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STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

AZERBAIJAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING (BACHELOR)

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES ENGINEERING (MASTER)

TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING (MASTER)

June 2026



Content

Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS	3
I. Preamble	6
II. Accreditation procedure	6
1. Criteria	6
2. Approach and methodology	6
III. General information on the university	8
IV. Assessment of the study programmes	8
1. Quality of the curriculum	8
2. Procedures for quality assurance	16
3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students	18
4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification.....	21
5. Teaching staff.....	25
6. Learning resources and student support	27
7. Information	29
V. Recommendation of the panel of experts.....	31

DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- **LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING (BACHELOR)**
- **LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES ENGINEERING (MASTER)**
- **TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING (MASTER)**

OFFERED BY AZERBAIJAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its circulation procedure on 10 June 2026, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programmes “**Logistics and Transport Technology Engineering**” (Bachelor), “**Logistics and Transportation Technologies Engineering**” (Master), and “**Transportation Engineering**” (Master), offered by the **Azerbaijan Technical University**, Baku, **Azerbaijan** are accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master).

The accreditations are conditional.

The study programmes essentially comply with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 June 2027**. The confirmation of the conditions might include a physical site visit within the time period of twelve months.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 June 2032**, provided that the conditions listed below are fully met. Otherwise, the accreditation may be withdrawn.

Conditions

All Programmes:

1. Clear standards for final thesis must be defined and made accessible to students, including minimum length, minimum number of references, and a standardised structure.
2. AzTU must establish a mechanism to calculate workload based on in-class hours, self-study, and examinations to ensure transparent allocation of workload and consistency across the programmes.
3. The programmes must maintain and further formalise the practice of regular feedback, including documenting how such feedback is analysed and translated into concrete improvements in teaching and curriculum delivery.
4. The programmes must establish and implement clearly documented assessment rubrics and criteria and make them accessible to students.
5. A clear and binding definition of examination methods for each course, including the weighting of mid-term and final assessments, is required and must be implemented.

6. AzTU must establish clear processes and organisational structures to ensure that all published information is accurate, impartial, and consistently kept up to date.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programmes:

1. To ensure smoother integration into the working environment, soft skills should be included more strongly in the curriculum.
2. To improve the students' exposure to the industry, guest lecturers and site visits should be organised more frequently and regularly.
3. It is recommended that at least one English-taught lecture per semester be made mandatory to attend.
4. AzTU should more systematically and transparently document programme review cycles and decision-making processes to further strengthen transparency and traceability.
5. To strengthen the effectiveness of the quality management system, university management should ensure systematic follow-up on recommendations issued by the quality assurance department and verify their implementation at faculty level.
6. It is strongly recommended to establish and publish a central AI policy and systematically implement it in the programmes.
7. Academic writing skills and group assignments should be implemented more often to strengthen research competencies and alignment with skills required by the labour market.
8. Broader international cooperation with universities worldwide should be pursued to increase both outgoing and incoming student mobility.
9. To ensure the quality of appointed lecturers, it is recommended that the recruitment process be organised in a way that guarantees the assessment of the candidates' qualifications.
10. Teaching staff applicants should be required to demonstrate their English teaching skills through internationally recognised certification such as IELTS in the recruitment process.
11. To further enhance academic performance and staff development, the university should introduce individual target agreements with academic staff.
12. It is strongly recommend publishing comprehensive online information on its study programmes in both Azeri and English.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached experts' report.

EXPERTS' REPORT

ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

- LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING (BACHELOR)
- LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES ENGINEERING (MASTER)
- TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING (MASTER)

OFFERED BY AZERBAIJAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

Visit to the university: 20 - 23 January 2026

Expert panel

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Jonathan Enseroth

Master Internationale Logistik und Management, HAW Hamburg, Germany (student representative)

Coordinator

Eylem Inanici

AQAS, Cologne, Germany

I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by nearly 90 universities, universities of applied sciences, and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the programmes “Logistics and Transport Technologies Engineering” (Bachelor), “Logistics and Transportation Technologies Engineering” (Master), and “Transportation Engineering” (Master), offered by Azerbaijan Technical University.

1. Criteria

Each programme is assessed against a set of criteria for accreditation developed by AQAS: the AQAS Criteria for Programme Accreditation (Bachelor/Master). The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015. To facilitate the review each criterion features a set of indicators that can be used to demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria. However, if single indicators are not fulfilled this does not automatically mean that a criterion is not met. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of each programme since not all indicators can necessarily be applied to every programme.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in December 2023. The university produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In April 2025, the institution handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programmes and an appendix. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview of statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors,
- information on student services,
- core information on the main library,
- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 19 May 2025. The final version of the SER was handed in in September 2025.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in December 2025. AQAS informed the university about the members of the expert panel, and the university did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university and to all panel members to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place from 14-16 January 2026. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. representatives of the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, of teaching and of other staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded with the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the university's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS Criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the university for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programmes. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission discussed the draft of the report in its meeting on 18 May 2026 and took a decision on the accreditation in a circulation process on 3 June 2026. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In July 2026, AQAS published the report, the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel members.

III. General information on the university

Azerbaijan Technical University (AzTU) was established in 1950 and is a public higher education institution located in Baku, Azerbaijan. The University offers bachelor's, master's, and PhD programmes and engages in research activities across various specialisations. Languages of instruction are reported to be Azerbaijani, Russian, English, and German. AzTU operates under a Scientific Council, the highest governing body comprising the top management (rector and vice-rectors), faculty representatives, chairs, student organisations, and trade union members. Strategic oversight is provided by a three-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Ministry of Science and Education.

AzTU's organisational structure includes management, academic/teaching, research and development, administration, support services (e.g., Library & Information Centre, IT, Social Support Centre), and social services (e.g., Trade Union Committees, Student Youth Organisation, Student Science Centre). The University's day-to-day affairs are directed by the rector, who reports to both the Scientific Council and the Board of Trustees. Vice-rectors manage areas such as academic affairs, research, finance and accounting, document control, international relations, quality assurance, housing-utilities, student affairs, social and sports activities.

AzTU has eight faculties (Transportation and Logistics, Power Engineering and Automation, Metallurgy and Materials Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Robotics, Information and Communication Technologies, Special Equipment and Technology, Economics and Management, German Engineering) and 22 departments. The University offers 36 bachelor's programmes, 36 master's programmes (with 128 specialisations), and 31 PhD programmes. Research at AzTU is mainly conducted in the fields of "Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity", "Energy, Transport and Environmental Technologies", "Robotics and Industrial Internet of Things", "Advanced Materials and Nanotechnologies", and "Sustainable Development and Mobility".

The institution's increasing impact is reflected in a substantial growth in student enrolment, especially in the master's programmes. The SER holds that all programmes are embedded in the University's academic and administrative framework and combine international standards, collaborations and partnerships with the industry, and modern technologies (including LMS platforms) to deliver high-quality education.

IV. Assessment of the study programmes

1. Quality of the curriculum

Bachelor's/Master's degree

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.

The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.

[ESG 1.2]

Description

General aspects

As stated in the documentation, it is asserted that the outcomes of all educational programmes are said to reflect academic and labour market requirements and are scientifically and professionally up to date. It is stated that the academic level of the educational programme meets the requirements of Level 6 or 7 of the relevant level of the European Qualifications Framework. Within the local context, the educational programmes align

with the sixth (Bachelor) and seventh (Master) levels of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In terms of eligibility, one academic year of the study programme is equal to 1800 teaching hours and 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits, which are available to students (citizens, employees, etc.). The SER holds that all programmes align with the national framework and that the curricula are structured in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna process and the ECTS system, allowing for student mobility and education/exchange in EU countries.

The academic year for full-time students at both levels of higher education (Bachelor and Master) is 40 weeks. Each semester consists of 20 weeks (including a 5-week exam period). Full-time students are assigned 30 credits per semester (this number may be lower if the student has academic debt from prerequisite courses), while part-time students are assigned up to 20 credits. One credit equals 30 hours of student work, both in and outside the classroom.

A master's student's weekly workload in a 5-day work regime is 45 hours, with 15 hours of in-class time and 30 hours of independent work. This translates to 1.5 credits per week (excluding the summer semester). Each week which is dedicated to preparing and defending the master's thesis, preparing for and taking exams, and completing internships, is equivalent to 1.5 credits.

