

## Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the study programme:

**“Social Services” (B.A.), School of Applied Sciences (Turkish programme)**

offered by Istanbul Gelişim University

**Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 71<sup>th</sup> meeting on 14/15 May 2018, the Accreditation Commission decides:**

1. The study programme **“Social Services” (Bachelor of Arts)** offered by the School of Applied Sciences of **Istanbul Gelişim University** is accredited according to the AQAS criteria for Programme Accreditation.

The accreditation is conditional.

The study programme essentially complies 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 nine months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **28 February 2019**.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is **valid until 30 September 2024**.

### Conditions:

1. The intended learning outcomes on programme level have to be revised in a consistent transversal way and in accordance with the main lines within the programme.
2. The documentation of the curriculum has to be revised and completed. The learning outcomes for all courses have to be formulated and missing course descriptions for courses in the later semesters have to be completed to provide a full documentation of the study programme and to make it more transparent.
3. The denomination of the programme has to be used consistently in English to foster internationalization of the study programme.
4. The diploma supplement has to be handed in, which documents the intended learning outcomes specific to the study programme.
5. A clear hiring strategy for teaching staff in compliance with the five main lines of the study programme has to be provided.

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

1. An assessment processes for internships to assure their quality should be established.

2. More courses with theoretical-practical content (e.g. Social Work Management or Social Work Policy) should be implemented in order to impart more courses with content needed by social workers on a daily basis.
3. More specific training of the various approaches to social work in different contexts should be implemented in the programme, such as community social work, linked more prominently to the third sector or social work in welfare state or courses linked to public administration.
4. Teaching staff and students should be encouraged to make use of the Erasmus+ exchange programme, which will be beneficial for the internationalisation of the university.
5. A student representative for the particular study programme should be elected in order to strengthen the bond between the student body and the university.
6. The implementation of two internships focussing on different aspects or areas of social work should be considered by the university.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Accreditation Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

## Experts' Report

on the Bachelor degree programme:

**“Social Services”**

offered by Istanbul Gelişim University

Visit to the University: March 6 – 9, 2018

### Panel of Experts:

**Prof. Dr. Edurne Bartolomé Peral**

Department of Sociology at Deusto University, Bilbao

**Prof. Dr. Veli Duyan**

Faculty of Health Sciences at Ankara University

**Leander Gussmann**

PhD Student at Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria  
(student representative)

**Amin Stiller**

Team leader at the social service agency Soziale  
Dienstleistungen Becker (SBB) in Cologne, Germany  
(labour market representative)

### Coordination

Patrick Heinzer, Constanze Noack

AQAS, Cologne, Germany

## **Preamble**

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AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 85 member institutions, both higher education institutions (HEIs) and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is therefore a notified body for 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), which all Bologna countries agreed upon 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 both academic studies and teaching in higher education institutions. The activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither restrained to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor to a certain type of higher education institution

## **I. Accreditation procedure**

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This report results from the external review of the Bachelor programme in “Social Services” offered by the School of Applied Sciences by Istanbul Gelişim University (IGU).

### **1. Criteria**

The assessment of the programmes is in accordance with a set of criteria for programme accreditation developed by AQAS. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015 and feature a set of indicators used to demonstrate the fulfilment of each criterion. However, criteria are met even if single indicators are not fulfilled. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of the programme as not all indicators are necessarily applicable to a programme.

### **2. Approach and methodology**

#### *Initialisation*

Istanbul Gelişim University mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in June 2017.

The university prepared a Self Evaluation Report (SER). In July 2017, IGU handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation of the study programmes and an appendix.

The appendix included e.g. an overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student drop outs), CVs of the teaching staff, information on student services, core information on the main library as well as undergraduate academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER draft for completeness, comprehensibility and transparency. The final version of the SER was handed in February 2018.

The accreditation procedure has been officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Accreditation Commission on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

#### *Nomination of the expert panel*

Composing the expert panel follows the stakeholder principle. Involved are consequently representatives from the respective discipline/s, the labour market and students. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

The Accreditation Commission nominated the expert panel in January 2018. AQAS informed the university thereafter about the members of the expert panel and IGU 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 points in need of additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university as well as the panel members to increase transparency in the process and upcoming discussions during the site visit.

#### *Site visit*

After review of the Self Evaluation Report, the site visit to the university took place between March 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. On site, the experts interviewed in separate discussions different stakeholders, such as the management of the university, the programme management, teaching and other staff as well as students, and consulted additional documentation as well as examples of graded work from students' achievements. The visit concluded with presenting preliminary findings by the experts to the university's representatives.

#### *Report writing*

Following the site visit, the expert group drafted the following report assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS criteria for programme accreditation. The report included a recommendation to the Accreditation Commission. The report was sent to IGU for comments.

#### *Decision*

The experts' report together with the comments by IGU form the basis for the AQAS Accreditation Commission to make a decision regarding the accreditation of the programmes. Based on these documents, the Accreditation Commission decided on the accreditation on 14-15 May, 2018. AQAS forwarded the decision to IGU. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In June 2018, AQAS published the report and the accreditation result of the accreditation along with the names of the panel of experts.

