular care of? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Which principles do those responsible have to take into account when designing and organizing exams? Are these principles accepted by all involved stakeholders? What role does the institutional tradition have in the design of exams? Are new assessment methodologies taken into account? Which values and behavioural patterns have the highest influence on the exam system and organization? How do these influence the achievement of the objectives for exams? Do typical conflicts exist among those involved with regard to exam methodology and exam organization? How are such conflicts dealt with?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU has published all relevant rules and procedures of its examination system in a number of publicly available documents, among them the “Regulations on the procedure for monitoring progress and intermediate certification of students” as well as the “Regulations on the organization and conduct of final attestation of students”. Other documents of importance are the “Regulations on the preparation and defence of Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. thesis”.

ATU minutes that it is using a broad range of altogether six different examination forms, including written and oral exams, laboratory assignments etc. The experts learn that it is the privilege of the individual lecturer what kind of exam will be applied. Work in progress in the introduction of an outcome-based assessment scheme as well as modern assessment rubrics.

As regards the grading system, the final grade in each course is composed of two elements: 60% of the grade will be calculated by students’ achievement until and including the midterm exams, the final 40% will be the result of the final exam in each course. In order to take the final exam, the student must regularly attend all classes. The GPA of ATU students on average is....., students mostly progress and graduate on time.

During the Pandemic, the conduct of exams had to be adjusted. ATU before this background has put into place modern proctoring systems in its attempt to prevent illegal practices and cheating to materialize. ATU in addition has developed strict regulations on antiplagiarism in case but reports that there has been only few cases of fraudulent behaviour.

The ASIIN experts find that the rules and regulations of examinations are clearly defined and that staff members and students are aware of these rules and apply them.

The expert team finds conclusive evidence that the assessment system at ATU rests on a broad range of different types of assessment, including oral and written examinations. The experts are reassured that a combination of these are used also in the crucial area of language education. The conditions for an examination are clearly stated in the course description in the electronic information system. Whereas staff in the interviews did not have particular issues with regard to ATU’s examination system, in the triangulating discussions with students during the on-site visit, the following points of concern were raised:

The students, while expressing the opinion, that the examination system is fair and transparent, criticized, that the exact dates of the final exams frequently are only communicated very late in the semester. The “last minute” announcement reportedly makes it difficult for the students to plan the examination phase (as well as the ensuing semester vacations).

Some students wished to be able to make a choice regarding their examining lecturer. The experts had difficulties to get to the bottom of things in this respect. They nevertheless recommend having oral examinations executed always by two staff members to avoid one-on-one examination situations, which might cause unnecessary problems.

Finally, the recommend considering the use of “external examiners”, thus periodically evaluating the validity of the grading system in a comparative analysis.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that the rules and regulations of examinations are clearly defined and that all concerned stakeholders are aware of these rules and apply them. The methods and forms of assessment as well as performance-related expectations are equally clearly defined and communicated transparently.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that the ATU has sound, transparent and fair examination procedures in place. Students are being informed about the details and can adequately prepare. The results are available without great delay and do not stand in the way of student progression. In terms of recommendation for further improvement, the expert see a need systematically announcing the dates for the final exams earlier than is currently the practice. They furthermore recommend avoiding one-on-one examination situation and see value in periodically checking the validity and comparability of its grading schemes by using external examiners.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The expert team finds that there is a solid examination culture regarding examinations at the University in place, students are generally satisfied with the system. There is a clear commitment for a fair examination system and fighting plagiarism.

Criterion II.5: Recognition of Achievements

Questions

Institutional dimension: Do the rules, structures and responsibilities for the recognition of achievements obtained from other institutions or in a non-academic setting work as expected?

Procedural dimension: Do the procedures for the recognition of achievements obtained from other institutions or in a non-academic setting work as expected? Are there typical difficulties which regularly occur in the procedures? Which changes are planned for which reasons?

Cultural dimension: What are the guiding principles for the recognition of external achievements? Have the relevant members of the institution and interested students and teaching staff been informed of them and do they accept them? How are conflicts dealt with?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU according to its own account has sound recognition procedures and regulations in place. The corresponding document is labelled “Regulations on the procedure for recognizing the learning outcomes of formal and non-formal education”. This is partly misleading in as much, as there are currently no provisions in place neither on the national nor on the institutional level to recognize the results of non-formal education.

The corresponding body in charge of making recognition and equivalency decisions is the so called “profile commission”.

At ATU, there are a number of double-diploma degrees on offer, where recognition of credentials is “built in”. This applies for the joint study offers with the Swiss Institute of Hospitality and Tourist Management, the European Institute of Design (Italy), the Russian Economic University as well as the Polish University of Food Technologies in Plovdiv and two examples of cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz state technical as well as the economic university. For shorter form of study exchanges with foreign universities, learning agreements are discussed and agreed on with the concerned students prior to the commencement of their semester abroad. In the transition from school to technical and vocational diploma programs, there is a mechanism in place recognizing qualifications from the previous level of formal education and reducing the period of study accordingly.

The experts take note of the regulations in place for the recognition of achievements. They are also reassured by the fact, that Kazakhstan as a country has signed the corresponding Lisbon Recognition Agreement. In their conversations with the students, the ASIIN expert team does not learn about any concerns and problems in this area. They conclude that the current system is working well. The experts recommend the launch of a micro-credentials scheme to offer convenient and topical short courses for credit, which can then be stackable to provide more opportunities and convenience for learners.

As regards the existence and use of Diploma Supplements, the experts learn, that they have been in use since 2012, ATU is providing its students and graduates with transcripts of their results at the end of a their studies as required by the ASIIN rules.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The ASIIN experts find that ATU has adequate rules and regulations in place to deal with the recognition of achievement on all levels of the academic qualification framework. In their discussions with stakeholders, they do not come across inadequacies in this domain and they are reassured by experiencing general satisfaction of students regarding this topic.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that there are fair and transparent admission criteria and adequate procedures in place to provide qualification channels to students from various educational backgrounds. The Lisbon Convention constitutes the yardstick for recognition procedures and the institution makes its decision on a comparison of achieved learning outcomes in order to smoothen the articulation of its graduates to its programs. Learning Agreements are in place for recognition of credentials acquired by students at a foreign partnering higher education institution. A Diploma Supplement is delivered to each graduate of the ATU. A new challenge in the future will have to be tackled with the emergence of micro-credentials in Kazakhstan and the European Higher Education Area. Rules for the recognition of non-formal education still need to be elaborated on the national level in order for ATU to follow suite.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The expert team in general finds, that the ATU has cultural dispositions of acting as an inclusive educational institution with fair and transparent admission and recognition criteria, striving to provide qualification channels to students from various educational backgrounds. Currently there is however only a very limited degree of internationalization and student mobility to be observed.

Criterion II.6: Assistance and Support**Questions**

Institutional dimension: Which elements of the assistance and support services offered for students are successful? Which changes are required? What are typical challenges to be overcome? Are the physical and human resources adequate and sufficient to implement the expected assistance and support services? How is this verified?