Full-time students are allowed to take additional courses. Students studying under state order who maintain a GPA of 81-100 in individual courses throughout their studies are also permitted to take additional courses in their field. In all cases, the number of credits a student takes in a semester should not exceed 40.

All educational programmes are said to be structured in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), facilitating international credit recognition. Credits earned by a student who successfully completes their studies are included in the ECTS. The SER mentions that an academic year comprises 1800 hours or 60 ECTS credits, supporting student mobility and furthering education within the European Higher Education Area.

The programme documentation states that leading enterprises have contributed to the curricula, providing feedback to align learning outcomes with labour market needs. The University's Career and Employment Centre is highlighted as a key resource for supporting employment and career development, with established partnerships facilitating student internships and collaboration with industry professionals.

Logistics and Transport Technology Engineering (Bachelor)

The bachelor's programme "Logistics and Transport Technology Engineering" spans four years for full-time study, leading to a bachelor's degree. The programme comprises a total of 240 credits and higher education institutions are said to be required to adhere to national regulations in delivering this curriculum. The documentation specifies that the programme provides a balanced structure between general and vocational training, ensuring that graduates are equipped with a variety of competencies tailored to the needs of the academic and professional sectors. As outlined in the self-evaluation report (SER), the programme is structured to achieve general competencies, in design, organizational and management, scientific research, special, production and technological, service and operational activities. At the same time, students prepare and defend coursework and projects, perform independent work outside the classroom and under the guidance of a teacher. As for research and practical application, students gain skills in conducting research projects and participating in practical training, such as a 20-week internship at production enterprises, to ensure hands-on experience in the industry. Students also develop their academic and professional skills by preparing for coursework and the Final State Attestation through rigorous academic training, including independent work and collaboration with faculty on research and development projects. The curriculum of the Logistics and Transport Technologies Engineering programme is organised to balance foundational knowledge with

vocational training. It includes both compulsory and elective subjects, with a clear allocation of credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). For general subjects, 30 credits are required, comprising both compulsory (24 credits) and elective courses (6 credits), accounting for 15-20 % of total hours. Vocational training makes up 120 credits, which include a mix of compulsory and elective courses, constituting 80-85 % of the curriculum. 21 credits are allocated to internships (20 weeks), and 9 credits are reserved for the Final State Attestation, providing practical and evaluative components to the programme. The SER also holds that the programme design incorporates research tasks, student presentations at conferences, and the defence of their work during coursework assessments. The integration of theoretical and practical elements ensures that students are prepared for both academic and industrial careers. Additionally, the University's collaboration with leading institutions and the establishment of a Career and Employment Centre aim to align educational outcomes with labour market needs and provide students with opportunities for internships and career advancement.

Expert evaluation

The desired qualifications for the bachelor's programme in Logistics and Transport Technologies Engineering are defined through a structured set of general and professional competencies, which serve as intended learning outcomes. These outcomes encompass subject-specific and interdisciplinary competencies, including organisational and management skills, as well as transferable professional skills. The technical and learning infrastructure is adequate to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Students have access to relevant software, laboratories and supervised practical environments. The programme makes active use of specialised software and laboratory facilities.

The ILOs are clearly aligned with academic and scientific standards, as well as labour market requirements. The appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes is supported by qualitative evidence, including close cooperation with industry, structured internships aligned with learning outcomes, regular site visits, guest lectures, and the use of applied case studies (e.g. railway transport modelling and station modernisation projects).

The experts learned that curriculum includes compulsory and elective components, with defined credit allocations for general subjects, vocational training, internships and the final state attestation. More detailed module-level documentation is provided, including module descriptions, learning outcomes, assessment methods and prerequisites. The academic aspect of the programme is supported through coursework, research-oriented assignments, optional bachelor's theses and the Final State Attestation, while labour market relevance is ensured through extensive practical components, including a structured 20-week internship, project-based learning and applied case studies. The programme also benefits from intensive partnerships with industry and a high proportion of part-time faculty members who are actively engaged in professional practice. These partnerships contribute to the continuous integration of current industry developments into teaching and support the regular updating of lesson plans and course content in response to labour market needs. Despite the programme's strong alignment with labour market needs, feedback from industry stakeholders indicates that some graduates have gaps in certain soft skills, particularly communication, teamwork, presentation and professional interaction in multidisciplinary environments. To ensure smoother integration into the working environment, soft skills should be included more strongly in the curriculum (**Finding 1**).

The substantial internship component (20 weeks, 21 credits) is clearly reflected in the curriculum and is defined as an integral part of the programme design. This practical training element is well aligned with the intended learning outcomes and supports the development of applied competencies. The role of internships is adequately described. However, apart from the internships, the experts learned during the interviews with the students that the integration of the labour market is not always strong enough. While the ILOs show alignment with labour market needs, in practice, there are barely any labour market representatives invited for guest

lectures. To improve the students' exposure to the industry, guest lecturers and site visits should be organised more frequently and regularly (**Finding 2**). In addition, students are encouraged to organise a 'Logistics Summit' with industry experts in their fourth or fifth semester, with faculty guidance, to strengthen professional networking, industry exposure and practical learning.

In addition, it became clear during discussions on site that students were lacking English language competency that is necessary for the field. To ensure that students are well prepared for their future careers, it is recommended that at least one English-taught lecture per semester be made mandatory to attend (**Finding 3**). This will also support AzTU's internationalisation efforts on student level.

The total programme workload and credit distribution are presented in line with ECTS principles and appear internally consistent. The allocation of 240 credits over four years, including credits for general education, vocational training, internships and the final assessment, is appropriate for a bachelor's degree programme. While the transparency of credit allocation at the aggregate level is satisfactory, providing more detailed workload and credit information at the module level would further support full transparency and enable a more precise evaluation of student workload distribution.

The academic degree awarded aligns with the stated learning outcomes and the expectations of EQF Level 6 and/or the relevant national qualifications framework. This is achieved through a combination of foundational theoretical knowledge, applied engineering competencies, independent work and summative assessment via the Final State Attestation. Students may opt to complete a bachelor's thesis (typically 60–100 pages), which carries 9 ECTS credits and is supported by supervision, library resources, and guidance on literature reviews and identifying research gaps. While the experts assess that the current exams and mechanisms in place are sufficient to ensure the achievement of programme- and course-level ILOs, the experts believe it would be beneficial to think about making the bachelor's thesis mandatory to further improve the quality of graduates in an international context. In the context of the bachelor's thesis, the expert panel learned on site that no standards for grading are currently defined which leads to a rather high degree of variety among the theses. To ensure comparability and transparency, clear standards for the final thesis must be defined and made accessible to students, including minimum length, minimum number of references, and a standardised structure (**Finding 4**). Additionally, the use of academic paper writing as an examination method in the first two semesters would strengthen research competencies.

As for programme development, AzTU provided adequate evidence that learning outcomes are reviewed and updated based on systematic feedback from industry partners and part-time academic staff with professional expertise. Written feedback from stakeholders in areas such as risk management and transport is also incorporated. Modifications to lesson plans, the inclusion of current industry issues and the planned implementation of additional specialised programmes indicate an ongoing process of curricular updating. While these processes appear to be well embedded in practice, the experts noticed a lack of documentation of these processes. AzTU should therefore more systematically and transparently document programme review cycles and decision-making processes to further strengthen transparency and traceability (**Finding 5**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

Logistics and Transportation Technologies Engineering (Master)

Based on the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 2 December 2024, No. 503, the programme name has been changed from “Organization of Shipment and Management in Transport” (Master) to “Logistics and Transportation Technologies Engineering”.

