

## **Accreditation Report**

Institutional Accreditation of

**Turan University**  
**Almaty, Kazakhstan**

### **I Procedure**

**Date of contract:** 7 June 2021

**Date of the submission of self-assessment report:**

**Date of site visit:** 6-8 December 2021

**Attendance by ACQUIN office:** Dr. Jasmine Rudolph / Nina Soroka

**Accreditation decision:** 31 March 2022

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The **Assessment Report** of the peer-review experts is **based on** the self-assessment report of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) and extensive discussions with the HEI management, the board of trustees, representatives of the holding company, deans, heads of study programmes, lecturers, staff representatives, students, and alumni.

The basis of the **Assessment Criteria** is part 1 of the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) in the current official version. Further, the assessment considers criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions” Section B.IV). At the same time the national context, particularly the national regulations regarding the establishment of study programmes, are taken into account.

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## **II    Introduction**

The experts would like to thank the representatives of the HEI as well as students that they have taken part in the discussions and willingly shared information and their views during the site visit. The discussions are valuable not only for the assessment of the institution, but also for a better understanding of the legal and sociocultural context of the local higher education system.

Evaluation basis for the peer-review experts is the self-assessment report of the HEI as well as intensive discussions during the site visit with the HEI management, board of trustees, representatives of the holding company, deans, head of study programs, study programme coordinators, teachers, lecturers, administrative staff, students, and graduates.

Main objective of the accreditation procedure is to assess the quality of the study programmes and compliance with the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG). The ESG standards are applied as main assessment criteria in the international accreditation procedure. They are completed with criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions" Section B.IV). In addition, the respective country-specific criteria and standards are taken into account.

A group of experts was set up, which ensured that all areas relevant to the accreditation procedure (e.g., legal, structural, social etc. aspects) as well as the ESG, the WR criteria, and national criteria were considered. The peer-review experts include professors, representatives of the professional practice and the student representative. A certificate with the ACQUIN seal is awarded upon accreditation of the institution.

### **1    Short profile of HEI**

Established in 1992, Turan University is one of the first and largest private universities in Kazakhstan and regards itself as an innovative and entrepreneurial university. It is part of Turan educational corporation, which includes a lyceum, 2 colleges, 2 universities – Turan University in Almaty and Turan-Astana University in Nur-Sultan – and Tau-Turan educational and recreational facility.

The main goal of Turan educational corporation is to create a unique integrated environment for the accumulation of knowledge, competencies, and professional skills for the training of sought-after specialists in various fields based on creative potential, facilities, equipment, financial, and organisational resources.

The sources of funding include the provision of paid educational services, financing of the state educational order from the country budget, implementation of research and development work, charitable assistance and other work, provision of dormitory accommodation services, and borrowed funds from banks. Up to 90% of the income is generated by tuition fees.

Turan University covers the full educational cycle (Bachelor, Master, and PhD). In 2020, there were 73 programmes in the Register of Study Programmes: 31 Bachelor programmes, 33 Master programmes, 3 MBA programmes, 5 PhD programmes, and 1 DBA programme. Currently, there are 27 Bachelor programmes, 27 Master programmes, 2 MBA programmes, 5 PhD programmes, and 1 DBA programme.

The total number of students in 2020-2021 stood at 4621: 4278 undergraduate students, 258 graduate students, and 85 doctoral students. The teaching staff includes 362 people, and the administrative staff is made up of 98 people.

The university has 5 faculties: Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Law, Graduate School of Business, Faculty of Digital Technologies and Art, and Foundation. The University has 15 departments and 4 research institutes: Scientific Research Institute of Tourism, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Scientific Research Institute of Law, and Scientific Research Institute of Informatization of Education. There are 3 dissertation boards.

### III Implementation and assessment of the criteria

#### 1 Institutional Profile and Strategy: Strategic Planning, Mission and Vision

*The HEI has a clear mission statement in which the institutional profile, strategy, and objectives of the HEI are defined. The mission is consistent and complies with international standards. Academic bodies have adopted the mission, which is publicly available. The HEI has adequate resources to fulfil its mission and strategic planning [Examination Area 1].*

#### Implementation

The Turan University mission statement of “Culture, education and science for the sake of society” paves the road for its activities, and it is included in the Academic Policy made available online in three languages, Kazakh, Russian, and English. The vision of the university has undergone a transformation and now focuses on shaping an innovative and entrepreneurial university capable of training highly qualified personnel with great entrepreneurial potential, who are able to create and introduce innovations for the Kazakhstani economy. Another guiding principle is the motto stating, “For those who believe in themselves and strive for success.” The university regularly undergoes assessments to be included in local and international rankings.

The Development Strategy for 2016-2020 was aimed at creating conditions for students to become proactive and competitive in a rapidly changing world as well as at establishing a leading position among domestic universities and enhancing its standing in the global market of educational services and research programmes. The specific strategic goals defined in the Strategy were achieved within the planned period of time.

The Development Strategy for 2021-2024 seeks to put the mission into the context of a new vision of the university where the emphasis is laid on innovations and entrepreneurship. Major attention is paid to preservation and increase of the experience of development, professional continuity in preparing students for changes in the conditions of breakthrough innovations, consolidation of the links between teaching, research, and innovation activities to ensure their continuity and commercialization, and entrance to the ranking of the leading innovative and entrepreneurial universities in the global market of educational services. To implement those and other goals into reality, five strategic points have been defined. They read as follows: unique educational programs and innovative learning technologies, scientific and innovation ecosystem, vectors of university internationalization, personal development and socially significant activities, and marketing activities and promotion of educational products.

