

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes



106th Meeting on 23 March 2018

Project Number:	16/077
Higher Education Institution:	Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University
Location	Baku, Azerbaijan
Study Programme:	Operations Management (MBA)
Type of Accreditation	initial Accreditation

The FIBAA Accreditation Committee for Programmes has taken the following decisions:

According to § 12 (2) in conjunction with § 16 (1) in conjunction with § 16 (2) of the “Special Conditions for awarding the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programme Accreditation “FIBAA Programme Accreditation””, the study programme is accredited with three conditions.

Period of Accreditation: March 23rd 2018 until the end of spring semester 2023

Conditions:

- **Condition 1**
The HEI adjusts the admission regulations and ensures that only applicants with appropriate work experience of at least 2 years can start the MBA programme.
(see chapter 2.4),
- **Condition 2**
The HEI defines the English Level for international applicants in the admission requirements and ensures that all applicants have sufficient language skills to successfully complete the study programme.
(see chapter 2.5),
- **Condition 3**
The university ensures with appropriate examination methods that the students can proof their scientific skills on master level. In case that this is done by a mandatory Master thesis (like stated in the university’s statement) this has to be documented in the programmes’ regulation.
(see chapter 3.1.7),

Proof of meeting these conditions is to be supplied by December 23rd, 2018.

Reason for the change of condition 3:

The committee states that there is no general necessity of a mandatory thesis in Master programmes as long as it is ensured that a university uses adequate methods to check on the students’ achievement of scientific skills. However, such methods must be documented transparently in the programmes’ regulation.

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.



Assessment Report

Black passages are identical to the other reports from the HEI

Higher Education Institution (HEI):

Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University
Baku, Azerbaijan

Master study programme:

Operations Management

Qualification awarded on completion:

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

General Information on the study programme

Brief description of the study programme:

The MBA programme with the major in Operations Management provides an introduction to operations and process management and explains how the operation functions within the organisation overall as well as teaches qualities to operation-management professionals, including leadership, decisiveness, flexibility, sound judgement to business and determination. The MBA focuses on the management of resources and activities that produce and deliver the goods and services for customers.

Type of study programme:

Master programme

Projected study time and number of ECTS points assigned to the study programme:

2 years - 120 ECTS

Mode of study:

Full-time

Didactic approach:

Study programme with obligatory class attendance

Double/Joint Degree programme:

No

Scope (planned number of parallel classes) and enrolment capacity:

One at a time, Enrolment capacity of 150 per year

Programme cycle starts in:

Fall semester

Initial start of the programme:

1998

Type of accreditation:

Initial accreditation

Procedure

A contract for the initial accreditation of the Operations Management (MBA) was made between FIBAA and Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University on August 3rd, 2016. On June 30th, 2017, the HEI submitted a self-evaluation report, which included a detailed description of the programme and further documents in order to prove that the criteria for programme accreditation were met.

At the same time, FIBAA appointed a review panel. The HEI agreed to the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Prof. Dr. Andreas Mockenhaupt

University of Applied Sciences Albstadt-Sigmaringen

Professor for Innovation and Sales and Distribution Management, Industrial Engineering

Prof. Dr. Gerd Hofmeister

University of Applied Science Erfurt

Professor for General Business Administration with the focus on Human Resource Management for Bachelor and MBA programmes

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Bernd Hamacher

University of Applied Science Osnabrück

Professor for Engineering and Information Management

Dr. Kavus Abushov

ADA University, Baku, Azerbaijan

Assistant Professor for Political Sciences

Martin Luckmann

AgileBrains GbR

Managing Partner

Management Consultant

Thomas Sachs

University of Bayreuth

PhD student Information Management

FIBAA project manager:

Vera Kassler

The assessment is based on the self-evaluation report, amended by further documents, requested by the panel, and a site visit. The site visit took place on October 24th to October 26th at the HEI's premises in Baku, Azerbaijan. The same cluster included an appraisal of Operations Management (MBA). At the end of the on-site visit, the panel gave a short feedback on its first impressions to representatives of the HEI.

The assessment report based on this was delivered to the HEI for comment on January 31th, 2018. The statement on the report was given up on February 9th, 2018, it has been taken into account in the report on hand.

Summary

The Master programme Master in Business Administration in Operations Management (MBA) offered by Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University fulfils with few exceptions the FIBAA quality requirements for Master programmes and can be accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for five years starting on March 23rd, 2018 and finishing on the end of spring semester 2023 under conditions. The programme is in accordance with the national and the European Qualification Frameworks and the European Standards and Guidelines in their applicable version valid at the time of opening of the procedure, and with the Bologna declaration. This includes fulfilling the requirements set by the EQUAL MBA Guidelines.