Procedural dimension: How do the processes to provide assistance and support work? Which processes are considered to work well, which need to be improved? Do the members of the institution who are involved in the assistance and support have sufficient information and resources? Are the target groups for assistance and support reached as intended? How is this verified? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Are the offers of assistance and support available used by the intended target groups? If not, why not? How satisfied are the individual target groups with the assistance and support on offer?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU has established a broad range of systems to support students before, during and after their studies at the institution. These services are provided by the Student Service Centre, which has been newly opened in 2020 and is offering all services centrally from one source. Students of ATU are supported throughout the student life cycle. At the beginning of their studies, students are assigned

an advisor, who supports them during the course of their studies in matters of admission, choosing and enrolling in a program, providing guidance in educational matters and organizing tutor support where needed. In order to organize educational, organizational, methodological and consulting work, **curators of academic groups** are appointed at each faculty. During the academic year, once a semester, students meet with the management of ATU in a question-answer format. The results of the meeting are published in the Rector's Blog at www.atu.edu.kz.

Students have access to "Univer", which is a software and information tool, documenting a student's educational achievement throughout the entire period of study and providing online services, such as obtaining transcripts and certificates applying for transfer etc. via a Virtual Office Registrar. Students also receive every year an electronic guidebook informing students about their respective study offers. Social Media (WhatsApp groups) are used to inform students about more specific, day-to-day features of their studies.

A career service centre provides assistance **in organizing the transition from studies to graduate employment**. On regular occasion, employment fairs are organized bringing students together with their future employers. The Board of Trustees, in which important stakeholders from the labour market are assembled, supports these activities. Graduates of ATU as a result are successful in finding suitable employment quickly.

In terms of **financial assistance**, talented students are supported by the ATU Endowment corporate fund. To provide support to socially vulnerable groups of students, a commission for the provision of benefits for tuition fees has been established.

JSC "ATU" has developed further infrastructure to provide support measures to students. The **health centre** provides medical and sanitary assistance and assists in promoting a healthy lifestyle in the student population. During the Corona crisis it also was instrumental in conducting anti-epidemic measures and organized vaccination and revaccination of the teaching staff and students.

Psychological support services are also available to students. There is a helpline, which students can use for psychological counselling. Trained psychologists support in solving practical problems of students' life, assisting them in developing their personal potential, creative abilities and positive motivation for learning. Almost all of first year students participate in psychological diagnostics, in the framework of which vulnerable students are identified and trainings for these "risk groups" are organized. Constant contact is maintained with curators-advisers, who receive the necessary recommendations for interacting with students, taking into account personal and age characteristics.

The chair of the so-called "Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan - APK" participates in the process of supporting international students of different nationalities. A student club "Dostyk" was created in JSC "ATU". The Youth Council coordinates the work of student clubs and associations of interest.

Students at ATU are regularly surveyed on questions of satisfaction, the questionnaire includes open questions for proposals for improving the academic and educational processes.

The ASIIN expert team positively notes that in their discussions with students these are generally highly satisfied with the quality of their teaching staff, the mentoring and tutoring system as well as

with the administrative support offered by the institution. As part of its quality assurance system, ATU has instruments in place to monitor and measure student satisfaction with their academic environment and to take appropriate action where needed. The experts commend ATU for its manifold support initiatives and see the positive impressions from previous program accreditation procedures confirmed.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that ATU is offering a broad array of different student services on all levels. These include comprehensive assistance throughout all cycles of student life and includes support in the enrolment and learning process, during the transition to the labour market, assistance in personal, psychological and technical matters etc. Students in the interviews have articulated to be generally very happy with the provision of these services.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts conclude that ATU has adequate processes in place to provide assistance and support students in their studies. They commend the institution for continuously monitoring student satisfaction with the personal and administrative assistance provided via a number of online surveys. Surveys on student satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning are instrumental in improving the study experience.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts observe a general culture of cooperation, assistance, and helpfulness within ATU. Students generally are happy with the services provided.

III. Management of Resources

Criterion III.1: Material and Human Resources

Questions

Institutional dimension: Which elements particularly support the achievement of the quality objectives in this area as defined by the institution? What are typical difficulties and how are they dealt with?

Procedural dimension: Do the processes for the allocation and administration of physical and personnel resources, specifically for teaching and learning, within the institution work according to

the expectations of the different groups and units? How does the institution integrate external (legal and economic) requirements? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli? Which changes are planned or will become necessary based on such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: How can the members of the institution, e.g. teaching staff and students, participate in managing physical and human resources for teaching and learning? Do all members of the institution feel adequately informed about the management of physical and financial resources? Which values and methods are supported or expected of the people involved in terms of the use of resources? What are the guiding principles at the institution to avoid misuse or waste of resources? Are the set rules and guidelines accepted by those affected by them? How are conflicts dealt with?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

As regards the quality and viability of AUT's **human resource potential**, the expert team takes note of the institution's staff composition. The University currently employs 573 staff, of whom a little more than 50% (279) dispose of a Ph.D. qualification. Among the teaching staff figure 35 professors (26 of them full time), 99 associate professors (83 full time), 108 senior (66 full time) as well as 206 lecturers (158 full time). The average age of teacher staff is 49 years. The number of staff has considerably increased over the course of the past few years. Given the number of enrolled students, the average student-staff ratio amounts to 1:13 in line with ministerial regulations. In selected disciplines such as food and light industry, ATU according to its own account employs about 60% of Kazakh Doctors of Sciences and 40% of PhDs in the field.

One of the central general challenges related to the recruitment of best talent is linked to the non-competitive remuneration system of the Kazakh higher education employment sector but also to the specifications of internal ATU regulations. Regarding the latter, in the first three years of employment, the newly hired lecturer at ATU earns comparatively small wages with no chance of promotion even if they excel in their job. This according to ATU's own account frequently results in the departure/loss of the most gifted teachers, which find themselves stuck in inflexible HR regulations and consequently quit for higher paying jobs in industry. From then onwards, they are permanently lost as they no longer return to their Alma Mater.

All teaching staff working at AUT have a high teaching load of 600 hour per year, which translates roughly into 20 hours per week during one semester. In reality, the vast majority of lecturers at ATU shoulder a load beyond these 20 weekly teaching hours, which makes it – also in the complete absence of a periodical sabbatical – challenging to deeply engage in research activities. This scenario per se is not unusual for a typical private University of Applied Sciences with an emphasis of providing well-trained and tailor-made employees for the labour market. It however becomes a challenge before the background that ATU in its Strategic Plan 2022-2027 has put the transformation into a leading “International Research University” on top of its agenda. To approach this goal, ATU leadership has announced the introduction of so called “research professorships”, presumably starting with this endeavour in the course of the next academic year.

Concerning the quality of teaching, students at ATU are generally happy with the quality of teaching staff as evidenced by their feedback in periodical questionnaires. A satisfactory standard of teaching is also confirmed in the discussion with representatives of the employer side, who are generally content with ATU's graduates. The experts conclude that for the current "set up" of ATU as a recognized University of Applied Sciences, the quality and quantity of staff is adequate to secure the good standing of ATU in the Kazakh higher education market.

A different verdict however is rendered when the prospect of a leading International **Research University** is taken as a yardstick. The experts identify problems and challenges on at least two levels:

Regarding the upgrade of teaching and research qualifications, the experts learn, that the provisional numbers of "research professors" are in the range of 3-5 positions for each of the 4 faculties (not considering the faculty of continuous education). Apart from the fact, that the experts are not provided with a mid- or long-term financial plan, in which these (and many other) additional expenses are properly calculated and documented (see below), the process of filling these limited number of new positions is not clear. Upon request, the experts are informed that the "research positions" will be filled via an "open call", addressing ATU's own personal as well as external candidates. During the interviews, the expert team questions the staff regarding their interest in applying for the new positions. In spite of rather vague information available, roughly one third of the lecturers present announce their intent to apply. The experts see here a considerable potential of spoiled hopes and even the danger of cleavage within the existing staff. From a cultural there is a risk, that the new approach will plant the seed of inequality within the ranks of ATU teaching staff. In terms of HR (as well as financial and physical) resources, it also means, that ATU will have to invest heavily into the substitution of teaching time which will be lost in this transformation process towards "research professorships" with a reduced teaching load.