The master's programme "Logistics and Transportation Technologies Engineering" has a standard duration of two years for full-time study, leading to a master's degree. The programme comprises a total of 120 credits, while part-time education extends to two years and six months. According to the documentation, the programme provides detailed information about specialisations within the field, ensuring that graduates acquire advanced technical and professional skills. The SER outlines that graduates are expected to develop a broad and integrated understanding of theoretical principles and research methodologies. It is highlighted that students should be prepared to conduct scientific research, engage in pedagogical activities, and be capable of solving unexpected and complex problems within their professional field. The competencies specified are both subject-specific and interdisciplinary, aiming to prepare graduates for diverse roles in academic and professional environments. The programme documentation details the requirements for professional activities, stating that training encompasses scientific research, pedagogy, production technology, and organisational-managerial training. It defines minimum requirements for educational content, which include subject areas, course credits, expected learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and competencies), and competency codes, along with the overall duration of the master's programme. It is stated that higher education institutions must provide suitable material and technical resources, such as ICT-equipped classrooms and laboratories, computer labs, workshops, etc., for conducting lectures, practical classes, and research. The SER emphasises that students should have access to essential resources, including the local network, internet, databases, and electronic libraries and search engines. It is also mentioned that faculty members should hold appropriate academic degrees, and external specialists may be involved in teaching if they meet the specified criteria. The programme requires that scientific supervision of master's theses be conducted by academically qualified staff or approved external experts. The programme description specifies that theoretical and pedagogical training is delivered through lectures, seminars, consultations, and independent work. The SER states that various teaching methods, including oral presentations, interviews, interactive learning, independent work, discussions, round tables, illustrations, research, and laboratory and practical work, are utilised. It is reported that scientific research and pedagogical internships are crucial elements of the programme, with objectives tailored to each specialisation. Internships may be conducted in university departments or external organisations. The curriculum is reported to include 42 credits for core courses, 18 credits for electives (for specialisation), and 60 credits for internships (8 credits for research internship, 8 credits for scientific-pedagogical internship, 8 credits for research work, 6 credits for project management), and final attestation (30 credits for master's thesis preparation and defence). The SER notes that elective courses are designed to be flexible, with higher education institutions given the ability to adapt them based on market demands, faculty expertise, and research opportunities. It is stated that these electives also accommodate students' participation in international exchange programmes. The programme documentation highlights that the competencies students will acquire are distributed across both mandatory and elective coursework. It is specified that master's students engage in independent study and complete assignments under the guidance of instructors. According to the SER, research tasks are integral, with dissertation topics often derived from practical challenges faced in production settings. It is reported that students present their research findings at conferences and during thesis defences. Additionally, some students are said to participate in national and international competitions, while others collaborate with instructors on various research projects. The curriculum includes core courses across all specialisations and elective courses focused on areas such as crisis and risk engineering for transport services, transportation and management in transport, organisation of city transport network and transport service and international road transport. It is highlighted that the programme's flexibility allows for continual updates to align

with industry trends, ensuring graduates remain relevant in the job market. The requirements for the Final State Attestation, as outlined, involve the defence of a master's thesis. The SER indicates that the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan sets the guidelines for the thesis content, structure, and defence procedures. It is mentioned that student assessment follows regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, and successful candidates are awarded a master's degree and a state recognised diploma.

Expert evaluation

The master's programme in Logistics and Transportation Technologies Engineering is offered in accordance with national higher education regulations. The programme normally takes two years to complete on a full-time basis and comprises 120 ECTS. A part-time option, lasting two years and six months, is also available. The academic degree awarded is consistent with the stated learning outcomes and the expectations of EQF Level 7. Based on the documentation and the discussions on site, the experts assess that the programme overall complies with this level.

The intended learning outcomes are defined in the programme documentation and include subject-specific and interdisciplinary competencies. They reflect academic requirements and those of the labour market. The programme prepares graduates for scientific research, teaching, production-related tasks, and organisational-managerial functions. Research activities form an integral part of the programme, with master's thesis topics linked to practical challenges in professional contexts. The learning outcomes also address scientific research competencies and pedagogical skills, as well as the ability to analyse and solve complex, unforeseen professional problems. Organisational and managerial competencies are also sufficiently included. Group work and project-based learning form part of the programme. However, the experts learned on site that teamwork competencies and some other soft skills are sometimes lacking in students and graduates. Despite the programme's overall strong alignment with labour market needs, this was also reported from industry stakeholders. To ensure smoother integration into the working environment, soft skills should be included more strongly in the curriculum (see **Finding 1**), including communication, teamwork, presentation and professional interaction in multidisciplinary environments.

In addition, it became clear during discussions on site that students were lacking English language competency that is necessary for the field. To ensure that students are well prepared for their future careers, it is recommended that at least one English-taught lecture per semester be made mandatory to attend (see **Finding 3**). This will also support AzTU's internationalisation efforts on student level.

The curricular structure supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and students' progression. The curriculum comprises core and elective courses linked to specialisations, as well as internships and a final assessment. Internships include research internships, scientific-pedagogical internships, research work and project management. The final state attestation consists of preparing and defending an optional master's thesis. In this context, the expert panel learned on site that no standards for grading are currently defined which leads to a rather high degree of variety among the theses. To ensure comparability and transparency, clear standards for the final thesis must be defined and made accessible to students, including minimum length, minimum number of references, and a standardised structure (see **Finding 4**).

The course descriptions document all curricular elements, including their compulsory or elective nature and their function within the programme. A typical course plan is available. Credits are allocated to all elements of the curriculum in accordance with the credit system. However, the currently calculated workload does not cover all essential aspects of student work. AzTU must therefore establish a mechanism to calculate workload based on in-class hours, self-study, and examinations to ensure transparent allocation of workload and consistency across the programmes (**Finding 6**).

Laboratories, specialised software and technical equipment are available for use within the programme. Teaching is supported by supervision structures, project-based learning and practical case studies. Many part-time lecturers, who are experts working in the field, are involved in teaching. Close cooperation with industry partners and continuous feedback from the labour market help to ensure that course content is kept up to date. Programme content is modified in line with labour market requirements, and processes for implementing changes to lesson plans are in place.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

Transportation Engineering (Master)

Based on the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 2 December 2024, No. 503, the programmes name has been changed from “Land Vehicles Engineering (Master)”, and the new name is “Transportation Engineering”.

The master’s programme “Land Vehicles Engineering” is structured over a standard duration of two years for full-time study, leading to of a master’s degree. The programme consists of 120 credits, while part-time study extends the duration to two years and six months. The documentation highlights various specialisations within the field of organisation and safety of traffic, autotechnical examination of traffic accidents, certification and licensing of the traffic complex and Intelligent management of transport operations. The programme description indicates that graduates are expected to develop a broad and integrated understanding of theoretical principles and research methods. They should be prepared for conducting advanced scientific research, engaging in teaching activities, and addressing complex and unpredictable challenges within their professional domain. The set of competencies detailed in the curriculum combines technical expertise with interdisciplinary knowledge, preparing graduates to excel in a variety of professional settings. The SER holds that students are trained across different areas, such as scientific research, pedagogical practice, production and technological processes, and organisational-managerial skills. It defines core educational components, including subject areas, course credits, expected learning outcomes (spanning knowledge, skills, and competencies), competency codes, and the duration of the master’s programme. It is emphasised that institutions offering this programme must be well-equipped with necessary facilities, such as ICT-equipped classrooms and laboratories, computer labs, and workshops for conducting classes, practical work, and research. Furthermore, students should have access to essential digital resources, including the local network, internet, databases, electronic libraries, and search engines. The SER specifies that teaching must be provided by qualified academic staff, and external experts meeting established criteria may also contribute to the educational process. Supervision of master’s theses is conducted by faculty members with the requisite academic credentials or qualified specialists from other organisations. The programme integrates diverse teaching and learning methods such as lectures, practical classes, seminars, consultations, independent work, pedagogical practice, etc. Methods such as oral presentations, interviews, interactive learning, independent work, discussions, round tables, illustrations, research, laboratory and practical work, and more are utilised to facilitate student learning. The text states that scientific research and scientific-pedagogical internships are included in the programme, with goals and objectives tailored to each specialisation. These internships may be completed within relevant organisations or university departments and laboratories. According to the SER, the curriculum differentiates between mandatory and elective components. It allocates 42 credits to mandatory core courses, 18 credits to electives (for specialisation), and 60 credits to internships (8 credits for research internship, 8 credits for scientific-pedagogical internship, 8 credits for research work, 6 credits for project management), and thesis-related work (30 credits for master’s thesis preparation and defence). Elective courses are designed flexibly, allowing institutions to adapt courses based on the expertise of faculty, research opportunities, and evolving job market

demands. The SER highlights that these electives also facilitate participation in international exchange programmes. The SER holds that the programme ensures that students achieve the intended learning outcomes by combining mandatory coursework with specialised electives. Research and scientific-pedagogical internships are fundamental in developing practical skills and field-specific competencies. It is mentioned that students engage in research projects under faculty guidance, with dissertation topics often linked to real-world problems encountered in the industry. The findings from these projects are typically presented at academic conferences and defended in front of a committee. Some students participate in national and international competitions, while others collaborate on research initiatives with instructors. The requirements for the Final State Attestation involve defending a master's thesis. The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan sets the guidelines for the content, structure, and defence procedures of the thesis. Assessment is conducted in line with regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Graduates who successfully complete their thesis defence are awarded a master's degree and a state-recognised diploma.