All of the above translates into close ties and practical co-initiatives established with local and international players, including businesses, educational and research institutions, state and non-state organisations. The university wants to serve as a platform for its stakeholders and broader communities to interact and jointly take action. The tools for that include a business incubator, Turan Entrepreneurship winter and summer schools for students, advanced training for teaching staff from other universities in Kazakhstan, subject-specific and interdisciplinary projects, events, and conferences.

Drafting, implementation, and assessment of the broader guiding principles and narrowed targets are subject to discussions, feedback loops, and meetings involving internal and external stakeholders. The progress and related development are being closely monitored and analyzed on an ongoing basis, the obtained results of the analysis are considered at the meetings of the Academic Council, the Rector's office, the admission board, in all structural divisions. The SWOT approach allows for constant improvement. The designated planning and document management system allows keeping track of the feasibility of the Development Strategy and the execution of the set goals. Facilitation strategic sessions are held for administrative and managerial personnel and teaching staff on an annual basis to assess the implementation of strategic goals and objectives and their timely adjustment. In addition, monitoring studies and internal audits of the quality of operational management and the effectiveness of teaching, scientific, research, and educational processes are regularly carried out. The university has the facilities and resources necessary for the implementation of the strategic goals and objectives and for meeting the needs of its teaching staff and students.

### **Assessment**

The Turan University has made it its central task to develop a quality culture that applies universally at all levels of the university, is accepted by all university members and is constantly reviewed and further developed. In the opinion of the expert group, the university has a very good formal quality assurance policy in which all control loops are closed, interlock very well and work together. The instruments of internal quality assurance are publicly accessible and known to all staff and students. The quality assurance policy covers all relevant areas and informs all university members regularly and transparently about the use of the quality assurance instruments. All relevant bodies are also appropriately involved in the process of further developing quality assurance and the coordination processes of the various bodies were explained in the discussion rounds. All important bodies and institutions are sufficiently involved in the development and implementation of the policy. All relevant areas are covered and are publicly accessible.

The new development strategy presented and explained by the Turan University to embed the focus on "entrepreneurship" and "innovation" fulfils the postulate of consolidation between teaching, research and innovation activities, successfully establishing close relationships and practical cooperation with local and international stakeholders, including companies, educational and research institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations in general. However the university should document more transparently how the central goals of "entrepreneurship" and "innovation" are integrated interdisciplinarily into the degree programmes. The concrete implementation at degree programme level can still be improved.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 2 Governance, Organization and Administration

*Responsibilities, decision-making processes, and decision-making competencies are clearly defined and integrated into statutes. Organisation and management structures are adequate to the tasks and objectives of the institution and assure freedom in teaching and learning [Examination Area 2].*

### Implementation

Turan University functioning is defined in its Charter and is carried out in strict accordance with the current applicable legislation. Its supreme body is the General Meeting of Founders, the executive body is the Rector's Office, and collegiate bodies include the Board of Trustees, Academic Council, Faculty Council, Council of Advisers, etc. The managerial levels can be put into three categories, the first one involves founders, members of the Board of Trustees, rector, vice-rectors, followed by directors of departments and deans of faculties, concluded by directors of institutes, centers, chairmen of departments, and heads of departments.

Turan University is a non-profit educational institution, which under the country legislation means that the purpose of its activities is to achieve "social, cultural, scientific, educational, charitable, managerial goals; ... aimed at providing public goods..." and the profit allocation is geared towards improving the facilities and resources, the quality of the teaching staff, attracting the best foreign specialists to maintain the current high rating among the educational institutions of the republic.

The organisational structure of the university is a set of structural units that reflect the main key areas of its activities, including administrative and managerial divisions, educational and scientific, educational and auxiliary, scientific divisions, as well as departments of maintenance and support of the educational process. Divisions are official groups of employees responsible



for performing a certain set of functions. They differ in status, number, size of available material, and financial resources. Collegiate bodies differ in goals and objectives, their composition and the terms of functioning are determined by the relevant provisions. The general management of the university is carried out by the Academic Council consisting of the rector (chairman), vice-rectors, deans, heads of a number of structural divisions, representatives of the teaching staff, and students. The Academic Committee is established to ensure the academic standard of teaching and advanced training, the introduction of external advanced higher education standards, the provision of advice and recommendations on strategic initiatives related to teaching and advanced training. The Quality Assurance Committee is aimed at developing an internal quality assurance system, ensuring compliance of the preparation and implementation of educational programs with the requirements of international and national quality standards, and improving the efficiency of educational activities. Students, employers, scientists, representatives of public associations and organisations, parents of students are involved in the work of collegiate bodies. The activities of each collegiate body are evaluated by a higher collegiate body.

Turan University management is based on a systematic approach as it is regarded as an educational system consisting of a system of goals of educational activities, a management system, a methodological system, a pedagogical process, and a cultural and educational environment. To resolve and prevent conflicts, the University has developed internal documents regulating uniform rules of conduct, ethical and moral standards (Academic Policy, Student Code, Code of Corporate Governance), and established a Disciplinary Council.

The personnel policy of Turan University is carried out in accordance with the main priorities of the strategy. Heads of structural divisions of the university are appointed from among qualified invited or full-time employees with academic degrees and titles, in accordance with the current labor legislation and the relevant university provisions. Teaching staff assessment includes their assessment and ranking.