The experts imagine a less disruptive systems model, which is also favoured by some of ATU's deans in the various faculties at ATU. The deans favour a system, in the framework of which they are given the authority to distribute the teaching, research and other task in a more flexible way. This would allow for matching the various responsibilities in line with capabilities and personal preference. Those more talented in research and acquiring third party funding would profit from a reduced and individually negotiated reduction in teaching load, whereas the one for staff members with a passion for teaching would increase.

Regarding the transformation into an "**International**" Research University, the transformation process is also not backed up by sufficient HR resources and corresponding financial backup. Currently, the English (and in part Kazakh) language capabilities of most staff is limited; almost all interviews during this accreditation procedures had to rely on English (and sometimes Kazakh) translation services. Language of instruction is almost exclusively Russian or Kazakh, with very little education provided in English (with the notable exception of the dual degree program in hospitality with a Swiss partner).

Even if the definition of becoming an "International University" was to be narrowed down to the Russian speaking countries, the language barrier with regard to Kazakh would still persist. The only

solution has been and will be the introduction of trilingual study tracks, a concept, which however requires substantial investments into corresponding language/HR resources if fully implemented.

In summary, the experts acknowledge, that over the past couple of years, there have been additional investments in upgrading the HR capacity of the institution in the area of teaching and administration. The experts before this background consider the current composition and number of ATU's human resources as being sufficient and adequate to offer sound educational services. At the same time, the University is not disposing of the HR resources needed for the transformation process into an International Research University.

In terms of **financial resources**, ATU to a considerable degree relies on government funding. State funding provides currently around 50% of the annual budget. Another roughly 40% comes from tuition fees in various forms (self-financed or via stipends). Only 5% currently is generated by third party funding/services provided. Overall, ATU disposes of substantial financial resources and regularly generates a surplus.

The experts are informed that the University has a number of internal financial regulations in place to deal responsibly and strategically with the allocated funds. There is an economic board which according to a predefined structure discusses university-wide investments as well as the allocation of financial means to the faculties. No long-term financial plan nor a financial risk register is provided as part of the universities' self-documentation.

Assessing the financial situation of ATU, the expert team is amazed by the fact, that ATU as a private HEI receives substantial funding by the government. The percentage of state contributions even has increased over the past couple of years with no guarantee that this will continue in the future; the experts perceive stable income in the area of tuition fees, though ATU's own enrolment goals for Master and Ph.D. students have not been reached.

The amount of third party funding is low especially in view of ATU's high-flying aspiration to become a research university. The expert team sees a need diversifying ATU's income structure and generating alternative sources of funding to finance this transformation. The experts see untapped potential for increasing the institutions income and diversifying the sources of revenue by intensifying the research cooperation with ATU's industrial partners. Creating new international study offers while intensifying the recruitment of international students is an option, which has to be pursued more consistently. Systematically applying for international projects is also a potential way forward. The experts in this context point to the possibility to liaise with private companies that have specialized in drafting project proposals for attractive tenders. The experts in addition also recommend thinking about the marketing potential of continuous (certified) education that can be offered to a broad range of stakeholders. Practically all higher education institutions in European have meanwhile recognized the economic potential in this field, taking advantage of accompanying political initiatives like the introduction of a European Framework for micro-credentials, individual study accounts etc.

As regards the quality of the **physical infrastructure**, ATU is located in 4 educational buildings within the area over 70 thousand square meters including cultural and sports facilities. Non-resident students are provided with places in four student dormitories. ATU also disposes of a Scientific

Library development with four traditional reading rooms, subscription system for getting literature and sources, electronic resources centres, electronic catalogues and book depositories. The total area of the Scientific libraries amounts to 1780 square meters with 390 seating places, around 900,000 books, magazines, newspapers, over 250 titles of Kazakh and foreign periodicals publications are issued annually. Students and teaching staff in addition have access to Kazakh international, inter-University educational library platforms including an annual subscription to the Republican intercollegiate electronic library "RMEB" JSC "RNTB", RSE on the «Gylym ordasy», EBS ZNANIUM.COM (Moscow), EBS "Lan" (St. Petersburg), EBS "IPRbooks" (Saratov), EBS EBSCOhost (USA), ID GREBENNICON (Moscow), LLP "SmartInfo".

Currently, the University is undergoing a transition from a classical to the Smart-University model with massive investments in the proliferation of digital technologies. It is important to note, that ATU successfully has acquired a European grant for the "Modernization of Higher Education in Central Asia through new Technologies" (HiEdTec project). With the help of this project, ATU managed to modernize its lectures rooms, create a new studio for video-conferencing, install an educational platform for mass open learning courses and to create a virtual library of digital education resources.

The laboratories of ATU are assembled in the so-called "Technopark". It boasts multiple laboratories and training centres (for bakery, meat and milk processing, fermentation products, technology of conservation, public catering products, Kazakh-Korean centre of technology and design, tailoring industry, construction of light industry items, textile material science etc.).

ATU manages its buildings by entertaining an inventory of all physical facilities in use (and in planning), including plans for their renovation and reconstruction. In addition, there is an internal auditing system in place for inspecting the proper use of material resources and the Academic Senate of the University is exercising its monitoring functions through its Economic Committee.

During the audit, the ASIIN expert team had a chance to visit the facilities of the institutions. The experts visited the Technopark for food safety and technology with laboratories and training centres for bakery, meat and milk processing, fermentation products, technology of conservation, public catering products, grain processing, low-temperature treatment and also a certified laboratory in food safety. The ASIIN team visited the modernized library facilities and learned about the working mode during pandemic.

The experts find that progress has been made in upgrading the physical infrastructure with the Pandemic serving as a catalyst. The equipment within classrooms and laboratories in the School's learning centres has been modernized in order to facilitate the surge in online connectivity, as well as the associated training costs. With the pandemic, classes were successfully shifted to online video conferencing platforms.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

Regarding the viability of its human resources, the experts find that ATU currently has a sufficient number of qualified and committed staff. Students, Alumni as well as employers are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching and the commitment of their lecturers. All Staff have a heavy teaching load of at least 20 hours of weekly instruction, which leaves little room for research. The experts join the deans of ATU in suggesting that the deans should be provided with the opportunity to deploy the staff according to its talents and interests in a more flexible way. There also should be the possibility to make the rigid employment rules at ATU more flexible in order to retain the best talent at the institution.

In terms of finances and its material base, ATU can be considered a solid and well-managed institution. The institution is generating a small annual surplus and can rely on substantial reserves. It has however been less successful in diversifying its income and tapping into alternative sources of funding.