Expert evaluation

The master's programme in Transportation Engineering shows a very high degree of integration with industry and government, particularly through project-based learning. The curriculum is coherent and offers five specialised elective tracks, even for relatively small student cohorts, which reflects academic flexibility. The experts learned during the discussions on site that updates in machine learning and neural networks are planned. The experts strongly support this and believe that the update should be implemented as soon as possible. A typical course plan is available. The learning outcomes are specified in a very detailed way. These outcomes clearly align with academic/scientific standards and labour market requirements, and are supported through coursework, research-oriented assignments and optional master's thesis work. However, the criteria for thesis writing and referencing, such as the number of references required and the demand for up-to-date sources, are outdated, and the definition of research criteria for thesis writing is unclear. At present, assessment relies predominantly on oral examinations of up to one hour. Against this background, clear standards for the final thesis must be defined and made accessible to students, including minimum length, minimum number of references, and a standardised structure, to ensure comparability and transparency (see **Finding 4**).

The course descriptions document all curricular elements, including their compulsory or elective nature and their function within the programme. A typical course plan is available. Credits are allocated to all elements of the curriculum in accordance with the credit system. However, the currently calculated work-load does not cover all essential aspects of student work. AzTU must therefore establish a mechanism to calculate workload based on in-class hours, self-study, and examinations to ensure transparent allocation of workload and consistency across the programmes (see **Finding 6**). The academic degree awarded is appropriately aligned with the stated learning outcomes and consistent with the expectations of EQF Level 7 and/or the relevant national qualifications framework. Based on the documentation and the discussions on site, the experts assess that the programme overall complies with this level.

As for internationalisation, it became clear during discussions on site that students were lacking English language competency that is necessary for the field. To ensure that students are well prepared for their future careers, it is recommended that at least one English-taught lecture per semester be made mandatory to attend (see **Finding 3**). It might also be beneficial to integrate a certification component in the curriculum to further standardise English language proficiency requirements. In the same context, initiatives that support the preparation of research theses in collaboration with international universities could be encouraged to further promote AzTU's internationalisation efforts on student level.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

2. Procedures for quality assurance

Bachelor's/Master's degree

The programme is subject to the higher education institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.

A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.

The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.

Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme.

[ESG 1.1, 1.7 & 1.9]

Description

According to the SER, AzTU has implemented an extensive and structured system for quality assurance, which includes continuous monitoring, regular programme reviews, and regular feedback by internal and external stakeholders. AzTU has reportedly developed a comprehensive set of policies governing its educational programmes, including the "Quality Assurance Policy of Azerbaijan Technical University," approved on July 13, 2022. According to the documentation, this policy reflects the University's commitment to sustainable quality assurance and aligns with the University's strategic plan for 2024-2030. The Quality Assurance Department has developed a comprehensive Quality Assurance Guideline Book and a Governance Description Document defining the internal structures, responsibilities, and quality assurance procedures.

The Quality Assurance Department formulates and circulates department-level quality policies related to evaluation, curriculum development, assessment methods, stakeholder involvement, and feedback mechanisms. These policies are regularly reviewed and updated, with faculty and administrative staff receiving training and support to ensure correct implementation.

Stakeholders are involved by sending written feedback, engaging in face-to-face communication, or after student internship placement in the industry. Student surveys are conducted regularly by the Academic Department, the Career Centre, the chairs, and the Deans of the Faculty, and results are said to be discussed accordingly to assess student satisfaction and employability. Students and recent graduates are said to participate in periodic surveys conducted by various university departments. The results of these surveys are said to be reviewed in faculty meetings, where decisions are made to improve the programme quality. AzTU's Career and Employment Centre reportedly maintains regular contact with graduates, conducting surveys to track their employment status. It is noted that information about graduates from the last five years is submitted to the State Employment Agency for inclusion in an employment portal. The SER states that graduate employability data is used to inform curriculum development and ensure alignment with job market needs.

The Quality Assurance Department is described as overseeing a range of activities to uphold academic standards. The department collaborates with faculty members, relevant institutions, and various university departments. It is stated that the Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs manages general educational affairs, with coordination carried out by the Education Department. The SER also mentions that the University-Industry Cooperation and Lifelong Learning Centre engages multiple stakeholders in the quality assurance process, ensuring that the education offered at AzTU is of high quality.

The University's quality assurance policy supports academic integrity, stating that any form of fraud or discrimination is not tolerated. According to the SER, infrastructure supporting these values has been established, and AzTU has separate policies on academic integrity, academic freedom, and anti-discrimination measures. It is noted that these policies are designed to protect both students and staff from any form of intolerance.

Information management practices reportedly include engaging students, graduates, and labour market representatives in quality assurance. The SER describes meetings held with industry leaders and periodic labour fairs organised to connect students with potential employers. It is mentioned that labour market needs are assessed through meetings, surveys, and internship evaluations, and the information is reviewed by faculty for curriculum adjustments.

Expert evaluation

Azerbaijan Technical University's quality management system is designed to ensure high academic standards by implementing structured procedures that emphasise transparency, accountability and continuous improvement. The university's quality management structures are in place and include programme evaluations and benchmarking with European study programmes. However, it remains unclear whether these evaluations have been carried out systematically and whether their results have been fully implemented at faculty level. To strengthen the effectiveness of the quality management system, the university management should ensure systematic follow-up on recommendations issued by the quality assurance department and verify their implementation at faculty level (**Finding 7**).

Student feedback showed that lecturer evaluations at the end of the semester are not conducted on a regular basis. However, this regular feedback is important to establish a culture of continuous improvement. Therefore, the programmes must further formalise this practice, including documenting how such feedback is analysed and translated into concrete improvements in teaching and curriculum delivery (**Finding 8**).

The quality assurance department also coordinates the systematic collection of stakeholder feedback. The use of employer surveys, together with graduate career tracking, provides valuable input for programme development and supports the alignment of study programmes with labour market needs. Academic staff performance is assessed within a differentiated salary system and through defined key performance indicators, including criteria related to internationalisation and research activities, which contributes to a performance-oriented academic culture. These activities align with the university's strategic objectives, national regulatory requirements and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

3. Learning, teaching and assessment of students

Bachelor's/Master's degree

The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.

Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.

Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

[ESG 1.3]

Description

Learning and teaching

The SER outlines that teaching methods are student-centred, problem-oriented, and competency-based, incorporating both theoretical and practical approaches. It is mentioned that student assignments and graduation projects are often derived from industry-related topics or concerns, with specialised software used to enhance practical learning. The educational process is enriched by technological tools such as electronic presentations and virtual laboratories to encourage active learning.

The learning environment is described as supportive, enabling students to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Teaching and learning methods are outlined in the syllabus, which is publicly available. The University continuously reviews and improves these methods as part of its quality assurance framework. Instructors are said to use a range of teaching techniques, such as discussions and debates, presentations, group assessments, independent work/research, reports, projects, role-playing games, video and audio lectures, simulations, and expert method. The curriculum maintains a balance between theory and practical training to align with the needs of the labour market.

The University reports to have invested in modernising its facilities, has equipped lecture rooms with interactive whiteboards and established computer labs with specialised software for design and programming. Students have electronic access to educational materials, and the infrastructure supports a blended learning approach. Efforts are ongoing to develop new purpose-built classrooms to meet evolving labour market demands.

Diverse student needs are also addressed. Communication between students and faculty is facilitated through multiple platforms, including face-to-face interactions and social media channels. Special support is provided for international students, such as preparatory language courses, activities for social integration, and individual training sessions. Adaptations are made for students with disabilities, including electronic resources, online exams, and tailored teaching materials. Support for socially sensitive groups is also ensured, with state-provided financial concessions and scholarships available.