Financial management of the university is carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation, internal documents, accounting policies, and a long-term development plan. The procedure for determining and distributing the total financial resources of the university is made of a sequence of management decisions (budget planning) both for the long term - ensuring the achievement of strategic goals - and for the short term, i.e., planning current activities. The main source of funding is generated by students' tuition fees (90%) which result in a greater degree of independence from the Ministry of Education and Science. Transparency in the process of making any decisions, including financial ones, implies wide access of staff to management, their participation in this process.

## Assessment

The university's activities are carried out through a strong hierarchical structure (cascade model at different levels). The responsibilities of the bodies, members, etc. have been clearly defined. The organisational structure of the University consists of a number of structural units reflecting the main areas of activity of the University: These include administrative and management departments, pedagogical and scientific departments, pedagogical and auxiliary departments, scientific departments, and departments for maintaining and supporting the educational process.

Management functions, delineation of authority, rights, duties and responsibilities are fully defined and described in a transparent and accessible manner.

Individual curricula are drawn up on the basis of the teachers' experience, level of competence and research. Depending on their position, they have the choice to focus on academic or research work. They can also do a research internship.

The administrative and funding body is divided into the highest body of founders and the executive body, the Rectorate, and is not within the same institution.

External input is provided by the Board of Trustees, which is used for strategic planning. The board of trustees includes, for example, local representatives, managers and employers.

The teaching staff have appropriate degrees and publications. 64% of the staff are female. Routine programmes ensure good cooperation between staff, e.g. team building or skills development programmes. Internships abroad are also very welcome.

The university recruits its staff from other universities or uses contacts with industry so that professional practice and teaching are combined.

Staff numbers appear to be stable, with an average age of around 50.

About 10 % of the budget is appropriate reserved for research.

The different areas within the university are closely connected through institutionalised meetings and exchange programmes. Everyone is very well informed and the individual statements are very congruent.

Turan University's financial activities are governed by internal documents, official guidelines and a long-term development plan. The university's financial activities were audited by an external commission. In 2021, it was confirmed that TU uses its budget efficiently. No violations were found. TU's main source of funding is income from educational programmes (90 %), which leads to a high degree of independence. During the pandemic, they additionally sought new sources of revenue. They introduced innovative programmes and new start-ups that are

profitable, or tried to obtain funding from companies and industry by identifying their research needs.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 3 Teaching and Learning

*Objectives and content of study programmes are in accordance with the HEI's mission and strategy. Study programmes have an adequate academic standard, are well structured and have an adequate workload. They comply with national legal regulations. The processes of creating and implementing as well as revision of study programmes are clearly defined. The HEI offers professional support services for students. Support services have adequate staff [Examination Area 4, ESG Standard 1.2, ESG Standard 1.3, ESG Standard 1.4].*

## Implementation

The objectives and content of the study programmes are consistent with the innovation and entrepreneurial profile of the university, its mission of “Culture, education and science for the sake of society,” and its strategic goals. The university profile prescribes all of the programmes to be on a combination of fundamental knowledge and practice-oriented assignments, e.g., an entrepreneurial module. Study programmes go through several stages of discussion within the university: at the level of the department, faculty, university. These involve the participation of stakeholders beyond university staff, e.g., students, employers, representatives of professional communities. Disciplines retirement, update, and introduction are carried out on an ongoing basis, and employers' requirements and feedback serve as one of the decisive factors in this process. To this end, employers from each area of study are included in the council of each faculty. New programmes go through multiple levels of approval at the university and then are undergo an external examination procedure prior to being included in the register of the Ministry of Education and Science. Currently, 73 study programmes of the university are listed in that register, of which 17 were added in 2021. Special attention is paid to joint study and double diploma programmes, e.g., harmonisation of the Jurisprudence with the National Research State University of Nizhny Novgorod named after N.I. Lobachevsky (Russia).

The quality of study programmes is assessed on a regular basis, both internally and externally. The latter includes accreditations, rankings as well as indirectly by performance in professional examinations, competitions, employability, etc. Learning outcomes include work in a team, possession of cross-sectoral communications and leadership qualities, skills of conflict-free communication, capacity for multilingual and multicultural communication to solve problems of

interpersonal and professional interaction, demonstration of the culture of writing and speaking, and the ability to support a position with arguments. Catalogues of educational modules include an optional component with an indication of the summary, pre- and post-requisites, competencies in accordance with the Dublin descriptors.

Turan University organizes its educational process based on the four goals of higher education defined by the Council of Europe. Among the goals of higher education, the Council of Europe has identified the following: raising active citizenship among students, choosing a future career, supporting personal growth, creating a broad base of modern knowledge, stimulating research and innovation. Advanced teaching methods and innovative learning technologies are implemented, and this toolkit is being extended. Methodological workshops on the use of modern innovative learning technologies are held annually.

### **Assessment**

The students are very satisfied with the implementation of the study programmes at Turan University, be it with regard to the content, the forms of teaching or the workload. The expert group also find no reason to assess this differently. Another positive aspect is the wide range of opportunities for stays abroad and the very good work of the Department for International Cooperation. This department is also responsible for cooperation opportunities for teachers abroad and actively supports them.

The supervision ratio and the relationship between students and teachers can also be rated extremely positively. The students describe an open communication culture and visualise an open door and convincing culture of short distances. In the event of problems, both teachers and students know the defined contact persons and receive great support there. In addition to this very well-functioning communication with deans and the like, the organised quality management was also positively explained: the regular evaluation of the study programmes always requires a careful implementation of necessary recommendations for action that advance the quality of the study programmes.