The physical resources are currently sufficient. In order to develop into a fully-fledged research university however, substantial additional funding for upgrading the laboratories with modern equipment would be needed.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 2

The experts find the ATU has appropriate processes in place for the allocation and administration of its physical, financial and human resources. It has a solid recruitment record and manages to recruit many qualified practitioners for its various study disciplines on offer. Financial regulations have been passed in order to govern the universities spending activities. Various monitoring systems also in place to control the proper flow of money. The experts nevertheless recommend the establishment of a detailed financial risk register and the development of a thorough long-term financial plan, clearly outlining the investment needs for implementing the transformation process outlined in its Strategic Plan.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find evidence for a “corporate spirit” among the institutions employees, which is explicitly mentioned in its HR policies. They observe a close cooperation among and between the various employment groups and foster the collaboration between the academic and administrative co-workers. The transformation of ATU into a more “Entrepreneurial university” requires a change of mind-set among ATU stakeholders.

Criterion III.2: Human Resources Development

Questions

Institutional dimension: Which challenges have to be mastered with regard to staff development? Do the existing concepts take these challenges adequately into account?

Procedural dimension: How does the implementation of the staff development concept work? What are typical difficulties? How are they dealt with? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Which of the concepts and offers for staff development – specifically those with a focus on subject-relevant and didactic development – are particularly well received by teaching staff? Which are not? Why?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU's Human Resources are governed by a comprehensive quality management system and manual, developed, passed and published in 2021. This document contains the QA requirements for ATU's human resources, determining the main goals, objectives and mechanisms for developing the potential of ATU's staff.

Regarding the measures related to the development of HR capacities within ATU, there are some external requirements to be honoured as well as a range of internal offers, which ATU provides for the further professional development of its staff.

According to Kazakh regulations, each lecturer teaching at a University is required in at least one further training course related to his/her discipline to update his/her professional skills. Apart from this state exigency, ATU on its own initiative invests heavily in the further training of its staff. There are a number of courses in place in the area of modern pedagogy, critical thinking, dealing with plagiarism or language education, offered by the departments for training, teaching methodology and trilingual education. These further education courses are provided on a voluntary, cost-free basis and enjoy a high popularity. The annual participation rates in this further development courses has steadily increased in time and today almost equals the number of ATU teaching staff, according to its own account and the evidence provided. It is noteworthy, that ATU's Institute for Advanced Studies and Retraining of Personnel" offers trainings for young teachers and training staff to expand and deepen their knowledge. In the past academic year, more than 70 teachers were thus trained and retrained.

ATU also mentions that during the pandemic, it has greatly intensified its support for its staff to be able to adapt to the new challenges of providing high quality instruction on a virtual basis. The experts are provided with the work plan of the aforementioned Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies, which contains an impressive number of training measures for the preparation of ATU staff for the challenges of the new digital era.

Concerning monetary as well as non-monetary incentive systems, ATU has implemented a broad range of measures, which are summarized and documented in the "employees' remuneration regulations". Next to their salary and various bonuses, there exist incentives for employees in the form of vouchers discounts on tuition, provision of paid time off, access to training measures etc.

Looking at the overall picture and taking into account the feedback obtained in their discussion with various stakeholder groups, the expert team comes to the following conclusions:

ATU has to be commended for its efforts to upgrade the qualification of its staff. The fact that a very high percentage of staff makes use of these additional professional development courses, attests to the success of this HR strategy. ATU also has managed to assist its staff in the transition to teaching during the COVID-Pandemic providing multiple support through its Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies. There is also an incentive system in place which rewards special achievement of ATU's staff. In the discussion, the experts nevertheless learn that new opportunities for the development of academic mobility programs for teachers would be greatly appreciated.

While the existing course offers are high in demand, there is also a wish on the part of the teaching staff to have additional offers in the area of personal development/strategies to motivate active student engagement, which is a concern, also addressed in ATU's Strategic Plan. The expert group furthermore recommends offering additional courses in a number of critical areas such as sound scientific writings as well as in the area of successful project application and administration. The first recommendation is instrumental to fulfil ATU's strategic ambitions to increase the research output in terms of publications in recognized international journals, the second is formulated in view of ATU's quest to diversify its income structure and to increase third party funding.

While academic staff greatly profits from the above-mentioned additional training offers, the expert team in their interview and discussion round with the **administrative staff** learn, that very few of the many present interviewees has partaken in further education courses. Before this background, the expert group encourages the university leadership actively promoting the offers on stock also in this group of employees. There is no reason, why administrative e.g. would not also profit from better English knowledge e.g.

The ASIIN expert team commends ATU for introducing a number of monetary and non-monetary incentive systems in place to honour good teaching and learning and to advance on the career ladder. In their discussions, they learn that there is currently no system in place for the planning of individual career pathways. Before this background, they recommend the introduction of so-called "career plans" replacing the current monitoring system. Each staff members once a year e.g. could sit in an interview with the dean/department head to discuss his/her career perspectives based on their own career aspirations. By introducing this new HR management tool, ATU could improve internal communication, decrease fluctuation among staff and increase employee satisfaction.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that ATU's Human Resources are governed by a comprehensive quality management system. The corresponding manual has been developed, passed and published in 2021. It contains also a range of incentive systems to honour outstanding achievements. With regard to the challenges of adapting to the Corona crisis, the university has greatly supported its staff by establishing the Centre for Innovative Educational Technologies with the help of an EU grant.

As regards the establishment of a systematic HR development, the experts recommend introducing a more participatory approach citing the development of individual “career plans” as a potential option. If the university wants to proceed on becoming an internationally acknowledged research university, the institutionalization of periodical sabbaticals would have to be considered.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

ATU is offering a considerable number of well-received professional development systems on a regular basis. So far, the number of employees, who regularly benefit from continuous education courses, has increased greatly in recent years and now almost all academic staff profit from these courses. The participation of administrative staff in these courses however lags behind, so that the experts recommend a new focus on the training needs of this staff category.

While acknowledging the broad range of available training courses, the experts suggest offering additional courses in the areas of “personal development”, “motivation for active student engagement”, “sound scientific writing” as well as “successful project application” for the reasons mentioned above.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts appreciate that there are a considerable number of support measures available to ATU’s staff. The HR policies signal a clear understanding of the importance of continuous professional development. The experts also commend ATU for systematically monitoring its employees’ satisfaction with their working conditions.

Criterion III.3: Interaction with Research

Questions

Institutional dimension: Are there any challenges at the points of interaction between teaching and research? Do the existing concepts take these challenges adequately into account? What are the strengths of the existing concepts and arrangements?

Procedural dimension: How are the processes to link teaching and research designed? Who is involved, who is responsible, and who is informed? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Which values and modes of behaviour are expected from the members of the institution when it comes to combining teaching and research? How is the expected mode of behaviour supported? To which extent do the different members of the institution share and accept the expected values and behaviour?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

As mentioned throughout this accreditation report, the leadership of ATU has identified the development into an internationally recognized research university its top strategic priority for the

next five years. One of its most important benchmarks in that regard is the number and quality of publications in international magazines indexed in Clarivate data Analytics and Scopus bases. ATU minutes in its Self-Assessment-Report, that currently the Scopus and Web of Science platforms contain profiles of more than 500 publications of 397 authors, mainly in the fields of science; engineering; material science; business, management and accounting. It further states, that during the last academic year, ATU scientists of the University published 182 articles in magazines included in rating foreign databases. It also mentions that the number of scientists with a Hirsch index at the University amounts to 156.

ATU also puts on record, that since September 2021, the "(Research) Bulletin of ATU" has been included in the List of publications recommended by the Committee Ensuring Quality in Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for publications of major results of scientific activities.