Students are actively involved in shaping their educational experience and encouraged to participate in projects, competitions, and study abroad programmes. High-achieving students receive scholarships and job opportunities from various enterprises. Students can create individual study plans and have the freedom to choose elective courses and academic advisors in line with the Bologna principles. Regular surveys collect student feedback on teaching quality, research interests, and social concerns, which are analysed to inform decisions.

Assessment

The SER specifies that student knowledge is evaluated through continuous assessment and through final exams, each contributing 50 points to the overall grade. The grading is based on a 100-point scale, with a minimum score required to pass. Exams are conducted in both oral and written form, with questions randomly selected by a computer system. Video recordings of exams are archived for quality assurance purposes.

Semester exams are organised twice a year, in January-February and June-July, with schedules drawn up a month in advance. The University ensures that students have at least two days to prepare between exams. Re-examinations are provided in two stages: one week before the exam session for students with academic debts from previous semesters, and another week after the session for those who missed exams due to valid reasons. Students can only retake an exam once, and those who fail must retake the course. Results are printed and archived accordingly.

Special provisions are made for students with health issues, such as the option to take online exams or re-schedule tests. The final assessment involves writing and defending a graduation thesis, which serves as the student's final certification under the new educational programme.

Organisation

AzTU has reportedly implemented a well-structured organisational framework to manage the educational process. Lessons are scheduled by the faculty and approved by the vice-rector for educational affairs. Classes are organised in two shifts, starting at 9:00 am for the morning shift and 1:35 pm for the afternoon shift, while master's classes begin at 6:30 pm. The Department of Educational and Methodological Work (DEMW) is responsible for conducting and supervising classes, with oversight from the Education Department.

The University has established clear procedures for student workload planning. According to the regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, full-time students are assigned 30 credits per semester, and part-time students up to 20 credits. One credit corresponds to 30 hours of work, both in and outside the classroom, with a weekly workload of 45 hours. Students with high academic performance are allowed to take additional courses, but their total credit load cannot exceed 40 credits per semester.

AzTU has also created avenues for student appeals and complaints. Students can submit complaints through meetings with the administration and deans, as well as the Department of Educational and Methodological Work (DEMW), via email, or by using suggestion boxes placed around the University. The Rector holds regular office hours, and complaints submitted electronically are reviewed by an Appeals Commission. Decisions are made based on the nature of the issue, and outcomes are communicated accordingly.

Expert evaluation

The teaching and learning methods are designed to be student-centred, problem-oriented and competency-based. The programme combines theoretical instruction with practical application, making extensive use of project-based learning, case studies, and industry-related topics. Assignments and graduation projects are often based on practical challenges in the transport and logistics sector, helping students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

A variety of teaching methods are employed, including lectures, discussions, presentations, group work, independent research, reports, projects, simulations and sessions led by experts. Teaching is supported by technological tools such as electronic presentations, specialised software, and laboratory-based learning environments. This variety of methods contributes to student engagement, motivation and active participation in the learning process, supporting the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is structured to balance theoretical foundations with practice-oriented elements. The practical relevance of the curriculum is further strengthened through internships, site visits and the involvement of part-time lecturers with professional experience in the labour market. Continuous interaction with industry partners and feedback from external stakeholders contribute to the adaptation of course content and lesson plans to align teaching with current professional requirements.

During the site visit, it was stated that students are permitted to use AI-based tools and heavy use in student work is reportedly detectable. There are currently no binding, module-overarching policies requiring students to acknowledge the use of AI tools in written assignments or theses and regulating the use of AI. It is therefore strongly recommended to establish and publish a central AI policy and systematically implement it in the programmes (**Finding 9**).

Despite the strong practical orientation, student feedback indicates that some graduates experience difficulties in entering the labour market immediately after completing their bachelor's degree and therefore continue their education at master's level. While the reasons for this could not be ultimately determined, it might be beneficial to implement measures in terms of teaching and learning methods aimed at strengthening students' readiness for the labour market.

The organisation of teaching is conducted in accordance with a structured framework. The organisation of teaching schedules is centrally coordinated and approved, with classes being organised into defined time slots that cater to the needs of both full-time and part-time master's students. The university recognises the importance of meeting students' diverse needs through flexible learning pathways and personalised support, including an open-door policy. Students have the opportunity to select elective courses, devise personal study plans and appoint their own academic advisors, who provide consultation and guidance. To ensure inclusivity, adaptations are made for students with disabilities, including bespoke teaching arrangements and alternative examination formats where necessary.

Assessment of students is conducted through a dual approach of continuous assessment and final examinations, with both components contributing equally to the determination of the overall grade, which is expressed on a 100-point scale. Assessment formats include oral and written examinations, as well as project- and case study-based components. However, the experts learned on site that the questions in written exams are not always clearly phrased which sometimes leads to confusion among students. To ensure a consistent level of exam content, the programmes must therefore establish and implement clearly documented assessment rubrics and criteria and make them accessible to students (**Finding 10**). Enhancing the transparency of the written examination process will promote fairness, consistency and student comprehension of assessment criteria. In the same context, while different assessment methods are used, academic writing skills and group assignments should be implemented more often to strengthen research competencies and alignment with skills required by the labour market (**Finding 11**).

Examination schedules are published in advance, and students are given sufficient time to prepare between exams. Despite the existence of general assessment regulations, examination methods and assessment structures are defined by the individual lecturer and are not consistently standardised across all modules. A clear and binding definition of examination methods for each course, including the weighting of mid-term and final assessments, is therefore required and must be implemented (**Finding 12**).

Re-examinations are offered under clearly defined conditions. Students who fail an exam or are unable to attend for valid reasons may retake it within specified timeframes. There are also regulations in place to compensate for disadvantages caused by illness or other justified absences, including alternative examination arrangements such as online exams. According to the applicable regulations, students are permitted to retake an examination once only. If they achieve an insufficient result or do not participate in the re-examination, they must retake the subject. While the students did not mention any issues with this policy when asked during the discussion round, the experts believe that this regulation might limit the students' flexibility in terms of study progression and it might therefore be beneficial to consider making it more flexible.

The final assessment consists of the preparation and defence of a graduation thesis, which serves as the formal completion of the respective programme. At the master's level, this includes a research-oriented thesis component. At the bachelor's level, the preparation of a thesis is currently not mandatory. As stated in the

section on the quality of the curriculum, the experts believe it would be beneficial to think about making the bachelor's thesis mandatory to further improve the quality of graduates in an international context. In the context of the bachelor's thesis, the expert panel learned on site that no standards for grading are currently defined which leads to a rather high degree of variety among the theses. To ensure comparability and transparency, clear standards for the final thesis must be defined and made accessible to students, including minimum length, minimum number of references, and a standardised structure (see **Finding 4**).

In the event that students have any complaints or wish to appeal, the university has established a set of procedures for dealing with such matters. It is therefore stated that students have the option of submitting complaints via a variety of channels, including meetings with administrative bodies, electronic submissions, and formal complaint mechanisms. The review of complaints is conducted by an Appeals Commission, with the resulting decisions being communicated to the relevant parties.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Bachelor's/Master's degree

Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

[ESG 1.4]

Description

Admission

Student admission at AzTU is reported to be centralised and regulated by the State Examination Center (SEC). It is stated that all applications and information for prospective students are managed through the SEC website. The documentation outlines that details such as the composition and number of specialities, admission criteria, tuition fees, choice of major etc. are made available by the SEC both online and in periodically published journals. The official list of admitted students and their scores is electronically transferred to the educational institution, and these students are subsequently registered in the integrated electronic systems of both SEC and Ministry of Education. According to the guidelines, other governmental agencies, such as authorities for military deferment, can track student enrolment and academic progress through this electronic system.

According to the SER, admission requirements are defined and published by the SEC. Students are eligible for admission upon completing 11 years of secondary school or a secondary vocational school. As of the 9th grade, the system allows for the creation of a personal electronic cabinet for each student, which is used for applications and communication. High-performing graduates from secondary vocational schools may be admitted directly without competition, provided they meet the specified General Outcome Indicator (GOI).

Prospective students must complete online applications for bachelor's programmes and submit documents in person to SEC-designated acceptance commissions. It is noted that the SEC conducts entrance exams at multiple stages, assessing subjects such as the Azerbaijani language, mathematics, and foreign languages. Master's programme applicants face a two-stage examination process, testing logical thinking, foreign language proficiency, and informatics.