## **II. General Information on the University**

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İstanbul Gelişim University (IGU) was founded in 2008 as a private vocational school by the Gelişim Foundation for Education, Culture, Health and Social Development. In 2011, IGU acquired university status and has expanded its programmes and number of students (a total num-

ber of 22.012 students in 2017). Today it is divided into three faculties: Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, and Faculty of Fine Arts. In addition to these faculties, within the university, there are two vocational schools, four graduate schools, and three institutes. Within each faculty there are numerous departments, each of which has its own distinctive and shared research areas. Most of the students registered to the university are studying at the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences. Since its foundation the number of students as well as the number of academic staff is constantly growing.

The School of Applied Sciences was established in the academic year of 2013-2014. The number of students registered to the School of Applied Sciences in 2016-2017 is 609. Within the School of Applied Sciences there are 13 departments as e.g. "Banking and Insurance", "Television Reporting and Programming", "Social Services" or "International Trade". The Social Service Department is the youngest of the departments.

According to IGU, the vision of the university is to become one of the top leading Universities in the world in teaching and research. Based on these principles of modern academic values, the university strives to be ranked among the best 50 universities in the next years, and among the best 500 universities world-wide in the next 20 years.

### III. Assessment of the study programmes

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#### 1. Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance

*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.*

[ESG 1.1]

#### Description

As stated by IGU, the university aims to reach beyond international standards in terms of educational-learning processes, researches and administration. One of the main objectives of IGU is therefore the involvement of domestic and foreign stakeholders through an Advisory Committee under the Rector of the university. This Committee, as a board of advisors, consists of other advisory councils, who have been established under other faculties, and representatives of the private sector and graduated students. All of the members are appointed by suggestion of the Rector and the approval of the Senate. In total, the Committee of Quality consists of Rector, Vice Rector and 14 members.

Furthermore, IGU has established an additional body named the Office of Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance in order to measure, evaluate and improve the quality performance. The main objective of this office is to supervise the development of IGU and to detect findings regarding the goals of the university and the improvement of the performance. According to the self evaluation report of IGU, the university factors expectations, critics and suggestions of stakeholders both from the university and private-public sectors into their QA-process.

As stated, the evaluation of IGU's teaching programmes is organized under the Advisory Council and with the participation of other stakeholders such as graduates, students or external stakeholders from the labour market at least once a year. The resulting findings are approved by the rector and reviewed by deans, administrators and heads of departments. After this step additional measures are formulated suggestions or alterations are made to create a final roadmap which will be submitted to the University Senate.

The incorporation of student's feedback is also one of the main objectives for the quality assurance. With this purpose in mind a Student Council has been established under the university and Student Clubs and student representatives assist this body. These student bodies have an exchange of ideas regarding the improvement and quality of the programmes with other stakeholders. At the end of each semester the feedback from different sides such as student evaluation via surveys and reports of other performance indicators are gathered to get a clear overview regarding the overall performance of IGU and its quality.

Additional to this, the Alumni Association and the Career Development Research creates an inter-linkage between graduated students, private sector representatives and the university in order to monitor study programmes.

### **Experts' Evaluation**

Throughout the site visit the target to expand upon a clear vision of growth and further development has become clear to the panel of experts. The strong will and constant striving for quality improvement have been emphasized during the discussion round with the management. The department is a relatively new department, which can be seen as a plus due to its flexibility and the openness to make changes. In general, the decision to go through a European accreditation process is considered admirably by the panel of experts.

The university has defined strategic goals and certain indicators help to monitor them. In order to keep track of each programme's development, statistical information is accessible for both university management and heads of department. As the programme is young, it is even more important to monitor the development of the programme at the beginning, so changes can be implemented near-term. Data on applicants as well as drop-out rates are already collected and data on graduation, retention rate and information on the further career of its graduates will be gathered in the future.

The regulations for quality assurance are well designed and in place. As prescribed by the Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK), the university has established a Quality Committee, which meets on a regular basis. A multi-level procedure is in place in order to issue decisions on study programmes and related issues, which starts from department board via the faculty board up to the Senate, the highest decision-making body of the university. For all these bodies student representatives are elected by the students. Nonetheless, the university should think about the implementation of an own student representative for the department at the School of Applied Sciences (see below Finding 9).

The further development of the study programme is a permanent topic in the department board, in which all professors and teaching staff meet. The expert panel has been informed that changes in the curriculum have been made based on latest developments in the field and some regulations by the Turkish Higher Education Council. The commitment to develop the programme further could be testified by the experts throughout the site visit. Student feedback has been taken into

consideration, as for example report writing/academic writing was not part of the programme at the beginning, but has been integrated after students' feedback.

The documentation of the curriculum is available, but incomplete. Some course descriptions for later semesters are not yet complete and information on learning outcomes on course level is missing. A revision is necessary to provide a transparent and complete documentation of all curricular elements (**Finding 1**).