In terms of future direction, the University has defined seven major directions for scientific research. Among the core future research areas figure topics such as advanced equipment and technologies for raw materials processing for environmentally safe nutrition products production, biotechnology and nanomaterials in agro-industrial complexes, resource-saving safe textile technologies for the production of light industry products, design concepts and design methods for light industry, communication control of technological processes, sustainable tourism as well as innovative mechanisms for managing the economy of enterprises of food, light industry and hospitality sector.

ATU regularly hosts two international and one national scientific conferences annually. The conference "Innovative development of food, light industry and hospitality" as well as the "International scientific and technical conference "Kazakhstan Kholod" belong to the first, the national scientific and practical conference for young scientists "Science. Education. Youth" to the second category.

As regards further statistics on the research output, ATU enumerates close to 200 R&D projects, which over the course of the past 5 years have been conducted and implemented by ATU staff.

Every year, ATU's Academic Council is doing a stocktaking regarding the results of the university's research activities. In its quest to further upgrade the research potential of the institution, ATU is using/is considering the following instruments:

ATU's Strategic Plan provides for an increase in the research potential of the university, denoting target indicators. These are the number of publications of scientific articles in high-ranking journals and in journals included in the list of Quality assurance committee, RK. Furthermore the number of patents for inventions and utility models; the number of research projects for the competition for grant funding from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, JSC "Science Fund", etc.

As a major departure from past HR policies, ATU plans the introduction of "Research professorships". Around 15-20 of vacancies (3-4 per faculty) in this new staff category are to be filled by national and international scientists in an open tender.

The plan also foresees the upgrade of the research infrastructure of the university, which currently includes 3 research institutes, 8 scientific laboratories and 12 educational and scientific centres. ATU disposes of an educational and hotel complex, equipped with modern equipment as well as laboratory educational technological lines for production of milk and dairy products, meat and sausage products, bread and pasta, fermentation products, dietary supplements, grain mixtures and provision of a range of services for restaurant and hotel business. A long-term investment plan for upgrading the research facilities is not available/not provided to the expert team.

Research institutes of JSC "ATU" assist in teaching and in the performance of laboratory classes in the research laboratories of research institutes, provide methodological and consulting services. According to ATU, there are numerous examples regarding results of research work, which were introduced into lectures and practical exercises.

The ASIIN experts in their appreciation regarding the standing of research at ATU come to the following findings:

Regarding the publication record, they are of the opinion, that it is quality not quantity, which counts. They find that most ATU staff have a very low Hirsch index as publications in internationally recognized journals are currently an exception rather than a rule. This does not come as a surprise, as practically all academic personnel has a very high teaching loads, which in the absence of sabbaticals translates into a major impediment for engaging in substantial research. The introduction of the new staff category of "research professors" with a workload reduced by 50% in their view is a step into the right direction. Upon repeated request, the boundary conditions of introducing this new type of employment at ATU remains however rather vague, as it is still in the planning phase.

The experts also find that focusing on publications as main key performance indicator might cloud the view for other important research activities. As has been noted before, the number of projects and the amount of third party funding generated by them, is currently in the range of 5% of the universities' budget. This figure according to the experts is not in accordance with the Universities claim of becoming a premier research institution. The expert team identifies considerable amount of untapped potential in this area.

Concerning the research facilities and the available equipment, they are currently sufficient for a practically oriented university of applied sciences, but currently do not satisfy the requirement of being a recognized research university. Teaching staff during the interviews pointed out that the capacities in the laboratories should be increased, since in the past it has not always been possible to conduct practical classes with students due to the busy laboratories.

In terms of its "substructure", ATU has to find new ways to attract Master and Ph.D, students to increase its pool of scientific talent.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 1

The experts find that on the institutional level the role of research is receiving heightened attention not only in ATU's Strategic Plan, but also on the level of various policy papers. The university is about to implement a broad range of activities such as the institutionalization of "research professors", the identification of new research priorities etc., but this is still work in progress. The experts see currently a mismatch between the universities aspirations and departure from its traditional educational tasks at a university of applied sciences.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 1

The experts observe that ATU has formulated very ambitious goals, which currently are not supported and backed up by adequate implementation plans and sufficient resources in terms of HR capacities, finances and infrastructure. They expect that the envisaged transformation of ATU into a research university is better prepared and planned and that the implications of this change are clear for all stakeholder involved.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 1

As teaching in advanced higher education institutions is regularly informed by good research, there needs to be a continued focus on this important nexus. For a real culture in the Humboldtian sense of research to blossom, the room for engaging in active research should be further strengthened to avoid frustration among staff with regard to its research aspirations. While the experts acknowledge the announced action plans, in their eyes there needs to be a strengthened and continued effort to become better in this area.

Criterion III.4: Interaction with Administration**Questions**

Institutional dimension: What are the guiding principles and rules for the role and function of the administration linked to teaching and learning? Which elements of support for teaching and learning by the administrative units of the institution work well? What areas can be improved? What are typical challenges for the administration in order to effectively support the quality objectives for teaching and learning? How are these challenges dealt with?

Procedural dimension: How are the administrative units involved into the design, (further) development and implementation of educational offers and their quality assurance work? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Which values and methodologies are characteristic for the role of the administration in the processes of introducing, (further) developing and implementing educational offers as well as in their quality assurance? Which attitudes and behaviour are expected? How are they promoted? Are the set rules and guidelines accepted by those affected by them? How are conflicts dealt with?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU presents an organizational chart, which clearly depicts the distribution of powers and responsibilities of personnel within the institution. The main processes are presented in the Album of Process Information Cards. All structural subdivisions are under the supervision of one of ATU vice-rectors according to their area of responsibility.

The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs has the responsibility of supervising the Departments on training, teaching methodology, language education and the career centre as well as the office registrar, the library and the centre for Innovative Educational Resources. The Vice-Rector for Science and Innovation overlooks the services of the Department of Science, the Department of Postgraduate Education as well as the performance of various Research Institutes, the Dissertation Council as well as the Centre for Technology, Transfer, Education and Entrepreneurship. The first Vice-Rector is in command of the Department of Quality and Accreditation, the Department for International Relations and Academic mobility, the Institution for Advanced Training and Retraining, the Department of Technology and Economics as well as the Department of Information Technology. The Vice-Rector for Administrative and Economic issues is in charge of the maintenance department, the procurement department as well as the press office. The Vice-Rector for Student Services oversees all units related to providing student support services.

Each member of ATU's administration is guided by clear job descriptions defining areas of responsibility. The distribution of powers, responsibilities and functions is controlled by the quality management system of ATU. An assessment of the activities of all administrative units and their employees is carried out on a regular basis.

The experts witness manifold elements of support for teaching and learning by the ATU's administration and its various departmental subunits. Regarding student progression, dropout rates and the deviation from standard periods of study, the experts observe that student success within ATU is adequately monitored. The Career Service is instrumental in securing a rapid transition of ATU's graduates in the labour market. Overall, students in the interviews have been generally very satisfied with their educational experiences and corresponding administrative support services.