For master's degree admissions, bachelor's holders are required to participate in the SEC-administered entrance exams, which consist of evaluating general intellectual ability and specialised knowledge. The SEC

specifies that candidates must achieve the minimum scores to be eligible for selecting their major and enrolling in their desired programme. The documentation specifies that students are given the flexibility to select one of 15 technical or technological majors after completing the entrance exams. Once scores are finalised, the SEC sends this information to the students' electronic cabinets, enabling them to make informed decisions about their programme selection. All major selection procedures are carried out electronically.

AzTU reportedly adheres to a non-discriminatory admission process, ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants. Admission rules apply equally to local and international students, and education is said to be offered in multiple languages, including Azerbaijani, Russian, English, and German. The SER mentions that the admission process for international students is facilitated either through the SEC or via direct university competition, depending on the regulations.

The University provides various support mechanisms for prospective students, such as the Applicant Counselling Centre and "Open Door" days. The Applicant Counselling Centre offers information on student admission, the application process, and specialty selection. "Open Door" days allow prospective students to explore the University's facilities, interact with faculty members, and learn about educational programmes and opportunities.

Admission figures and the number of students at AzTU show a positive trend, while exclusion rates are said to have varied in recent years.

Progression

The progression of students at Azerbaijan Technical University (AzTU) is governed by a structured academic calendar. The academic year is divided into two semesters (fall and spring), each lasting 20 weeks, including a five-week exam period. The documentation notes that a summer semester may be organised for up to six weeks, primarily for additional learning opportunities. It also holds that full-time students must enrol in courses worth 30 credits per semester, while part-time students may take up to 20 credits. One credit is equivalent to 30 hours of work, encompassing both classroom and independent study.

Student progress is said to be monitored through analyses of student performance in exams, dynamics of participation in projects and exchange programmes, and the dynamics of the performance of employed students, among other reports. According to university regulations, students must complete all academic and practical requirements, including examinations and internships, to qualify for the Final State Attestation, which consists of a final state exam (interdisciplinary) or the defence of a dissertation. The period allocated to the preparation and organisation of the final attestation is six weeks.

Depending on the duration of the specialisation, students are assigned 120 credits at the master's level. A student who collects the credits provided for in the educational programmes of specialisations is considered to have mastered that programme. Those who have fully completed the curriculum of the master's level educational programme in higher educational institutions are awarded the "master" higher vocational-specialty degree based on the decision of the final Specialized Scientific Council.

The SER holds that full-time students have the option to take additional courses, subject to certain academic performance criteria and payment regulations. High-achieving students who meet specific GPA requirements may enrol in additional courses without extra fees. However, the total number of credits per semester must not exceed 40.

The documentation explains that students must fulfil all curriculum requirements, including passing prescribed assessments, to be eligible for graduation. The normative duration for master's programmes ranges from 2 to 3 years, while bachelor's programmes are structured around the student's individual study plan. Upon successful completion, students are awarded a master's or bachelor's degree, depending on their level of study.

Recognition

AzTU has outlined a comprehensive recognition process, which is facilitated through an online platform. The recognition of credits is governed by regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is noted that credits earned by students at other institutions, either domestically or internationally, can be recognised, provided that the courses meet the criteria set by AzTU's Subject Equivalence Commission. This commission reviews the content, workload, and learning outcomes of external courses to determine their equivalency and suitability for credit transfer.

The University actively supports student mobility, encouraging participation in exchange programmes with partner institutions, primarily in Germany and Turkey. Students are offered additional support services, including language courses and career counselling, to enhance their experience in these programmes.

Competencies acquired at other educational institutions are recognised across all specialities at AzTU. The process involves obtaining prior approval from AzTU before enrolling in a course at another university. Upon successful completion, students must submit official documentation which is reviewed by the dean's office for credit allocation. As stated, students may transfer up to 30 % of the credits required for their specialisation from other institutions. If a student transfers from another university, their previously earned credits are evaluated for compatibility with AzTU's curriculum. The Subject Equivalence Commission ensures that the content and workload of transferred courses match at least 75 % of AzTU's requirements.

Certification

AzTU's certification process ensures that graduates receive state-recognised diplomas. Upon successful completion of their programme, students are awarded a higher professional degree and a diploma, which includes a unique identifier for verification. The documentation explains that the university rector issues an order for diploma conferral, which is then submitted to the Ministry of Science and Education and uploaded to the relevant electronic system. Graduates receive a diploma supplement, which provides detailed information about their academic achievements and is registered electronically. This supplement ensures transparency and facilitates the recognition. After completing the Final State Attestation, graduates are awarded a master's degree in the relevant field of study and a state-recognised diploma.

Expert evaluation

The formal admission requirements and the specific prerequisites for individual programmes of study are clearly defined and centrally regulated by the State Examination Centre (SEC). Information on admission criteria, procedures, available programmes, tuition fees and related matters is made publicly available via the SEC website and official publications. The multi-stage, centralised selection procedure follows clearly defined criteria and steps, and the electronic management of applications, results and enrolment ensures transparency and consistency. Transferring admitted students' data to the SEC's, the Ministry of Education's and the University's integrated electronic systems further support the traceability and integrity of the admission process.

The general prerequisite of having completed secondary education or secondary vocational education is appropriate for entry into bachelor's programmes and contributes to successful completion of the studies. Subject-based entrance examinations (e.g. Azerbaijani language, mathematics and foreign languages) and general intellectual ability tests at master's level support the selection of students with the necessary foundational competencies. Direct admission of high-performing graduates from secondary vocational schools is a regulated and transparent process. No significant recent changes to the general prerequisites are reported in the documentation. Overall, the prerequisites appear proportionate and appropriate for the academic level and profile of the programmes.

The university and the SEC collect and maintain systematic data on admission procedures and the outcomes of past cohorts through integrated electronic systems. These systems enable applicant numbers, admission scores, enrolment figures and trends to be monitored over time. While the availability of such data supports institutional planning and quality assurance, more explicit reporting on how admission data are analysed and used for strategic development would further strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

The university has implemented structured mechanisms for recognising prior learning and transferring credits from other higher education institutions. These procedures are governed by national regulations approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and implemented at an institutional level by the Subject Equivalence Commission. Reviewing content, workload and learning outcomes to ensure at least 75% equivalence provides a clear, documented basis for recognition decisions. The ability to transfer up to 30% of credits and the requirement for prior approval contribute to consistency and transparency. These procedures reflect key regional and international principles for credit recognition and student mobility and are broadly aligned with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Student mobility is facilitated through institutional partnerships, particularly with universities in Germany and Türkiye. The use of prior approval procedures, the documentation of completed courses and the review process overseen by the Subject Equivalence Commission support structured mobility and recognition. Additional support services, such as language courses and careers counselling, further enhance students' ability to participate in exchange programmes. However, internationalisation within the Cluster is currently limited, with student mobility primarily restricted to regional partnerships. Nevertheless, the programmes are aligned with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and the European Qualifications Framework, and student loan opportunities are available. The ongoing efforts toward international accreditation by AQAS are positively acknowledged. Industry representatives emphasized that proficiency in English and Russian is an essential requirement for graduates, which underlines the importance of strengthening foreign-language competencies across the programmes. In this context, broader international cooperation with universities worldwide should be pursued to increase both outgoing and incoming student mobility (**Finding 13**).

In the context of internationalisation, it became clear on site that incoming students require a sufficient number of English-taught modules, while outgoing students need stronger English-language skills. To ensure that students are well prepared for their future careers, also in an international context, it is recommended that at least one English-taught lecture per semester be made mandatory to attend (see **Finding 3**). In addition, it might be beneficial to offer more English language classes for all students to support AzTU's internationalisation efforts and attract more international students. Increasing the number of outgoing and incoming exchange students would enhance the international dimension of the programmes, broaden students' academic and professional perspectives, and bring institutional practice more closely in line with European and international mobility objectives.

Upon successfully completing their studies, graduates receive state-recognised diplomas issued in accordance with national regulations. This process is documented, including rector's orders, registration in national electronic systems and verification through unique identifiers. Graduates also receive a diploma supplement which provides transparent and detailed information on their academic achievements. This supplement supports national and international recognition by documenting the qualification, learning context and academic performance. Overall, the certification process is transparent and consistent with good practice in higher education.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Teaching staff

Bachelor's/Master's degree

The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.

Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of staff.