Being an integral part of the School of Applied Sciences, the panel of experts encourages the university to work out a strategy to assess internships precisely (**Finding 2**). An option could be that the students have to hand in a detailed report on what they have done during their internship or to establish questionnaires for students, which students have to fill out after having completed the internship.

## Conclusion

The commitment by the university to constantly improve the study programme is clearly visible and has been highly appreciated by the panel of experts. IGU has well established quality assurance mechanisms, which include all relevant stakeholders. Nonetheless, the curriculum documentation needs revision in order to clarify the interlinkage between learning outcomes on programme level and its application on course level. The criterion is partly fulfilled.

## 2. Quality of the Curricula

*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

#### *Study programme objectives*

The university outlines the importance to train competent social workers as a contributing part to the improvement of social justice and human health. Graduates are supposed to have the ability to demonstrate the power of social institutions and policies, apply contemporary and universal knowledge, with the ultimate aim of ensuring sustainable human and social development. Additionally, they will have learnt concepts on justice, equality, freedom or tolerance, which form the background of human rights and turning them into action. Graduates will also develop social responsibility projects with the intention of creating social benefits according to the different social realities.

The study programme has a total of 240 CP within 8 semesters (30 CP each semester). One semester has duration of 14 weeks. The planned admittance number of students each year is 60.



As stated by İGU, the curriculum includes 60 CP of elective courses, 45 CP of departmental elective courses, and 15 CP of non-departmental elective courses. A number of courses prescribed by YÖK will be held during the first and second year.

The curriculum aims to provide students with the ability to analyze data using basic knowledge and skills and to develop evidence-based solutions. Also, through the courses of the curriculum students are provided with appropriate communication strategies, methods and techniques by taking into account the communication characteristics, needs or differences of individuals, groups, masses or institutions. The programme aims at Level 6 within the European Qualification Framework.

#### *Curricular structure*

The university explains that all students need to complete the foundation core curriculum, the advanced specialization curriculum, and the field education. The foundation core curriculum consists of 48 compulsory courses. The advanced specialization curriculum comprises concentration courses and one elective course, whereas the field education comprises of 20-50 hours of pre-placement workshop, a foundation field placement, and an advanced field placement.

Regarding the advanced specialization curriculum, there are five specializations from which students are required to select before entering this phase. The concentrations are “Children & Youth”, “Family social work”, “Health & Mental Health”, “Policy, Community & Management practice” and “Research & Programme Evaluation”. There is also a compulsory internship of 30 working days in the Social Services Department, where students shall have the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge.

As stated by the university, the curriculum has been changed after the first year due to updates to the current developments in the field and due to regulations by the Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK). Thus, the first cohort, who is at the moment in their second year, will continue studying according to the first curriculum, whilst the second cohort, who is in their first year, will study according to the updated curriculum.

In particular, a typical pathway of the first curriculum comprises the following courses:

1. Semester: Turkish I, English I, Information Technologies, Introduction to Social Service, General Economy, Sociology and Social Issues.
2. Semester: Turkish II; English II, Information Technologies, Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Social Anthropology, Introduction to Psychology, The Social structure of Turkey and Business Administration.
3. Semester: History of Atatürk's Principles and Reform I, General Law, Social Service Legislation, Social Service Law, Psychopathology, Social Service Theories I.
4. Semester: History of Atatürk's Principles and Reform II, Social Service Theories II, Human Behaviour and Social Environment, Social Service Field Study, Statistics, Summer Internship.
5. Semester: Social Service Method, New Management Approaches and Total Quality, Team Work in Social Services, Departmental Electives.
6. Semester: Ethics in Social Services, Communication and Drama in Education, Social Psychology, Departmental Electives.
7. Semester: Social Service Practices I, Departmental and Non-Departmental Electives.

8. Semester: Social Service Practices II, Graduation Project, Departmental and Non-Departmental Electives.

The updates of the curriculum refer most likely to the third year, where courses such as “Team work in Social Services”, “Ethics in Social Services” or “Social Psychology” will be integrated. A graduation project will be integrated as well to create a more balanced mixture between the applied approach and the academic side of the study programme. Additionally to this, the selection of departmental and non-departmental electives has been extended in the new curriculum.

The programme is described to follow a holistic approach to social development issues from the perspective of social services, economic and social development. As stated by IGU, the link between theory and research shall be carried out by experienced academic staff, carrying out academic studies in their own area on a regular basis, and an active participation of students in projects.

The information about the learning outcomes is stated in the course descriptions where course structure, course contents and the ratio between theoretical and practical content are stated.

#### *Module descriptions*

The university provides a student handbook which is updated every year under the supervision of the head of the study programme and the approval of the dean.