The same can be said for the academic staff, which is highly appreciative of the services rendered by the various administrative units. The academic staff and heads of departments support the administration's goal of achieving the status of a research university and welcome the offer of the university to create new positions of Professor and Associate Professor of Research. They still however need more informational support how the goal will be implemented in development of degree programmes and day-to-day activities.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that the guiding principles and rules for the roles and functions of the administration are adequately established. On the institutional level, there are homogeneous and functioning planning elements in place by which the quality objectives for teaching and learning are monitored.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts that ATU has information systems and QA procedures in place, which help to manage the institutions strategic goals. The administrative support systems generate the necessary data for the further development of the institution’s courses and programmes, for organising its learning resources and student support, for monitoring the performance.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts during their discussions see a high level of commitment on the part of ATU’s administrative units, a mentality to provide excellent services to students and graduates. The interphase with academic staff is working well.

IV. Transparency and Documentation

Criterion IV.1: Rules and Regulations for Programmes / Courses / Trainings

Questions

Institutional dimension: Which rules and regulations for educational offers have been defined? Whom do they address? Which units of the organisational setting are responsible? What works well?

Procedural dimension: How are the documents that define the rules for studying at the institution developed? How are they published and updated? How does the institution integrate external (e.g. legal) requirements into the processes? What are typical challenges with regard to the draft, update and dissemination of rules? How are they dealt with? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Do the members of the institution – specifically students and teaching staff – feel adequately informed about the rules and regulations for programmes that affect them? Are the rules accepted by the respective members of the institution affected by them? Are the rules transparent and understandable for all stakeholders?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

Rules and Regulations of ATU’s operations are highly regulated by the Kazakh Higher Education Law. Among the most important legal documents figure binding stipulations for “developing degree programs of higher and postgraduate education”, “planning, organizing and monitoring the

academic process on degree programs” as well as regulations “on forming the catalogue of elective disciplines” and “for planning the organization and monitoring of the educational process”.

Regarding the multiple degree programs offered by the University, most of the essential information is published on the universities’ website. This includes relevant information regarding the conditions for admission, links to the various program learning outcomes as well as course descriptions as integral part of each study programs. The structure and content of the curricula correspond to the model curricula and catalogues of elective disciplines (QED). All educational programs of ATU are included into the Register of Degree Programs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and updated in the Unified Higher Education Management System (ESUVO).

Regarding the graduation of students, students are issued a diploma and a transcript in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, English).

The ASIIN expert team confirms that the documentation available provides mostly transparent and comprehensive information for stakeholders concerning the rules and regulations for educational programmes on offer at ATU. These include information on admission rules to ATU’s programs, the type of programs on offer, the program learning objectives, as well as the intended learning outcomes of the individual courses/modules together with other important pieces of information. The website gives a clear overview with relevant information including the qualifications ATU’s awards, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures and the learning opportunities available to their students. The experts note that ATU issues adequate graduation documents (a Diploma Supplement”) for each of its graduates. The experts see room for improvement with regard to information related to mobility opportunities for students, which are very generic. Even if at this moment Erasmus mobility opportunities are not available, in website it is not mentioned and the previous calls for Erasmus grant competitions are not available. More information is needed what documents are required, which deadlines apply, which universities and partner are available etc.. The experts also find, that the website contain different information in the three language versions used; this should be streamlined and adjusted.

The experts find that ATU disposes of a transparent and thorough set of rules and regulations pertaining to the establishment, implementation and modernization of programmes that have been analysed in prior parts of this report. Teaching staff of ATU together with employers participate in the improvement of degree programs, Internal rules and regulations are approved by designated bodies in a cooperative, transparent fashion and monitored by the relevant faculties and departments. The experts also comprehend that in the regular administrative meetings administrative teaching staff members and students are involved in the development of relevant rules and regulations.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find a strong centralised management in relation to rules and regulations pertaining to programs. All legal external and internal documents are published and appropriately administered.

Regarding its manifold, diverse educational offering, the website and detailed course handbooks contain all relevant information. This includes the selection criteria and learning outcomes/competence profiles for the programmes they offer, the qualifications they award, the teaching content and learning outcomes as well as the assessment methods in use. An exception to this rule are the untimely announcements of examinations, which was discussed in prior sections of this report.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The expert attest that documents that define the rules and framework conditions for studying at the institution are developed, published and updated according to strict internal rules. A legal department is checking the compliance with national legal requirements.

Systematized procedures in relation to programme design, delivery and evaluation is in place at ATU. Information related mobility opportunities for students should be updated. The content of the website should be maintained at the same level for all three languages in use, so that the websites in Kazakh, Russian and English contain comparable information.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts confirm that stakeholders of the institution – specifically students and teaching staff – feel adequately informed about the rules and regulations for programs in which they enrol/are enrolled and teach. These high caliber procedures and systems related to running the manifold educational offerings at ATU are established in an inclusive, stakeholder-driven process.

Criterion IV.2: Documentation

Questions

Institutional dimension: How does the system for the documentation, document management and filing of information work? What are typical difficulties and how are they dealt with?

Procedural dimension: Do the processes with regard to the documentation and filing of information about teaching and learning / about programmes work as expected? What are typical challenges and how are they dealt with? How are the external requirements for transparency and documentation which are relevant to the institution (e.g. disclosure obligations and voluntary publication) embedded into internal processes? Where do stimuli for changes or for improvement come from? How can they be fed into the system and what are the processes to deal with such stimuli?

Cultural dimension: Do the members of the institution – specifically students and teaching staff – feel adequately informed about the educational offers and their general conditions? Which attitudes and behavior are expected from the members of the institution with regard to internal

and external information policies, also in terms of achieved quality objectives and need for improvement? Are these expectations accepted by the different stakeholder groups within the institution?

Analysis and Findings of the Experts

ATU disposes of a unified system of information management on study and degree programs. The document management system in place is called EDMS "Documentolog-7", the corresponding software program "Univer". All documentation of ATU has its own unique code identifying the type of document, the responsible developer and administrative division in charge, the type of document and the place of storage, which paragraph of MS ISO 9001:2015 it refers to, the year of development or updating of the document and its serial number.

At the end of the internal development process, each document is approved by the Rector and subsequently registered in the "Journal of Registration of Control Copies of QMS Documents. The approved version of the document is sent to the Documentolog-7 EDMS and internally distributed to all parties concerned.

Security software used by ATU includes programs for user identification, access control, information encryption, deletion of residual information, such as temporary files, test control of the protection system, etc. ATU also has installed backup equipment, which duplicates the changed information on its media in real time.

The experts conclude that ATU has an appropriate documentation system in place, which manages all central documents and supports the processes of planning and implementing degree programs. The data collected by the quality management system provides the ATU management with the information they need to adopt measures. The documentation and filing systems work in line with the respective legal and functional requirements.

Final Assessment of the Experts / Levels of Maturity Observed

After having studied and discussed the material provided, the ASIIN experts come to the following conclusions and level of maturity:

Institutional Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts identify a strong centralized emphasis on documentation at ATU.. Meetings and decisions are regularly documented. External legal requirements relevant for documentation and transparency are continuously taken into consideration in the respective processes. The documentation and filing systems work in line with the respective legal and functional requirements. The quality assurance and documentation system of the UO provides target-group specific information about the programs and maintains information about the learning process of each student for the entire life cycle.

Procedural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts confirm that high calibre centralized procedures and systems relating to the development, processing and distribution of documents are in place.

Cultural Level of Maturity Observed: 3

The experts find that there is a well-established documentary culture at ATU in place. They confirm that relevant stakeholders like administration, teaching staff and students have access to relevant documents, which are consistently updated.