Just as positive as the International Department and the quality management were the possibilities of the IT equipment of Turan University convincingly described to the evaluators, which had already provided very good support before the pandemic, but especially in the current period has been able to increasingly expand its possibilities, so that students are able to study smoothly, online, and are supported in the event of corresponding problems. Turan University therefore describes the entry requirements for new teachers as high in terms of IT skills, but at the same time makes sure that there are also appropriate training measures to ensure smooth online teaching.

There are also very good support programmes for students: Turan University awards various scholarships and discounts on tuition fees. In the competition for the "best student", a scholarship can be won, and there are also very good discount opportunities for the hard-working students up to 20% (2020/21 7% of the students) who, for example, have already obtained their previous degree at Turan University. In addition, the university told us that discounts can also be granted as part of social measures.

The use of many lecturers from industry also provides valuable impulses from practice for the study programmes. The level of education can be described as very good from the perspective of the review group. This was also reflected by the students: The study programmes prepare students for the labour market in a meaningful way thanks to the very good teaching staff.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 4 Research

*Research activities fit into the mission of the institution. The structure of the HEI and the general conditions support research activities. The teaching workload allows room for research. Recruitment policy should correspond to the research activities and research strategy of the institution [Examination Area 5, ESG Standard 1.8]*

## Implementation

The development of research activities of the university over the past 5 years has been carried out in accordance with the Development Strategy of Turan University for 2016-2020. It fully corresponds to the university mission of "Culture, education and science for the sake of society" and is characterized by the following – ensuring the competitiveness of scientific and innovative potential, the relevance of the results of scientific, and innovative activities of the university in the real sectors of the economy and business. Upon adoption of the Development Strategy for 2021-2024, the mission acquired a new context, which culminated in a more systematic approach. Previously separate goals are now a part of the scientific and innovative ecosystem. A number of priorities are set in this regard, e.g., breakthrough mental activity and lateral thinking, innovative content of the results of intellectual labor, focus on excellence, talent management, and synergy of innovative entrepreneurship in the context of TRIPLE HELIX.

In the organizational structure of the university, research and innovation activities are clearly structured by levels and directions of organization and management. Those conducting it are bound by the Code of Ethics for Science and Innovation. Additionally, innovative and entrepreneurial experience and potential are considered during the recruitment process.

The workload slots specifically designated for research and innovations is calculated based on the position of the teaching staff, ranging from 50-150 hours for those holding Master degree to 300-450 hours for professors with Doctor habilitatus. Interim and final results are then reflected in reports, scientific publications, conferences, etc. Funding is allocated to specific areas of interest and topics. All teaching staff can opt for additional scientific projects, publications, and implementation of the results into educational settings and beyond it. Research is part of the long-term plans for teaching staff, doctoral students, and is included in study programmes from Bachelor level upwards. The internal research structure constitutes four scientific institutions - the Research Institute of Tourism, the Research Institute of Law, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, the Research Institute of Informatization of Education - and the Center for Innovative Development of the Region.

The forms of incentives for various categories of researchers are paid business trips and internships, publication of scientific papers at the expense of the university: monographs, educational literature, articles in the Vestnik of Turan University scientific journal, bonuses to the best scientists. Since 2011, the university has annually been holding the Best Scientist of Turan competition with monetary awards. In addition to financial and moral incentives, favorable working conditions are created for researchers, the necessary material and technical equipment, tools, and literature are purchased. Turan University also cooperates with external partners, e.g., over the course of 2018-2021, joint research with the University of London was funded by the British Academy and another joint project involved ONE ASIA Foundation (Japan), etc. Since 2016, Turan University has been a country partner of the Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS). Since 2017, Turan University has been the official headquarters of the Kazakh Representative Office of the International Association TRIPLE HELIX. Overall, more than 20 percent of the total university budget is allocated for research and innovation.

### **Assessment**

The structures and framework conditions support and promote research activity and the associated activities in an appropriate manner. With the Research Council, there is a fixed structure that bundles research, aligns it with the overarching strategy of the university and establishes research clusters.

The teaching load basically provides sufficient space for research. The establishment of a teaching/research position with a reduced workload offers better opportunities for conducting research activities. University teachers who can demonstrate very intensive research activity

can reduce their teaching load. The change in teaching load is consolidated by the corresponding status of the teaching-researcher. In the long run, the university does not need individual researchers, but research teams rooted in the university and its organisational culture.

The recruitment of academics for research activities is in line with Turan University's research strategy and meets the usual standards.

An important goal is publication in relevant journals and at appropriate conferences to ensure Turan University's visibility in the scientific community.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 5 Resources

*The HEI has adequate human and financial resources, infrastructure, and equipment to achieve its objectives. The academic staff recruitment process meets academic standards [Examination Area 3, Examination Area 6, Examination Area 7, ESG Standard 1.5, ESG Standard 1.6].*

### 5.1 Human resources

#### Implementation

Recognizing the importance of teaching, the university has developed and implemented an effective and transparent personnel policy that clearly sets out the criteria for access to leadership, incentives, skills development and self-improvement, and free access to university resources for teaching staff. The university personnel policy is geared towards preserving academic traditions and fostering innovation.

Competitive selection of candidates to fill vacancies is conducted in accordance with the legislation. Recruitment is based on an analysis of the needs of study programmes and is conducted by the members of the Competition Commission appointed by the rector. Applicants' documents are reviewed for qualification and a subsequent interview is held to determine eligibility level based on qualification requirements, education, experience, and publications. The heads of the university's structural units are appointed from among qualified invited or full-time employees with academic degrees and titles, and an age balance is taken into consideration. Selected candidates are offered contracts lasting 1 year and 3 years.