### **Experts' Evaluation**

“Social Services” has become an important field in Turkey in the last few years. As it has been reported in nearly every discussion round, the field is constantly growing and a saturation of the labour market cannot be prevised. Beside the programme, which will be revised by this report, IGU offers a Social Services programme at the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences. Nonetheless, the university has decided to start this programme, which is allocated at the School of Applied Sciences, to implement a study programme with a more practical and applied focus. The expert panel highly values the applied character of the programme and its distinction between the above mentioned faculty programme. Additionally to this, it is noteworthy that feedback from external stakeholders such as labour market representatives has been integrated in the curriculum design. As stated by the persons in charge, the programme takes into account the high demand of students and their preferences to study a more practical approach since the field as such is highly practical orientated. Although the expert panel strongly appreciates the current changes of the curriculum and in general the five main lines/concentrations of the study programme, the overall aim of the programme is not entirely reflected throughout the whole programme’s curriculum. The expert panel came to the conclusion that there is a gap between the formulated aim of the programme and the transversal application on course level. The consistency between the intended learning outcomes on course level and on programme level is not clear enough. Therefore, the university needs to revise and specify the intended learning outcomes both on course and on programme level in a consistent transversal way and in accordance with the main lines within the programme (**Finding 3**). The expert panel suggests defining a new overall programme aim for the study programme (with a clear integration of the five main lines) and break those, in a second step, down into intended learning outcomes on course level. From the definition of a clear aim of the programme, a tentative graduate profile should be defined and deconstructed into a clear set of learning outcomes corresponding with different mastery levels. Those defined learning outcomes (and derived from the definition of the graduate profile) should

be distributed across all units/courses taught in the curriculum in such a manner that it is designed and monitored how students acquire all the skills and competences needed to be a social worker according to the definition of IGU's main aim and profile. A good way to do this is through the elaboration of a learning outcome map to depict and show how the learning outcomes are being acquired and completed throughout the curriculum. It is important that the formulation and the list of learning outcomes rely on those, designing the programme and defining the aim and profile, and not only on the teaching staff in charge of each course, so the whole process is well organized, consistent, coherent and aligned with the aim and profile. It is of utmost importance that this step has to be clear, consistent and with a transversal top-down approach. Another alternative could be to make use of the already existing learning outcomes on course level (e.g. Human rights) in order to specify the overall aim of the programme according to the expertise of the teaching staff.

As indicated at some stage during the site visit, the study programme is designed to educate rather generalists than specialists in the field. Nonetheless, the curriculum tries to support the five indicated main lines of the field, which causes a contradiction as detected by the panel of experts. The overall aims stated in SER and during the discussion rounds are valuable and important for the field; however, the university needs to specify and define the programme goals in a more coherent and consistent way to ensure that graduates can either continue studying in postgraduate programmes (and specialize in a certain field) or start working in the field, where qualified personnel who is able to start working right away is urgently needed. As indicated by the panel of experts, this step is crucial for the programme since the overall goals, the main lines and the structure of the curriculum must be highly interlinked.

No matter how the university decides to solve the above mentioned discrepancy, some more aspects of specific nature have to be addressed as well. Having a more practical approach within the programme for this practical field, the panel of experts came to the conclusion that the hours of practical experience should be increased. This refers on the one hand to the internship, which helps the students to gain practical experience in the field and is regarded very positively by the experts. As stated by the university and having in mind that the area of work for social workers has to be seen as interdisciplinary with many subareas, the expert panel highly recommends to extend the duration of the internship or even to implement a second internship in order to gain a broader insight into the field (Finding 11, see below). On the other hand, the more applied courses such as Social Service Practices I & II need to be specified when it comes to its content and the learning objectives gained during those courses (see Finding 3). The experts are of the opinion that a clearer definition of those courses would be beneficial for the programme and would also help to establish a more detailed overall aim and vice versa. As stated by the university, the changes of the curricula have taken into account latest developments in the field. The openness to make changes on a short-term basis is highly esteemed by the experts and they hope that the university continues this effort to constantly update the programme.

Despite the more practical approach of the study programme, the theoretical aspect of the study programme has to be addressed also. The aim to educate graduates who will have gained knowledge in a much broader and generalistic sense implies that the graduates should get to know as well not only introductory courses or courses on soft skills (such as Social Psychology), but courses with a more theoretical-practical content. The panel of experts suggests therefore the implementation of courses such as Social Work Management or Social Work Policy to lead the curriculum to knowledge that will be needed on a daily basis for a social worker (**Finding 4**). In order to get a more comparative view on the field, the panel suggests additionally the implemen-

tation of a course on social work within the world. In addition, the panel would suggest more specific training of the various approaches to social work in different contexts, such as community social work, more linked to the third sector or social work in welfare state or courses linked to public administration (**Finding 5**).

The experts have also detected different English titles being used by the university in the documentation. Although the panel is aware that there is at the moment no distinction in Turkish between Social Services and Social Work, the correct denomination of the programme will be crucial for the programme to attract foreign exchange students in the future (**Finding 6**). The very definition of the degree and the profile of graduates should be clearly defined, particularly in terms of terminology. Both the terms social work and social service appear interchangeably, and the panel suggests being consistent with the term that best fits the aim and graduate profile of the degree.

Curriculum documentation is available but needs further modifications to include all relevant information (see Chapter III, 1). All curricular elements are assigned credits according to the relevant workload.