D. Comment of the Higher Education Institution (20.02.2023)

In response to the experts' request, ATU provides aggregated data regarding the standards period of study, progression and drop-out rates in ATU's various faculties, which does not solicit further comments on the part of the expert team. ATU also provides statistical data regarding the composition of its teaching staff; the corresponding numbers have been updated in this accreditation report. Furthermore, the university hands in additional information regarding its financial planning featuring adequate reserves and regular surpluses for the financial year.

Regarding the suggested revision and upgrade of ATU's Strategic Plan, replacing the concept of a research university by the more realistic model of an entrepreneurial university, the bodies of ATU have met in the interim to discuss the next steps. ATU announces that representatives of the Trustee University, the employers and the Academic Council of ATU have in principle agreed to develop by March 2023 the concept of an "entrepreneurial university" instead of "research university". It equally minutes that it will "update the "Strategic Plan for the Development of the University for 2023-2028", taking into account the available human, material, technical, scientific and innovative resources, while maintaining the cultural values and uniqueness of the EP JSC "ATU" in the field of food, light industry and hospitality industry in the upcoming months. ATU declares its intent "to put into effect annual development plans with target indicators and measurable benchmarks, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives of JSC "ATU" as an "entrepreneurial university".

As regards the observation that the two parallel internal ISO and ESG QA approaches, should be further streamlined, ATU reports that on January 18th "it has updated the "Rules for the development of educational programs for higher and postgraduate education. This has been done "in order to ensure a unified approach in the construction of educational programs for higher and postgraduate education, as well as to improve the quality of educational programs". Uses systematically international competence frameworks and benchmarking exercises in defining modern learning outcomes for its programs (2.1.)

Regarding efforts to booster the internationalization of ATU, the university minutes that it will shortly post all necessary information onto the site www.atu.edu.kz for all interested parties, including for foreign students in the services of ATU JSC with one-click access.

The experts welcome these suggestions as well as the further comments provided by ATU.

E. Summary: Expert Recommendations (10.03.2023)

Overall Comments

ATU scores high across many of the four sets of criteria, the average is a good score of over 2.7, approaching a score of 3, equating to 'established and controlled'.

ATU scores high on a considerable number of areas such as the design and execution of programs, human resource development, examinations, student support or documentation,

Areas, which deserve further attention are the processes related to the definition of the overarching quality assurance objectives as well as the interaction with research.

Based on the institutional accreditation report the experts recommend awarding the ASIIN Institutional Quality Seal to ATU with the following requirement and recommendations for one year until 14 April 2024:

Maturity Levels:

Areas to Review		Maturity Level 0 = not existent; 1 = defined; 2 = implemented; 3 = established & controlled; 4 = predictive & proactive
I. Definition of Quality		
I.1 Objectives	a) institutional	2
	b) procedural	2
	c) cultural	2
I.2 (Quality-) management systems/ governance	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	2
	c) cultural	3
II. Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings		
II.1 Creation and development of programmes / courses / trainings	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3

Areas to Review		Maturity Level 0 = not existent; 1 = defined; 2 = implemented; 3 = established & controlled; 4 = predictive & proactive
II.2 Implementation of programmes / courses / trainings	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
II.3 Cooperations	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
II.4 Examination systems and organisation of exams	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
II.5 Recognition of achievements	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
II.6 Assistance and support	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
III. Management of Resources		
III.1 Material and human resources	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	2
	c) cultural	3
III.2 Human resources development	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
III.3 Interaction with research	a) institutional	1
	b) procedural	1
	c) cultural	1
III.4 Interaction with administration	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
IV. Transparency and Documentation		

Areas to Review		Maturity Level 0 = not existent; 1 = defined; 2 = implemented; 3 = established & controlled; 4 = predictive & proactive
IV.1 Rules and regulations for programmes / courses / trainings	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3
IV.2 Documentation	a) institutional	3
	b) procedural	3
	c) cultural	3

Based on the certification report the experts recommend:

The experts recommend awarding the ASIIN Institutional Seal to the quality management system of the Almaty Technological University with requirements for one year until 14 April 2024. The extension of the accreditation until 30 September 2029 is subject to the fulfillment of the requirements. An additional onsite visit is not required.

Requirements

- A 1. (ASIIN I.1) ATU needs to revise its Strategic Plan, formulating realistic goals to be achieved over the course of the next 5 years and aligning them to the resources available. The concept of an “entrepreneurial university” instead of a “research university” could potentially serve as an alternative development path.

Recommendations

The experts recommend that Almaty Technological University:

- E 1. (ASIIN I.2) Further streamlines the two parallel internal ISO and ESG QA approaches, currently in place. Critical thinking skills should be further strengthened in implementing these processes.
- E 2. (ASIIN I.2) Further operationalizes the annual development plans in place defining with more precision the undergirding lines of actions needed for the accomplishment of the KPIs.
- E 3. (ASIIN II.1) Uses systematically international competence frameworks and benchmarking exercises in defining modern learning outcomes for its programs.

- E 4. (ASIIN II.1) Develops new “short cycle”-courses to diversify ATU’s portfolio and to respond to new market needs in the area of professional development and continuous education.
- E 5. (ASIIN II.1) Increases efforts to secure sufficient enrolment in its Master and Ph.D. programs or alternatively closing the programs with an insufficient demand.
- E 6. (ASIIN II.2) Defines the notion of an “international university” more narrowly, focusing on those (Russian speaking) countries which provide the bulk of the current international student intake.
- E 7. (ASIIN II.2) Increases its efforts to foster internationalization by appropriate measures (better promotion of Erasmus study opportunities, establishing formal windows of mobility in all study program, introducing more study offers in English etc.. (2.2)
- E 8. (ASIIN II.2) Invests in the further proliferation of “research-based” education, stimulating critical thinking capability of staff and students.
- E 9. (ASIIN II.3) Provides continuous professional education courses for its stakeholders.
- E 10. (ASIIN II.3) Implements appropriate measures to increase the amount of third party funding/income generated from projects.
- E 11. (ASIIN II.4) Improves the examination system by announcing examinations in a timely manner, avoiding one on one examinations situations and considering the use of external examiners as a corrective device.
- E 12. (ASIIN III.1) Introduces a more flexible, individualized approach to the human resource management to cater for the various talents of individual staff and retain best talent.
- E 13. (ASIIN III.2) Reviews the effectiveness of its HR development tools and considers the introduction of “career plans” to plan individually the career perspectives of its employees.
- E 14. (ASIIN III.2) Enhances the participation of administrative staff in its continuous education courses and introduce new offers especially in the area of personal development, scientific writing, on successful application of third party projects.
- E 15. (ASIIN III.3) Consistently monitors and critically evaluates the success of its support measures in improving the research output of ATU. The process for the introduction of “research professorships” needs to be clarified and substantiated by appropriate means.

F. Decision of the Accreditation Commission (24.03.2023)

The Accreditation Commission decides to award the ASIIN Institutional Accreditation Seal to Almaty Technological University with one requirement for one year. Upon due fulfillment of the requirement, the accreditation period will be extended until 30 September 2029

Requirements

- A 1. (ASIIN I.1) ATU needs to revise its Strategic Plan, formulating realistic goals to be achieved over the course of the next 5 years and aligning them to the resources available. The concept of an “entrepreneurial university” instead of a “research university” could potentially serve as an alternative development path.