All procedures related to recruitment, promotion, encouragement, termination, informing on rights and obligations are carried out by the personnel administration under the legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan and internal normative documents, e.g. procedures of QMS on



Personnel Management, Organizational Documents, Archive, Records, Internal and external normative documentation, Service documentation and Professional Development of TS.

The rights and duties of the staff and the requirements for the competence of the teaching staff are determined by job descriptions, which are drawn upon the basis of the Standard Qualifications for Teaching Positions and periodically updated per the requirements. The teaching staff is assessed regularly in terms of their competencies in the field of educational, methodological, research, and other activities. Guest lectures by representatives of practice are conducted.

The study programmes are covered in terms of the appropriate number and qualifications of the teaching staff. The total number of staff at the university stands at 596, 362 of them are the teaching staff (257 people or 70% are women, 105 people or 30% are men), 98 are administrative and managerial personnel (62 people or 63% of them are women, 36 people or 37% are men), 130 people are educational support staff (93 people or 71% are women, and 37 people or 29% are men). Currently, the university employs 290 of 362 teachers full-time (80%), which meets the qualification requirements. Of the full-time teachers, 62% have academic degrees: 37 – Doctor Habilitatus, 115 – Candidate of Science, 28 – PhD.

### **Assessment**

The faculties of the University of Turan is formed in accordance with the current regulations and the development strategy of the university. The quantitative and qualitative composition fully complies with current requirements in terms of the number of permanent (full-time) teaching staff, the presence of degree holders and practical professional experience. The experts have ensured that the requirements for teaching staff and researchers at the university are clearly and transparently defined. The personnel policy has been developed and applied in accordance with the principles of transparency and appropriateness. The internal procedures also apply to part-time teachers and researchers.

During the online inspection, it was fully demonstrated and confirmed that all quality assurance procedures apply fully to all teaching staff and are always followed.

Teachers are recruited on the basis of a valid selection process. The University also maintains a list of potential candidates who wish to work at the University.

During the online visit, the evaluators were able to convince themselves of the reliability of the information provided, including the high standard of the teaching staff and their sufficient number. According to the results of the visit, the experts also confirmed the existence of a procedure to ensure that teachers meet the changing demands of the educational process, including those related to the pandemic.



The teachers showed a sufficient level of competence, awareness of the organisation of the educational process, research and interaction with the labour market.

During the interview rounds, students and graduates gave examples of very well functioning complaint management. They also confirmed good interaction with teachers in the educational process.

During the online visit with faculty and students, the use of active teaching methods and digital technologies was confirmed.

The faculty and the management of the university pointed to a high salary level of teachers and differentiated allocation depending on the contribution to the implementation of the university strategy, which helps to attract the best teachers.

The university creates conditions for continuing education of teachers by using the capacities of the university itself and paying for continuing education in other organisations. Teachers therefore receive appropriate continuing education opportunities and go through an on-boarding process.

In addition, sufficient administrative staff is also available to create the framework conditions for a fully functioning university.

## **5.2 Financial Resources**

### **Implementation**

The financial activity of Turan University is carried out in accordance with the legislative acts, and is regulated by internal documents, accounting policies, and a long-term development plan. The importance of financial planning as one of the main elements of the strategic management of the university can hardly be overestimated. The procedure for determining and distributing the total financial resources of the university is built as a sequence of management decisions (budget planning) both for the long term, ensuring the achievement of strategic goals, and for the short term, planning current activities.

The main budget of the university involves revenues and expenses, which reflects all receipts and expenditures of the university funds. The sources of funding include the provision of paid educational services, financing of the state educational order from the country budget, implementation of research and development work, charitable assistance and other work, provision of dormitory accommodation services, and borrowed funds from banks. Up to 90% of the income is generated by tuition fees.

To implement these goals and objectives, the university annually appoints, as per the order of the rector, an internal audit commission. This is a supervisory body whose responsibilities include exercising management and financial control of all divisions of an educational institution, namely: informing the university management about the results of a comprehensive analysis of the state of financial and economic activities of higher educational institution to assess the composition and structure of sources of financial resources, indicators of income and expenses; warn about possible violations and abuses by forming a system of continuous monitoring and analysis of the entire financial management mechanism and its individual links, identifying and eliminating shortcomings in the work of structural units; assist in the rational and economical use of all types of resources of the university, ensuring the liquidity and solvency of the university; ensure compliance with legislation, timeliness of settlements with the budget and extra-budgetary funds; to identify internal reserves for the growth of labor productivity, improving the financial and economic results of activities, reducing the costs of production and circulation; ensure timely and correct accounting, full reflection in the accounting of all business transactions, correct accounting. The reports on the work of the internal audit commission are posted on the university website.

### **Assessment**

The information provided by Turan University in the self-report and during the panel visit, as well as during the discussions with the university management, suggests that the university distributes the financial flows rationally and uses the various financial instruments skilfully. In particular, the loans taken out by the university from second-tier banks for the purchase of a new building have been almost fully repaid. Regardless of the forms of ownership, Kazakh universities are financed mainly through tuition fees, which are collected either from students or as part of government grants.

The university explained that all Kazakh universities are heavily involved in research, including research funded by the Ministry of Education and Science. However, across the country, the majority of funding comes from tuition fees.

University expenditure is related to strategic goals, reflecting the cost of improving resources and attracting faculty. In particular, funding is allocated for entrepreneurship development, running a business incubator, supporting vulnerable students and undertaking new academic projects.