The concentrations and the list of elective courses looks adequate in general terms, but the panel believes that the level of specialization is low with a small number of specific elective courses for each concentration. The panel would suggest that either concentrations should be strengthened with more courses, or there should be less concentrations but a higher level of specialization would be required.

## Conclusion

The experts verify clearly the practical and interdisciplinary approach of the study programme. The study programme as such seems to have a high awareness of societal problems in Turkey. The university acknowledges the demand of graduates in the field, which has been pointed out as well by the labour market representatives and underlines the close collaboration between IGU and external stakeholders. Nonetheless, it became evident that the learning outcomes on course level do not fit entirely to those on programme level and in regard of the five main lines. Furthermore some modifications need to be made in order to meet the needs of the labour market more adequately. Therefore this criterion is only partly fulfilled.

## 3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

*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, Teaching*

The university states that the School of Applied Sciences offers an interactive environment in compliance to cooperation. The behavioural approach of the School of Applied Sciences has been adopted as a learning model which focusses the individualization of teaching and the reduction of mistakes. This individual learning approach ensures that students are actively involved in learning and make a systematic progress.

As stated by IGU, course credits are determined according to the necessity of course for the department. The course content as well as the teaching methods are considered by the instructor and the calculation of the workload is determined by taking into account the content of the course, its importance, and the teaching techniques of the course. The preparation of the course contents is made with the heads of relevant departments and is approved by the University Board.

At Istanbul Gelişim University, one academic year consists of two periods. It is based on the workload corresponding to 30 ECTS per semester, including a total of 60 ECTS credits in one academic year (1530 hours of student workload).

### *Assessment*

The assessment instruments are designed according to the regulations of Higher Education Law No. 2547. They consist of midterm exams, final exams, homework, application, quiz, report presentation, oral assessment, thesis presentation, document presentation, expert appraisal or computer assisted presentation. Since the theoretical and practical trainings are provided for the related department, most of the examinations are implemented in written format. The student's grade is being calculated by 40% of the midterm exam and 60% of the final exam (or the make-up exam), which are fixed in the academic calendar. The student is successful if the course grade is 60 or above (CC or above, 2.00 or above). Students have access to the assessment criteria for the courses on the website or via the internally used student system OBIS. After being approved by the Student Administration Office, every grade is announced.

## **Experts' Evaluation**

During the site visit at IGU it has been explained to the experts that different teaching methods are imparted by the instructors. The adequacy of the imparted methods, where both theoretical and practical aspects are interlaced, has been agreed upon by the experts. The panel of experts highly esteemed the fact that case studies are imparted on a regular basis, which leads to certain proximity to real life working situations. By doing this, theoretical aspects of the field are translated into practice. The contribution of interdisciplinary background in order to deepen knowledge of social work could be verified during the site visit by the panel of experts. The importance of proximity to real life working situations has been outlined by both internal and external stakeholders during the discussion rounds. Despite this, the expert panel suggests extending the number of practical hours within the curriculum to create an even stronger relationship to the labour market for the applied study programme (Finding 11, see below). Course descriptions indicate the use of a mid-term and a final written exam, which are suitable for theoretical courses and elements of the practical courses. The course outline is given beforehand and students are informed about it.

Assessment methods and procedures are well defined, regulated and available for students. As stated in the discussion round, the students will get to know a vast variety of different assessments during their studies. Theoretical courses are assessed by a mid-term and a final exam, whereas students will receive a case study to elaborate on in the practical courses. Make up exams can be taken two weeks after the final exam under specification of reasons. In addition to this, students can decide to take courses during the Summer School.

Examinations are scheduled within a specific examination period fixed at the beginning of the term. Responsibilities and structures related to the organisation of exams are clearly defined. Make-up exams regulations are provided and students reported positively about them. The examination rules include regulations to compensate for disadvantages, illness, absence, or other mitigating circumstances that may affect a student. In case of further disagreement, universities in Turkey are free in choosing complaint procedures at their institution in addition to the formal escalation step of appealing to court. IGU decided to only offer the formal procedure for students to bring an issue to the court.

## Conclusion

Teaching methods and assessment forms are generally adequate for the achievement of the learning outcomes. As stated before, the experts advocate strongly for specifying and broadening the practical aspects of the curriculum. The criterion is fulfilled.

## 4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

[ESG 1.4]

### Description

#### Admittance to the study programme

A central examination system within the framework of regulations set by the Council of Higher Education regulates the placement of future students. Based on the score of the central examination future students become eligible to register at IGU. Students who want to study programs with foreign language instruction and foreign language preparation class have to pass a foreign language proficiency exam at IGU. The university also offers the opportunity to make minor and double major degrees under certain conditions as well as the possibility to transfer between degree programmes of different or the same higher education institutions. The criteria and minimum requirements are defined by the IGU Senate.

IGU charges tuition fees but provides financial support such as scholarships and discounts.

#### Progression

According to the university, the programme's structure takes into account the level of readiness of the students, occupational requirements as well as age requirements of the students. As programmes are taught in English, IGU offers free English language courses on Saturdays.