Recommendations

The experts recommend that Almaty Technological University:

- E 1. (ASIIN I.2) Further streamlines the two parallel internal ISO and ESG QA approaches, currently in place. Critical thinking skills should be further strengthened in implementing these processes.
- E 2. (ASIIN I.2) Further operationalizes the annual development plans in place defining with more precision the undergirding lines of actions needed for the accomplishment of the KPIs.
- E 3. (ASIIN II.1) Uses systematically international competence frameworks and benchmarking exercises in defining modern learning outcomes for its programs.
- E 4. (ASIIN II.1) Develops new “short cycle”-courses to diversify ATU’s portfolio and to respond to new market needs in the area of professional development and continuous education.
- E 5. (ASIIN II.1) Increases efforts to secure sufficient enrolment in its Master and Ph.D. programs or alternatively closing the programs with an insufficient demand.
- E 6. (ASIIN II.2) Defines the notion of an “international university” more narrowly, focusing on those (Russian speaking) countries which provide the bulk of the current international student intake.
- E 7. (ASIIN II.2) Increases its efforts to foster internationalization by appropriate measures (better promotion of Erasmus study opportunities, establishing formal windows of mobility in all study program, introducing more study offers in English etc.. (2.2)

- E 8. (ASIIN II.2) Invests in the further proliferation of “research-based” education, stimulating critical thinking capability of staff and students.
- E 9. (ASIIN II.3) Provides continuous professional education courses for its stakeholders.
- E 10. (ASIIN II.3) Implements appropriate measures to increase the amount of third party funding/income generated from projects.
- E 11. (ASIIN II.4) Improves the examination system by announcing examinations in a timely manner, avoiding one on one examinations situations and considering the use of external examiners as a corrective device.
- E 12. (ASIIN III.1) Introduces a more flexible, individualized approach to the human resource management to cater for the various talents of individual staff and retain best talent.
- E 13. (ASIIN III.2) Reviews the effectiveness of its HR development tools and considers the introduction of “career plans” to plan individually the career perspectives of its employees.
- E 14. (ASIIN III.2) Enhances the participation of administrative staff in its continuous education courses and introduce new offers especially in the area of personal development, scientific writing, on successful application of third party projects.
- E 15. (ASIIN III.3) Consistently monitors and critically evaluates the success of its support measures in improving the research output of ATU. The process for the introduction of “research professorships” needs to be clarified and substantiated by appropriate means.

G. Fulfillment of Requirements (22.03.2024)

Requirements

- A 1. (ASIIN I.1) ATU needs to revise its Strategic Plan, formulating realistic goals to be achieved over the course of the next 5 years and aligning them to the resources available. The concept of an “entrepreneurial university” instead of a “research university” could potentially serve as an alternative development path.

Initial Treatment	
Experts	Fulfilled Justification: A strategic direction on the development of entrepreneurship, innovation, and the commercialization of scientific projects has been provided in the Development program of ATU for 2023-2029. ATU plans to foster an entrepreneurial culture by offering programs, courses, and events that develop skills and mindset in students and employees. Also ATU plans to increase revenues received from scientific activities, innovative developments and commercialized projects from 5.68% in 2023 to 8.85% in 2029. At the same time, ATU do not mention its entrepreneurial nature when formulating its mission and vision. Entrepreneurial tasks also are not identified from the duties of vice-rectors. It seems that university considers entrepreneurial efforts as a part of its activity. Meanwhile achievement of all strategic goals seems realistic.
AC	Fulfilled Justification: The Accreditation Commission follows the assessment of the experts.

ASIIN-label	Subject-specific label	Accreditation until max.
All requirements fulfilled	ASIIN	30.09.2029

H. Appendix

Appendix 1: Schedule for the Implementation of the Institutional Accreditation

First Day (24 January 2023)

Time	Activity, location	Topics	Participants of the institution
	Arrival of peers at the Almaty Airport, Transfer to the hotel		
12:30 - 16:00	Internal meeting of the peers Location: [...]	Introduction round, assessment of Self- Assessment Report, Development of Questionnaire for different interview rounds	
16:30 – 18:00	Introductory meeting Location: [HEI]	Welcome note, short presentation of the institution by management, general questions	Management of ATU
xx:xx	Dinner Location: [...]		

Second Day (25 January 2023)

Date / Time	Activity, location	Topics	Participants of the institution
08:30 - 09:30 am	1. Interview round Location: [HEI]	Section I: Understanding of Quality (Definition, responsibilities)	Management, staff members from QM unit
09:30 - 10:00 am	Break		

10:00 - 11:00 pm	2. Interview round Location: ATU	Section III: Management of resources (Material and human resources, Human resources development, Interaction with research, Interaction with admin- istration)	Management
11:00 – 11:30	Break		
11:30 – 12:30	3. Interview round Location: ATU	Section III: Management of resources (Material and human resources, Human resources development, Interaction with research, Interaction with admin- istration)	Staff members of ad- ministration
12:30 - 13:30 pm	Lunch		
13:30 - 14:30 pm	Consultation of Documents	Section I: Understanding of Quality Section III: Management of resources Section IV: Transparency and docu- mentation	
14:30 - 15:30 pm	4. Interview round Location: ATU	Section IV: Transparency and docu- mentation (Rules and regulations for programmes / courses / trainings, Doc- umentation)	Management Staff members of the legal unit
15:30 - 17:00 pm	Tour through the facilities of the institution Location: ATU	Section III: Management of resources	Heads of study units
17:00 – 18:00 pm	Internal meeting of peers Location: [HEI]	Summary of information gathered dur- ing the day Section II: Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings Section IV: Transparency and docu- mentation Preliminary assessment of maturity levels	
18:00	Transfer to Hotel		

19:00 Uhr	Dinner Location: [...]		
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Third Day (26 January 2023)

Date / Time	Activity, location	Topics	Participants of the institution
08:30 - 10:00 am	5. Interview round Location: ATU	Section II: Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings (Cooperations, Examination systems and organisation of exams, Recognition of achievements, Assistance and support)	Heads of study units
10:00 – 10:15 am	Break		
10:15 - 12:00 am	6. Interview round With students Location: ATU	Section I: Understanding of Quality Section II: Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings Section III: Management of resources Section IV: Transparency and documentation	Students
12:00 - 13:00 pm	Lunch		
13:00 - 14:00 pm	7. Interview round With cooperation / external partners Location: [HEI]	Section II: Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings (Cooperations)	Partners of ATU (Business partners, etc)
14:00 - 14:30 pm	Break		
14:30 - 15:30 pm	8. Interview round With teachers/lecturers	Section I: Understanding of Quality Section II: Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings Section III: Management of	Lecturers

	Location: [HEI]	resources Section IV: Transparency and documentation	
15:30 – 17:00 pm	Internal meeting of peers Location: [HEI]	Summary of information gathered during the day Section II: Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings Section IV: Transparency and documentation Assessment of maturity levels	
17:00 – 18:00 pm	9. Final Meeting with Management Location: [HEI]	Impressions of the peers	Management, interested stakeholders
18:00 pm	Transfer to Hotel		
19:00 Uhr	Dinner Location: [...]		

Germany 4th Day (27th January 2023)

Date / Time	Activity, location	Topics	Participants of the institution
02:05	Departure from Almaty		
08:50	Arrival at Frankfurt /		

Appendix 2: Organizations Chart of ATU

TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