[ESG 1.5]

Description

The teaching staff at AzTU is reported to be strategically structured to meet the programme objectives, ensuring that faculty members possess the required qualifications, professional expertise, and international experience. Respective evidence is provided in the form of CVs. The selection and development processes for teaching staff are noted to follow transparent, structured guidelines aligned with national regulations.

According to institutional reports, the recruitment of teaching staff is managed by the rector and adheres to the "Unified Tariff-Position Directory of the Employees in the Field of Education," as well as other legal frameworks. The process is governed by the "Internal Rules for Employment and Dismissal at Azerbaijan Technical University," based on the Labor Code and the University's Charter. The Human Resources Department coordinates recruitment activities, ensuring that procedures are properly implemented. Vacancies are announced publicly on the University's website, social media, and job platforms, with candidates undergoing a multi-stage evaluation process. This includes assessments of professional knowledge and interviews conducted by the Recruitment Committee. Candidates for the position are evaluated on the basis of their general worldview, alignment of specialisation, knowledge level and professional preparation, and personal qualities.

It is reported that faculty members across all programmes are required to prepare annual work plans outlining their teaching, research, and organisational tasks. The plans are reviewed and approved by the department. The organisation of the teaching process, the quality of education, student engagement in research work, independent proposals for research, and social issues concerning students are regularly evaluated through surveys, and the results are discussed at department and faculty meetings. Open and master classes are conducted each semester and include the participation of students, department heads, teachers, and members of the scientific-methodological council, providing an opportunity for peer and student feedback to refine teaching methods and curricula.

A differential salary system is applied to incentivise faculty performance. Staff members receive rewards based on research output, project involvement, publications, and other achievements. According to AzTU, there are structured opportunities for faculty to participate in professional training, technical foreign language courses, training aimed at the application of interactive teaching methods and distance learning, and research projects. The university provides support for scientific research, including business trips and industry collaboration. Each academic year, teachers are encouraged to participate in an online satisfaction survey to enable exchange and the possibility to share suggestions and recommendations.

Expert evaluation

Based on the information provided and the site visit, it is clear that AzTU is strongly committed to a student-centred approach, delivered by highly qualified teaching staff. A strength of the university is its combination of academic standards and practical industry expertise. Most lecturers work part time in industry and have focused on specialisation for five years. Due to this close connection, real-life problems are incorporated into lessons through practical case studies. This approach is also in line with the university's recruitment policy,

which aims to strengthen links with the world of work alongside its research activities. The recruitment process involves a public call for applications. Trial lectures are usually held to inform the decision on which lecturer to appoint. However, if the appointment is scheduled during the semester break, the trial lecture does not take place, and lecturers are hired without ensuring their teaching quality. To ensure the quality of appointed lecturers, it is recommended that the recruitment process be organised in a way that guarantees the assessment of the candidates' qualifications (**Finding 14**). Nonetheless, the university took measures to ensure that monitoring would be in place during the initial semester.

As part of its internationalisation efforts, the university has added proficiency in English to its recruitment criteria. By doing so, the university is capitalising on the impending generational change to further its internationalisation and research contributions, which have so far been limited to neighbouring countries and Germany. The university already has established partnerships and academic exchanges with Turkish universities in Bursa, Ankara and Istanbul, as well as with universities in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Government and Erasmus+ funding makes it possible to support research activities and academic mobility for staff members. However, English-language teaching competence is currently not a key criterion the recruitment of new lecturers and professors. Against this background, applicants should be required to demonstrate their English teaching skills through internationally recognised certification such as IELTS in the recruitment process (**Finding 15**).

Furthermore, as a part of its strategic commitment to enhance academic performance and staff development, the university should introduce individual target agreements with academic staff (**Finding 16**). These agreements should be annual for lecturers and two-year agreements for professors and should focus on teaching quality, research activities, professional development, and participation in conferences and training. A systematic review of these agreements after four years, linked to financial remuneration, would provide an effective incentive structure and support continuous improvement.

With government and Erasmus+ funding, it is possible to support research activities and academic mobility for staff members. To date, the university has published over 50 joint publications. However, academic staff should be supported to further increase the number of academic papers, including international co-authored publications.

A number of technical universities have been observed to demonstrate an enduring underrepresentation of female teaching staff relative to their male counterparts, a phenomenon that is also evident at the accredited programmes of the AzTU. In order to contribute to the promotion of gender balance and to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the expert panel propose an increase in the proportion of female lecturers.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Learning resources and student support

Bachelor's/Master's degree

Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.

Guidance and support is available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.

[ESG 1.6]

Description

According to the SER, AzTU offers appropriate facilities and resources for learning and teaching activities. Relevant structural departments, staff potential, teaching auditoriums, laboratories, and the library, among other resources, are provided. Mentorship and support are available for students to successfully complete their education, mainly carried out by department tutors and other colleagues.

The SER states that lecture rooms are adequately equipped to support teaching outcomes, featuring interactive whiteboards and specialised laboratory facilities. The labs of the department of specialisation offer equipment controlled by digital software and cutting tools, measuring devices, and other specialised devices, e.g. for metrological work. Additionally, various laboratories for Physics, Chemistry, Hydraulics and Mechanics, Electrotechnical topics, and automation are used to cater to the curriculum. Foreign languages, programming, and engineering graphics are reportedly taught in auditoriums equipped with specific infrastructure and software.

The University has equipped lecture rooms with interactive whiteboards (projectors) and established computer labs with specialised software for design and programming. Appropriate conditions have been created for teaching subjects that require digital services and technical support in educational programmes. For this, AutoCAD, Solidworks, 3D MAX, Keller, Autodesk Inventor, Ansys, etc. design, as well as computerised classrooms loaded with software such as Python, Mathcad, Matlab, Java Script, C++, and other programmes are used. Currently, work is being continued on the preparation and commissioning of new purpose-built auditoriums in accordance with the requirements of the labour market.

AzTU's Library Information Center, described in the report, provides access to a wide array of academic resources, including digital databases and open-access materials. It was mentioned that the library has negotiated free access to databases like ACM and Edward Elgar through the Azerbaijan Library Consortium, ensuring a robust collection of journals, academic literature, and modern texts. Furthermore, the University has reportedly equipped a TUSAŞ workshop to help students develop collective engineering projects aligned with labour market demands. The University has also established the "Cezeri Lab" in collaboration with TIKa, allowing students to prepare high-quality prototypes for competitions such as Teknofest.

The University is said to have established various support structures for students. Students who study under state orders receive scholarships, with different tiers based on academic performance, and additional support is given to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University offers student loans on concessional terms for those enrolled in paid education, and financial aid to students with special status, such as those deprived of parental care or children of martyrs or disabled veterans of the Karabakh War, or disabled students. AzTU also offers special scholarships awarded to high-achieving students based on their admission scores.

For health and well-being, AzTU reportedly operates a Student Polyclinic offering free medical services to students and teachers, and the Student Union Committee provides vouchers for free lunches to 35 low-income students per month. Extracurricular opportunities, such as excursions, cultural events, and activities are organised by the AzTU Student Union Committee to foster a sense of community. Sports enthusiasts have access to the AzTU Sports Club, which offers training in various disciplines, and student accommodation is

provided for 300 students annually in university dormitories equipped for safe and comfortable living. The AzTU Student Youth Organisation (TGT) aims to increase the networking activities among students.

The SER emphasises that foreign and exchange students receive tailored support from the International Relations Department and tutors regarding the organisation of their studies and beyond. Preparatory language courses, practical trainings, and seminars are organised, along with events celebrating national traditions and holidays. The University provides individual study plans for international students and offers excursions to explore Azerbaijan.

AzTU reportedly has a Student Scientific Society to promote research and scientific creativity. Qualified academic advisors are assigned to monitor student progress and provide academic support, while consultation hours are organised throughout the semester. Instructors are said to assist students with essays, independent assignments, and research projects, and help them prepare for thesis defences.

Career support is available through the AzTU Career Centre, which assists final-year students with job search strategies, interview preparation, and career planning. The centre offers free language courses and student volunteer programmes to provide work experience (e.g., in projects within the framework of the EU, UNESCO, and other cooperation agreements). Additionally, AzTU has introduced a Student Rector position, elected annually to facilitate communication between the student body and the administration. Academic advisors (tutors) with appropriate qualifications and specialised training supervise the development of students and provide academic support.