The university's strategic and financial development plans demonstrate competent planning for student numbers. The national evaluators emphasised that strategic and financial planning is carried out within the framework of national requirements that apply to all universities, regardless of the form of ownership. The relevant documents reflect the results of the SWOT

analysis and the results of the national ratings. The strategic plans and the corresponding financial plans reflect the needs of the market and the university's position in higher education, as well as the actions and positions of its competitors.

During the meetings and the analysis of the additional documents requested, the evaluation team found that the financial development plans take into account possible risks and provide for alternative options. Potential risks were fully recognised - an interview with university staff confirmed this.

The review panel noted with great satisfaction that the University won first place in the national competition "Altyn Sapa (Golden Quality)" - the prize of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of quality according to the EFQM model. This fact is underpinned by financial stability and stability and gives a confident perspective for the further development of Turan University.

### **5.3 Facilities and Equipment**

#### **Implementation**

All the facilities are open for all study programmes, and the resources are in line with the requirements of the state education and health regulations. Study rooms and laboratories are equipped with the necessary modern equipment, tools, computers, and licensed software. Collegiate bodies examine sufficiency and up-to-dateness. The university has specialised facilities and resources dedicated to specific study programmes, e.g. extensive filming and sound equipment for Journalism. In total, there are 4 academic buildings, 3 dormitories, 16 lecture halls, 120 workshop classrooms, 31 science and tech labs, 23 computer rooms, 90 multimedia offices, etc.

Automated control system to accept applications from applicants, form orders for admission/expulsion/transfer, manage the staff, ensure the educational process and keep records of various business processes of the university. The system is also used to send applications to units, to plan and supervise the teaching process, to issue diplomas, to monitor the availability of library materials, to check with Platonus, and many other functions depending on the level of access and functional responsibilities of the employee.

International scientific databases - Scopus, Elsevier, Web of Science, IPRbooks - can be accessed from the premises of the university. During the 2020 pandemic, information about free access to IPRbooks resources was published on the website of the university library and in the news section of the university's website.

## Assessment

The material and information resources fully comply with national requirements. The University has provided a complete and reliable description of all resources in the report. The evaluators conclude that the university is committed to continuous improvement of resources and competent management of these resources. During the meetings, students and lecturers emphasised that the availability of resources is always ensured and also further developed: For example, through the opening of new classrooms, the re-equipping of the library, the expansion of subscriptions to electronic resources or the systematic purchase of educational literature and the establishment of a valid examination system.

Students have access to a regular library and a digital library. The ability to access digital resources is ensured both through a national subscription to scientific digital resources provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan and through contracts with digital libraries and educational platforms concluded by the university.

The review group was introduced to the university's electronic portal and clarified that all university members always receive up-to-date information about the university. For example, the university publishes its own newspaper, has its own university TV channel and maintains its social media presence (e.g. on YouTube). Publications are made on the official pages of the university and on social networks.

Access to the electronic library is also possible via the portal. In the interviews, students and graduates confirmed that they have free access to educational resources, an electronic library, an LMS, an examination system, an anti-plagiarism system, a personal account and a university email address. The university's lecture halls, seminar rooms and laboratories are equipped with modern equipment.

During the interview, the lecturers emphasised the sufficient resources, the continuous improvement and acquisition of technical equipment, and the possibility of adjusting the resource situation in case of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. a pandemic). In communication, the heads of the departments and the pedagogical departments showed a clear understanding of the financial planning processes and their involvement in these processes.

Students also confirmed this very and timely resourcing. In this context, it was reported that new seminar rooms as well as a freshly modernised library are available, which fully confirms the impression that Turan University adequately addresses the needs of the students and the defined study objectives in its equipment on an ongoing basis.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 6 Quality Assurance

*The institution has adequate quality assurance procedures and mechanisms to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are for continuous improvement [Examination Area 2, ESG Standard 1.1, ESG Standard 1.7, ESG Standard 1.9, ESG Standard 1.10].*

### Implementation

The quality assurance policy is part of its strategic management and conceptually reflects the quality assurance and quality management system of the university. The university quality assurance policy expresses the general intentions and directions of activity in the field of quality, formally formulated by the university's top management. In accordance with the requirements of ESG Standard 1.1, the Quality Assurance Policy is available to students, teaching staff and employees, partners, and other stakeholders on the official website of the university.

The Quality Assurance Policy is compliant with ISO 9001: 2015 and the mission, vision, and values of the university. The latter include leadership, academic integrity, student orientation, partnership, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The quality management system covers the educational process, research, innovation, experimental, socio-cultural, and pedagogic activities. The basis for continuous improvement of the quality of processes is the monitoring and feedback system involving all relevant stakeholders. According to the Quality Assurance Policy, all structural divisions of the university are responsible for quality assurance. To ensure high quality of education, sections of the Development Strategy contain key quality indicators which are closely monitored.

The management of the study programmes and the activities of the university in the areas determined by the area of licensing and accreditation is carried out on the basis of the collection, analysis, and management of information. Information management processes at the University meet the requirements of ESG Standard 1.7 Information Management. The university website and all social networks are thoroughly analyzed. Currently, the university continues to work on the implementation of the Turan database and communication system.

To inform staff and students, the results of the data analysis are reflected in the published newsletters of the facilitation sessions and over the course of meetings. Another example of the involvement of students, employees, and teaching staff in the information management process is the self-examination of the entrepreneurial potential of the university under the Heinnovate project of the European Union (OECD). To monitor whether the needs of students and staff are met, surveys are conducted annually. In order to develop effective communication

with external stakeholders, open days, round tables, and other events, competitions of both republican and international levels are held.