### Creditation and Recognition

As part of the Higher Education Area, the university applies ECTS as a credit transfer and accumulation system to all its programmes. Courses taken at IGU have both local and ECTS credits. The credit points are being calculated based on all components that make up the student workload such as laboratory hours, course hours or exams.

Being a member of the Erasmus+ Programme since the academic year 2008-09, IGU has signed 73 bilateral agreements with universities from 23 countries. Outgoing students have to sign a learning agreement before the student leaves and a full academic recognition is given by IGU. Through a recognition sheet the ECTS grades gained abroad will be transformed into the local credit point system of Istanbul Gelişim University. Incoming students will receive a transcript of records which indicates the completed ECTS grades and credit points. Since the Turkish Higher Education Institutions are at the initial phase regarding the recognition processes, IGU states that they will make the necessary changes in its regulations and provide recognition when the legal processes at the level are completed.

Further transitional conditions are provided by the “IGU Course Directive on Equivalence and Adaptation Guidelines”.

### Certification

Students receive a Diploma Supplement on completion of their studies. The Diploma is based on the model developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO and provides a standardized description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies completed by its holder. Graduates from the Department of Social Services obtain the right to receive an Undergraduate degree.

### **Experts’ Evaluation**

Admission to university is centrally organized in Turkey. It is based on a standardized, central entrance examination. During the site visit the study programme had first and second year students, which sums up a total number of 74 students. IGU monitors admission numbers and tracks the progression of students.

Although IGU runs several Erasmus cooperation agreements with European universities, the department does not have a specific agreement with any partner institution. The panel of experts favoured very much the fact that IGU supports their students financially when spending a semester abroad. Erasmus coordinators help and guide students and formal procedures are in place. However, as the programme is offered in Turkish, students will have difficulties in going abroad. Likewise, attracting incoming students will be challenging for the university, if not nearly impossible, due to the language barrier of the programme. Having incoming and outgoing students would, however, be very beneficial for the programme and the students. The experts understand the limitations and obstacles, but urge the university to use all means to support and encourage students to go abroad (**Finding 7**).

A diploma supplement is currently missing. The precise definition of the learning outcomes, as mentioned above, will have to be reflected in the diploma supplement (**Finding 8**).

## Conclusion

Regulations and procedures governing admission, progression and certification are in place. The experts gained the impression that formal procedures and support structures are well defined and running smoothly. A diploma supplement needs to be drafted; the criterion is thus partly fulfilled.

## 5. Teaching Staff

*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 the staff.*

[ESG 1.5]

### Description

As outlined by IGU, the human resource management is organized by a central system and according to the Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Office which helps to distribute the workload between the faculty members equally. In the academic year 2016-17 there have been a total number of 466 full-time academic members. Among those are 43 professors, 10 associated professors, 180 assistant professors, 148 teaching assistants, 70 research assistants and 15 lecturers. As stated by the university, the academic personal employment is provided by the Higher Educational Institutions and fulfils a transparency guideline. For the university it is an important priority to hire only staff that with adequate qualifications that embody the university's aim, vision, and mission. Moreover, IGU organizes training programmes on a regular basis in order for its staff to improve themselves. Also it is outlined that newly hired professors and lecturers have an orientation programme with the help of the head of department and under support of research assistants.

Based on the information given by the university, teaching staff for the programme comprises two associate professors with 16 teaching hours and two research assistants, who are by law not allowed to teach. Five external lecturers provide teaching as well.

IGU provides an orientation programme for newly hired professors under the guidance of the Head of the study programme and supported by research assistants. Regular training programmes shall be offered to staff as well as English courses especially for administrative staff.

### Experts' Evaluation

The programme is currently taught by two assistant professors. Additionally, two research assistants, who by law are not allowed to teach, support the teaching staff in terms of organizing, guidance and support of students. Staff from other IGU departments provide individual courses on specific topics, such as Introduction to Psychology and Statistics.

Keeping in mind that "Social Services" is a young study programme with a practical approach, the panel of experts wants to point out the highly committed staff with an awareness of possible problems in the field. The inclusion of external stakeholder in the curriculum development process is noteworthy and takes new developments of the field into consideration. The willingness to gain international experience is visible both from management and department side, and aims to strengthen the programme in the future. The panel of experts understood clearly the interdisciplinary



nary approach for the study programme. Nonetheless, interdisciplinarity has to come along with the clear pursue of study programme objectives and the main lines of the study programme have to be visible on course level and through the teaching staff. The experts came to the conclusion that the upcoming increase of number of students will require an increase of teaching staff. In linkage with the above mentioned difficulties with the alignment of the study programme and its aims on programme level, the university needs to provide therefore a clear hiring strategy for teaching staff in compliance with the five main foci of the study programme (**Finding 9**). As stated in the previous chapter of this report, this will be crucial for the study programme since the university will have to find a healthy balance between interdisciplinarity and overall aims of the study programme. A short-term solution could be to invite external lecturers with international experience in the field (or with specific knowledge in a subcategory of the field), which will establish in the end an international and national network of social workers. Another way to facilitate international experience for teaching staff could be the usage of Erasmus+ mobility for teaching staff, so that the teaching staff can broaden their perspective on the social work (see **Finding 7**).