AzTU promotes international cooperation and student mobility through partnerships with international universities and companies, in particular cooperations with universities in Turkey and Ukraine. The programmes are designed to enable students to participate in exchange programmes.

Expert evaluation

AzTU provides the necessary material resources and infrastructure for teaching and learning. Lecture rooms are equipped with projectors and interactive whiteboards. There are also computer laboratories with specialised software. Laboratories for physics, chemistry, mechanics, hydraulics, electrotechnical subjects, transport-related topics and automation are incorporated into the study programmes and were presented during the site visit. Software such as AutoCAD, SolidWorks, Autodesk Inventor, Ansys, Python, Matlab and ArcGIS are used for teaching purposes. All resources are adequately applied in lectures, practical courses, and project-based learning. Practice-oriented facilities, such as the TUSAŞ workshop and the Cezeri Lab, are also available for collective engineering projects and prototype development. Courses in the master's programmes are usually offered in the evenings to accommodate employed students. The AzTU Library Information Centre provides access to academic literature and digital resources. According to the information provided, students have access to national and international databases, including ACM and Edward Elgar, via the Azerbaijan Library Consortium. The library supports coursework, research activities and thesis preparation. While not all facilities are currently accessible for students with physical disabilities, AzTU provides special support to ensure that all students can attend their classes. They also adapt their teaching activities to include these students.

AzTU has established comprehensive institutional and personalised student support structures. Academic advisors (tutors) provide guidance and support for students, particularly in the first semesters. Teaching staff offer consultation hours and provide support for assignments, research projects and thesis preparation. In addition to these already well-functioning services, the introduction of peer-based tutoring formats could further strengthen student support, particularly in the early semesters. AzTU further offers student clubs and organisations that contribute to student engagement. Projects aimed at supporting female students were also mentioned. According to the information provided, approximately 25% of the student body is female, with an

increasing number of female students. Specific support measures for women across different fields were also mentioned which the experts believe to be highly commendable.

Various scholarship and financial support schemes are available for students studying under state orders. Additional financial support is provided for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with disabilities, and students with special social needs. Student loans are offered on favourable terms to those enrolled in fee-based programmes.

As for international students, the programmes under review are supported by AzTU's DAAD office that is located on the campus as well as the Erasmus programme. However, scholarship options for outgoing students currently remain limited. While this is mostly due to external factors, the experts would like to encourage AzTU to explore additional opportunities in this regard as this will further strengthen international visibility and qualification of AzTU graduates.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Information

Bachelor's/Master's degree

Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders.

[ESG 1.8]

Description

Information on the educational programmes is said to be primarily shared via the University's website and is available in English and Azerbaijani to cater to international students. The SER claims that the information is presented in a user-friendly format and downloadable.

The public relations department is said to ensure that the information is accurate and updated regularly across all platforms. The SER holds that information on the educational programmes is displayed on the website, the faculty websites, in the announcements section, during meetings with students, and on social networks. The university website includes sections dedicated to learning outcomes, admission requirements, and details about specialisation, teaching, learning, and assessment procedures. Faculty-specific pages and students' electronic cabinets are also used to share current information, often facilitated by academic advisors.

The SER outlines that a comprehensive approach is taken to ensure the dissemination and accessibility of information related to its educational programme. The Public Relations Department is tasked with overseeing the accuracy and timeliness of all information shared publicly. It coordinates with various faculties and departments to maintain consistency and accuracy across different platforms, including the university's website and social media channels. The content on the website is regularly updated to reflect any changes in programmes, faculty, or policies, ensuring that students and stakeholders receive accurate and relevant information.

Information about the scientific activities of faculty members, such as publications, conference presentations, and patents, is available through the university's Academic Teacher Search System (AMAS). Reportedly, scientific materials undergo a rigorous review process, first at the departmental level and then by the Research and Development Department and the Institute of Sustainable Development, where they are checked using anti-plagiarism software. The Scientific Methodical Council of AzTU further reviews teaching-methodological and scientific works electronically, with expert opinions sought and decisions made accordingly.

The University ensures that information is accessible to both staff and the public. Employees have secure access to upload and review documents, while the public can access approved programme materials and requirements. Mechanisms are in place for stakeholders to provide feedback on the clarity and usefulness of the information through the AzTU website and social media platforms. AzTU TV also plays a significant role in public relations, broadcasting events, seminars, and promotional campaigns to a broad audience.

Orientation and information sessions for students are conducted through various channels, such as the university website, students' personal electronic cabinets, dean's office announcements, and social media groups like WhatsApp. The institution organises events to introduce prospective students to the university's programmes and infrastructure, supported by press collaborations to reach a wider audience.

Expert evaluation

Public information at Azerbaijan Technical University is currently undergoing a transition as the university website is being revised comprehensively. This initiative is a positive step, as the website is a key tool for sharing reliable and transparent information with prospective and current students, staff, external stakeholders and the general public. Against this background, although general information about the programmes is available to the public in Azerbaijani, essential details such as ILOs, admission and selection procedures, the qualification awarded, as well as teaching, learning, and assessment methods are currently not easily accessible. This restricts prospective students' and external stakeholders' ability to make informed decisions and fully understand the academic profile and requirements of the programmes. The experts support AzTU's efforts in this regard and strongly recommend publishing comprehensive information on its study programmes in both Azeri and English (**Finding 17**).

In the same context, the current quality assurance policy does not clearly define who is responsible for providing, verifying, and regularly updating internal and external information. AzTU must therefore establish clear processes and organisational structures to ensure that all published information is accurate, impartial, and consistently kept up to date (**Finding 18**).

Besides public information, AzTU operates an internal information management system, and students have access to course-related information via institutional platforms. In addition, lecturers communicate course structures, learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, and examination topics in the respective classes.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

Commendation

AzTU is clearly committed to providing a high-quality education. By aligning its strategic goals with the EQF and pursuing accreditation, the university ensures an internationally competitive learning environment. A key strength lies in the university's strong industry collaboration, which influences both the curricula and research projects. Students benefit from state-of-the-art infrastructure, including modern laboratories and specialised IT tools. With its consistent curriculum, small-group electives and focus on sustainability and innovation, AzTU successfully prepares its students for the challenges they will face in real life. By maintaining close ties with the government and industry through practical projects, AzTU provides a supportive and forward-looking environment for its students.

Findings

1. To ensure smoother integration into the working environment, soft skills should be included more strongly in the curriculum.
2. To improve the students' exposure to the industry, guest lecturers and site visits should be organised more frequently and regularly.
3. It is recommended that at least one English-taught lecture per semester be made mandatory to attend.
4. Clear standards for the final thesis must be defined and made accessible to students, including minimum length, minimum number of references, and a standardised structure.
5. AzTU should more systematically and transparently document programme review cycles and decision-making processes to further strengthen transparency and traceability.
6. AzTU must establish a mechanism to calculate workload based on in-class hours, self-study, and examinations to ensure transparent allocation of workload and consistency across the programmes.
7. To strengthen the effectiveness of the quality management system, university management should ensure systematic follow-up on recommendations issued by the quality assurance department and verify their implementation at faculty level.
8. The programme must maintain and further formalise the practice of regular feedback, including documenting how such feedback is analysed and translated into concrete improvements in teaching and curriculum delivery.
9. It is strongly recommended to establish and publish a central AI policy and systematically implement it in the programmes.
10. The programmes must establish and implement clearly documented assessment rubrics and criteria and make them accessible to students.
11. Academic writing skills and group assignments should be implemented more often to strengthen research competencies and alignment with skills required by the labour market.
12. A clear and binding definition of examination methods for each course, including the weighting of mid-term and final assessments, is required and must be implemented.

13. Broader international cooperation with universities worldwide should be pursued to increase both outgoing and incoming student mobility.
14. To ensure the quality of appointed lecturers, it is recommended that the recruitment process be organised in a way that guarantees the assessment of the candidates' qualifications.
15. Teaching staff applicants should be required to demonstrate their English teaching skills through internationally recognised certification such as IELTS in the recruitment process.
16. To further enhance academic performance and staff development, the university should introduce individual target agreements with academic staff.
17. It is strongly recommended publishing comprehensive online information on its study programmes in both Azeri and English.
18. AzTU must establish clear processes and organisational structures to ensure that all published information on its study programmes published in both Azeri and English.