In accordance with ESG Standard 1.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of educational programs in the course of its educational activities, Turan University pays great attention to monitoring and periodic evaluation of its study programmes at all levels of university management. QMS regulates the process of study programme implementation. The tools for identifying the need for changes in the educational process are questionnaire forms, consumer surveys, examination of study programmes and their components by external and internal experts, discussion with stakeholders. The presence of automated systems for organizing and monitoring the educational process, providing remote access for students, obtaining information at all stages of the educational process, contributes to the effectiveness of monitoring the education quality.

In accordance with the requirements of ESG Standard 1.10 Periodic procedures for external quality assurance, the effectiveness and efficiency of the University are determined by an external assessment of the quality of the educational services provided. External assessment of educational activities is carried out through accreditation and participation in national and international university ratings, business ratings, republican competitions in the field of education quality, and QMS certification.

### **Assessment**

Turan University has set up a transparently regulated system for quality assurance (QA), which covers all the relevant processes on institutional and on faculty level. An overarching institutional QA policy, which reflects the strategic goals of the university, has been defined and made publicly available on the website. All the relevant stakeholders of the university are integrated in the QA system and a specific “matrix of responsibility” clarifies the tasks of the involved actors, which are monitored in internal audits. The expert group found during the online site visit that the quality processes are not only well defined and documented, but they are also filled with life in an open quality culture, which has been demonstrated by the members of the different collegial bodies. Although there are special collegial bodies for Quality Assurance (e.g., a Quality Council and a Quality Working Group, which is preparing and drafting the materials), all the stakeholders were conscious about their roles and responsibilities for QA. It has become obvious that the governing bodies are able to take their decisions on an informed basis and the relevant data and results from the applied QA instruments are made available to them.

A variety of QA instruments are used to collect feedback from employers, students and graduates to continuously monitor the quality of teaching and learning in all the study programmes

offered by Turan University. Most prominently, the students play an important role in that feedback system. During the talks with the expert group, the students reported that their voices are being heard and their suggestions for improvement are taken into account. An active student participation is fostered by special instruments like for example the “box of ideas” or the rector’s blog on the university website, but apart from that, students also reported a direct feedback culture to their professors and lecturers. There is an annual survey on the teaching assessment and the president of the student council is present during the discussion of the student’s feedback so that also the measures derived from the feedback will be transparent for the students. Apart from that, there are surveys for graduates and employers, whose feedback also contributes to the continuous monitoring and assessment of study programmes. The discussions with the members of the Educational-Methodological Council made clear that the results are indeed used to elaborate recommendations on how to further develop the study programmes.

In addition to these internal quality discussions in the collegial bodies, study programmes are also reviewed externally, e.g., in external accreditations with external peer reviewers and external rankings and ratings are considered as a central element of QA. Concerning the implementation of new study programmes, they have to be approved externally before they can be included in the official register of study programmes. The Bologna Process and Distance Center Learning is a key stakeholder for ensuring that the new study programmes are designed and conceptualised in the framework of Bologna Standards, defining Learning Outcomes, which are in line with the National Qualification Framework.

The expert group is convinced that the above-described implemented mechanisms of internal and external quality assurance are adequate and ensure that the results of the quality assurance procedures are used for a continuous quality enhancement.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 7 Internationalisation

*This criterion only applies in those cases where internationalisation is part of the institutional strategy [Vision and Objectives on Internationalisation].*

### Implementation

In its Development Strategy for 2021-2024, Turan University places a significant emphasis on internationalisation intensification in major areas of its functioning. There is a separate focus area titled Vectors of the university internationalisation. It prioritizes multilevel sustainable international partnership for cross-border cooperation, internationalisation of educational programs



and online learning as a virtual mobility tool, global knowledge networks in the context of research, internationalisation of the campus and the formation of global citizenship, and creation of an environment for international competitiveness and implementation of continuous international benchmarking. The listed priorities are specified into three defined goals: internationalisation of educational activities, internationalisation of R&D of teaching staff and students, and internationalisation of marketing activities.

To facilitate and systematize the internationalisation efforts, the International Cooperation Department functions at the university under the coordination of the Vice-Rector for External Relations and Doctorate. Its role is to ensure the sustainable development of international partnerships of the University, implement activities aimed at strengthening the research, educational, cultural potential of the University through the development of internationalization processes.

As of 2021, the geography of international cooperation covers 26 countries and 138 agreements with foreign universities and organisations. Turan University is a member of international organizations such as TRIPLE HELIX, UNESCO, GUESSS, UNAI, ENACTUS, ERASMUS +, etc. The university is the authorized examination centre for IELTS, TOEFL, and SAT exams. According to the policy of ensuring the education quality, an important goal of the university is to ensure the academic mobility of students and staff. The International Cooperation Department oversees this area and its development. Additionally, Turan University works on extending the list of double degree programmes and cooperation agreements it can offer its stakeholders.