The panel sees an outstanding level of commitment on the side of the teaching staff, and is well aware, as pointed out by staff and management in repeated occasions, of the difficulties and shortages in finding teaching staff. However, this aspect is considered of upmost importance and urgency. At this point the curriculum is not fully implemented, but as semesters are being implemented the shortage of staff will be more evident. The short term solution of having staff from other departments is in a first stage adequate, but teachers from other departments do not contribute to the research of the department nor to the definition of the aim and profile of the graduates. This aspect is of upmost importance too. The research record of the current teaching staff is not very prominent nor focused in the field of social work. A clear strategy to hire staff will strongly contribute in those areas where there is room for improvement, namely, 1) higher level of specialization in the teaching staff which can contribute with expertise to the concentrations and courses; 2) contribution to the research, which is needed and a must in academic activity; 3) contribution to the definition of a clear aim of the programme, providing Social work/social service program with a clear label and identity given by the expertise of their teaching staff; 4) contribution with expertise to the design of the graduate profile, implementation of the program and links to external stakeholders, internships etc., aspect which has been highlighted as important above.

Recruitment procedures are transparent as they are defined by national regulations. Teaching staff receives ample support by the university in conducting their research and in advancing their academic career and qualification.

## **Conclusion**

The expert panel has detected that the university has dedicated and committed staff for the programme "Social Services". Nonetheless, the university need a clear hiring strategy to foster the development of the study programme, since the overall aim of the programme and its reconsideration is highly interlinked with the teaching staff. The criterion is partly fulfilled.

## 6. Learning Resources and Student Support

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

*Guidance and support is available for students to advise on achieving successful completion of their studies.*

[ESG 1.6]

### Description

#### *Facilities and resources*

As outlined in the SER, the university has a total of three campuses providing a total of 24.440m<sup>2</sup> indoor areas with five buildings, 91 class rooms, three conference rooms, one exhibition room, eight workshops, three reading rooms and one indoor fitness centre. Furthermore, a conference room with a total of 650 people capacity and technological facilities can be used for scientific and cultural events. The faculties and schools have 13 computer laboratories with nearly 400 computers as well as a campus-wide wireless internet connection. The students can register for their courses and follow their grades by using the internal Student Information System (OBIS) and the Student Mail System (OMS). The faculty members can also use OBIS in order to confirm registrations and enter grades or can use the Staff Information System (PERSIS) to monitor their personal information.

IGU'S library and Documentation Centre is established in order to support the educational process for the students and scientific research activities. The libraries are split up throughout three different campuses (Art and Engineering Library, Central Library and Vocational School Library) and have a total area of 2.000 m<sup>2</sup> and a seating capacity of 200 people. Currently it contains a total of 115.00 materials. Among this, 25.000 are printed and 90.000 electronic sources. Every IGU library provide computers and wireless internet access.

The study programme is financed by the tuition paid by students, and, according to the IGU, the financial resources of IGU are determined and distributed in the budget period every year. Hereby the physical and technical requirements for the sustainability of the programme and the number of students and teaching staff are considered.

#### Information, consultation and guidance

Interested students can inform themselves about the curriculum of each programme which is available on the university's website. During the registration process to the university, students will be informed about their programme in detail with the help of the staff of Directorate of Public Affairs.

The Disabled Student Unit of the School of Applied Sciences participates actively in the formation of regulations for students. The effects of these regulations can be seen in extension of examination duration when necessary or a special support regarding participations in sports and cultural activities. Meeting are held on a regular basis to locate certain problems for students with disabilities in order to be able to communicate problems they encounter with members of the Disabled Student Unit and find solutions together.

A representative from the department of "Health Sciences" is assigned as the person to contact for the student body of "Social Sciences" and can address the feedback to the department management in behalf of the student body.

As stated in the SER, IGU has established a Psychological Guidance, Counselling and Research Centre (PDRAM) to facilitate personal, academic and social development of its students and employees. The centre provides meetings, seminars, and cultural activities to simplify the adaptation to the university and the programme.

Students who wish to go a semester or internship abroad may apply for Erasmus+ or Mevlana, an international student and teaching staff exchange programme established at the initiative of Turkey. Support is provided by the International Relations Office and by research assistants. According to the university, the budget allocated by the National Agency to IGU is used in its entirety for financial support to students.

The university offers assistance to a diverse student body: Working students benefit from courses carried out via distance education or in the evening. International students receive support by the International Relations Office, which organizes an orientation programme and offers guidance concerning visa and other administrative issues.

IGU also implements a mentoring system which aims to facilitate the communication between local and foreign students. Via this mentoring buddy system intercultural problems can be solved and the students can gain experience in this field. Moreover, IGU actively supports students in their effort to found student clubs and student councils.

### **Experts' Evaluation**

The panel of experts has detected a very supportive character regarding financial support, guidance or counselling of students. The development of resources is actively and in a profound manner supported by the university management and resources are generously provided to the students. Classrooms are allocated on the campus at Avcılar in an adequate and sufficient manner. This includes modern classrooms, spaces for self-study or social exchange. It is noteworthy that the university recently purchased a large-scale building which will be used to expand the facilities even further. Regarding the counselling, it has been stated during the discussion round that it will be beneficial for the study programme if the student body has a student representative from the School of Applied Sciences in order to create a tighter bond between student body and the university. The importance of a direct student representative has been highlighted by the experts, who therefore suggest the implementation of a student representative for "Social Services" at the School of Applied Sciences and from the department (**Finding 10**).

Learning material is provided in the library and via online databases. IGU participates in all major databases and students can access catalogues and sometimes even the material itself from their home computer. Books recommended to students are often in Turkish, but online articles are available in English as well. The experts are content with the generally well equipped library and with the amount of literature available for the specific field.

Course descriptions are available. At the beginning of each course the course outline is given beforehand and students are informed throughout the whole course what they will learn to what extend. In order to provide a full transparency for the course content, the definition of learning outcomes is missing in some case (see Chapter III, 2). In general, courses are scheduled so that no overlap occurs, which will be supervised by the management. To sum up, the experts are convinced that the students will be able to finish their studies within the indicated period of time.

The internships are an integral part of study programmes at the School of Applied Sciences and have a general length of 30 days. The internships become even more crucial for this specific study programme, having in mind the necessity to have practical experience in the field. Therefore, the experts recommend that the length of the internship should either be extended or divided into two internships with a length of 30 days each (and different foci) in order to gain a better insight in specific fields and to get to know the diversity of the different areas (**Finding 11**).

## Conclusion

IGU offers sufficient support to its students, be it financial, physical or personal. Support structures are adequate and students feel well taken care of. Facilities are available on the university campus. The criterion is fulfilled.

## 7. Information

*Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme. [ESG 1.7]*

*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

According to the university, IGU gathers information from internal and external stakeholders and holds regular meetings with academic staff, students and local, regional and national stakeholders. Questionnaires among students are regularly distributed and analyzed. Deans and teaching staff are supposed to monitor the scope of programmes with regard to changes in the business world. The Office of Career Development regularly examines the potential employment opportunities of graduates.

The university publishes information on study programmes on its website. Students and staff receive information via the Student Information System, the Student Mail System and the Personnel Information System. The university confirms that it collects data on students' profiles and progression, their satisfaction as well as on the effectiveness of teachers with the help of an information system.

### Experts' Evaluation

The achievement of its strategic goals is monitored by IGU via statistical indicators. The panel of experts got an insight how the data management system works and was provided examples with regard to the specific programme of retention rates or admission numbers. The overall impression of the experts was that the data management system is elaborated and fitting the purpose. Additionally, the quality of teaching and learning can be monitored by various indicators of the data management system.

As mentioned before, the teaching staff and the head of department are in close contact with the labour market and new developments are taken into account of the programme. Labour market

representatives' feedback has been collected by the university to strengthen the proximity between IGU and the labour market.

Documentation on the programme is provided to the public and contains information on the programme and the qualification awarded. However, as mentioned earlier, course descriptions are in parts missing information and need to be revised (see Chapter III.1).

### **Conclusion**

Data is collected to a sufficient amount. The data are also clearly linked to the strategic goals of the university. All stakeholders are involved in the further development of the programme. Documentation of the programme is provided, but lacks of consistency and requires revision. The criterion is fulfilled.

#### IV. Recommendations of the panel of experts

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The panel of experts recommends

- to accredit with conditions

the study programme “**Social Services**” offered at the School of Applied Sciences by **Istanbul Gelişim University**.

#### Findings:

1. The documentation of the curriculum has to be revised and completed. The learning outcomes for all courses have to be formulated and missing course descriptions for courses in the later semesters have to be completed to provide a full documentation of the study programme and to make it more transparent.
2. An assessment processes for internships to assure their quality should be established.
3. The intended learning outcomes on the programme level have to be revised in accordance with the main lines within the programme. They should be consistent with the intended learning outcomes throughout the programme.
4. More courses with theoretical-practical content (e.g. Social Work Management or Social Work Policy) should be implemented in order to impart more courses with content needed on a daily basis by social workers.
5. More specific training of the various approaches to social work in different contexts should be implemented in the programme, such as community social work, linked more prominently to the third sector or social work in welfare state or courses linked to public administration.
6. The denomination of the programme has to be used consistently in English to foster internationalization in the study programme.
7. Teaching staff and students should be encouraged to make use of the Erasmus+ exchange programme, which will be beneficial for the internationalisation of the university.
8. The diploma supplement specific to the programme documenting the intended learning outcomes of the programme has to be handed in.
9. A clear hiring strategy for teaching staff in compliance with the five main lines of the study programme has to be provided.
10. A student representative for the particular study programme should be elected in order to strengthen the bond between the student body and the university.
11. The implementation of two internships focussing on different aspects or areas of social work should be considered by the university.