## **Assessment**

Internationalization is one of the strategic goals that Turan University defined in its Development Strategy 2021-2024. The talks with the different stakeholder groups during the online site visit have shown that the predominant aspect of internationalization that is already fully implemented at Turan University is the one of academic mobility. Students reported that they are offered a variety of options to go abroad during their studies and also the staff reported close academic cooperations, predominantly with Turkey (Istanbul, Antalya, etc.). The academic mobility is supported by the services of the International Relations Department, which informs and advises the students on the different options of academic mobility or international internships. The academic mobility is thereby fostered by the use of the Bologna tools. Students reported that credits gained abroad have been recognized based on their transcript of records and that the recognition process has been easily manageable for them. The academic mobility comprises incoming and outgoing mobility based on a cooperation with 26 countries and around 100-150 international students per year. Apart from this aspect, the internationality of Turan



University becomes also most visible in its PhD programmes, where all PhD students have to have an international scientific advisor. The PhD students consider this element as a hallmark and outstanding feature of Turan University providing them with a good opportunity to communicate in English to be well prepared for the international job market and further prospects in academia worldwide. When it comes to study offers in English language, there are some modules offered in English (besides French, German, Turkish or Chinese language offers) and students have the option to attend an English club, where they can have discussions with native speakers. At the moment, some study programmes in Logistics, International Law, Tourism, Business and Management are offered completely in English language. Faculty representatives have reported that there are plans to extend the number of study programmes in English and the expert group highly encourages Turan University to proceed in that endeavour in order to strengthen its international profile. The self-assessment report also lists the existence of double degree programmes when describing the international profile, however the university representatives that the expert group met in the discussion rounds, were not really convinced about this kind of international study programmes, as it also entails organisational burdens, while only targeting a very small number of students.

When it comes to international research, the faculty representatives reported individual international research projects and individual international research cooperation with partners abroad, however there was no clear strategic partnership or strategic orientation of internationality mentioned. Turan University's general goal to be internationally competitive can be seen in the fact that there are international representatives in the Board of Trustees, who also bring in international perspectives or in the fact that decisions are also taken against international benchmarks. Besides that, the university is seeking international accreditations and enforcing its international marketing activities. However, as all the examples of internationality, which were raised during the various discussion rounds, pointed to individual collaborations, the expert group would recommend a more systematic and strategic approach when extending further international activities.

The expert group encourages Turan University to further enhance its international activities. However, an internationalisation strategy should not only be conceived in general, but also for each faculty and individual strategic measures should be worked out.

## Conclusion

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

#### IV Recommendation to the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN

##### 1 **Assessment of compliance the Standards and Guidelines in the Higher European Area (ESG) in the actual official version and the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR)**

The institutional structures and performance were assessed on the basis of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), criteria for the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institution of the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR) („Guidelines for the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions" Section B.IV), and the national or other relevant regulations.

The expert group concludes that the **ESG standards** 1.1 (Policy for quality assurance), 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes), 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment), 1.4 (Student admission, progression, recognition and certification), 1.5 (Teaching staff), 1.6 (Learning resources and student support), 1.7 (Information management), 1.8 (Public information), 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes) and 1.10 (Cyclical external quality assurance) are fulfilled.

The expert group concludes that the **WR examination areas** 1 (Institutional conception, profile, and development objectives), 2 (Governance structure, organization, and quality management), 3 (Staff), 4 (Study and teaching), 5 (Research), 6 (Equipment (rooms and facilities)) and 7 (Funding) are fulfilled.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

##### **Institutional Profile and Strategy (Mission and Vision)**

The HEI has a clear mission statement in which the institutional profile, strategy, and objectives of the HEI are defined. The mission is consistent and complies with international standards. Academic bodies have adopted the mission, which is publicly available. The HEI has adequate resources to fulfil its mission and strategic planning.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

##### **Governance, Organisation and Administration**

Responsibilities, decision-making processes and decision-making competencies are clearly defined and integrated into statutes. Organisation and management structures are adequate to the tasks and objectives of the institution and assure freedom in teaching and learning.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

**Teaching and Learning**

Objectives and content of study programmes are in accordance with the HEI's mission and strategy. Study programmes have an adequate academic standard, are well structured and have an adequate workload. They comply with national legal regulations. The processes of creating and implementing as well as revision of study programmes are clearly defined.

The HEI offers professional support services for students. Support services have adequate staff.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

**Research**

Research activities fit into the mission of the institution. The structure of the HEI and the general conditions support research activities. The teaching workload allows room for research. Recruitment policy should correspond to the research activities and research strategy of the institution.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

**Resources**

The institution has adequate human and financial resources, infrastructure, and equipment to achieve its objectives. The academic staff recruitment process meets academic standards.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

**Quality Assurance**

The institution has adequate quality assurance procedures and mechanisms to ensure that the results of quality assurance procedures are for continuous improvement.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

**Internationalisation**

The HEI has an internationalisation strategy which is consistent with the strategy of the institution. The activities in the area of internationalisation fit into the internationalisation strategy.

The criterion is **fulfilled**.

## 2 Accreditation Recommendation

The peer-review experts recommend an unconditional accreditation of Turan University.

The peer-review experts recommend the following **recommendations**:

### Recommendations

1. The internationalisation strategy should not only be conceived in general, but also for each faculty and individual measures should be worked out.
2. The university should document more transparently how the central goals of "entrepreneurship" and "innovation" are integrated interdisciplinarily into the degree programmes.

**V     Decision of the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN**

Based on the evaluation report of the peer group and the statement of the university the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN decided on 31 March 2022 :

**The Turan University is for the first time institutionally accredited without conditions.  
The accreditation is limited until 30 September 2028.**

The following recommendations are given for the further development:

- The internationalisation strategy should not only be conceived in general, but also for each faculty and individual measures should be worked out.
- The university should document more transparently how the central goals of "entrepreneurship" and "innovation" are integrated interdisciplinarily into the degree programmes.