The panel members identified need for improvement regarding the following aspects: admission and examination. They recommend the accreditation on condition of meeting the following requirements:

- Condition 1
The HEI adjusts the admission regulations and ensures that only applicants with appropriate work experience of at least 2 years can start the MBA programme. (see chapter 2.4),
- Condition 2
The HEI defines the English Level for international applicants in the admission requirements and ensures that all applicants have sufficient language skills to successfully complete the study programme. (see chapter 2.5),
- Condition 3
The university ensures that all MBA students write a final Master thesis. (see chapter 3.1.7),

Proof of meeting these conditions is to be supplied by December 23rd, 2018.

Furthermore, the quality requirements that have not been fulfilled – (Equality of opportunity (chapter 3.2)/ internationality of the student body (chapter 3.4)/ External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties (chapter 5.2)) – are no asterisk criteria and therefore do not lead to a condition. The measures the HEI takes to solve the identified problems are to be considered during the re-accreditation.

The panel members identified several areas where the programme could be further developed:

- The panel recommends observing and analysing the amount and given reasons of dropouts as well as taking measures to reduce the number of students who leave the university without finalizing their studies. (see chapter 3.2.3),
- The panel recommends to encourage the teachers' development of English language skills. (see chapter 4.1.2),
- The panel recommends to refresh the range of books in this local library to gain access to current literature for the students. (see chapter 4.4.2),
- The panel therefore recommends to provide the students with information on the results of evaluations and quality assurance measures. (see chapter 5.2.1),
- They recommend to implement a survey and to involve external parties more strategically in the quality assurance. (see chapter 5.2.3).

The measures that the HEI takes in order to implement the recommendations of the panel members are to be considered during the re-accreditation.

There are criteria in which the programme exceeds the quality requirements:

- International orientation of the study programme design (see chapter 1.2),
- Lecturing Tutors (see chapter 3.3.4),
- Foreign Language Skills (see chapter 3.4.4),
- Programme Director (see chapter 4.2.1),
- Alumni Activities (see chapter 4.5.2).

For the overall assessment of the programme, please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

Information

Information on the Institution

Being a pioneer oil and gas educational school across Europe and Asia, the Azerbaijan State Oil Academy (now Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (ASOIU)) was founded in 1920. ASOIU offers undergraduate, Masters and postgraduate level degrees. This higher educational school acted under different names in various periods. Founded as the Azerbaijan Polytechnic Institute, the institution was continued under the name of Azerbaijan Oil Institute, then Azerbaijan Industrial Institute, Azerbaijani Oil and Chemistry Institute, Azerbaijan State Oil Academy and quite recently was renamed into Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (2015).

At the Bachelor stage students are trained on 53 specialties and at the Masters' on 50 specialties. All programmes at ASOIU have been approved by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and are audited by the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan. ASOIU provides education for local and international students. The graduates work in over 70 countries.

Nearly 9,000 students and 1,000 employees in research, teaching and administration are part of the university. Throughout its rich history, ASOIU has prepared more than 100,000 engineers, approximately 2,000 candidates of sciences and over 250 doctors of sciences. Nearly 140,000 students have been educated at the university.

There are seven faculties in ASOIU that train highly qualified specialists for the oil industry:

1. Faculty of Geological Exploration
2. Faculty of Oil and Gas Production
3. Faculty of Chemical Technology
4. Faculty of Oil Mechanical
5. Faculty of Power Engineering
6. Faculty of Information Technologies and Control
7. Faculty of Economics and Management

ASOIU participates in a number of international projects for improving education quality and applying innovations in education. For example the Bachelor degree in environmental protection was set up within the frames of the European Union's TEMPUS programme. Since 2015, ASOIU has been taking part in the Erasmus+ network, hence the students gain the opportunity to study for a short period in leading universities of Europe. Furthermore, the Mevlana programme creates opportunities for academic mobility with Turkish universities. Currently ASOIU has cooperation agreements with over 58 universities and organisations from more than 25 countries. The Master of Business Administration programme was founded in 1998 in accordance with the project "Partnership to Develop the Master of Business Administration Programme and Faculty capabilities" at the ASOIU in partnership with the Georgia State University/Robinson Business School of the USA.

ASOIU is a member of the following international associations:

1. European Universities Association
2. Black Sea Basin Universities Association
3. Eurasian Silk Way Universities Consortium
4. International Association of University Presidents
5. Caucasus University Association
6. DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)
7. Erasmus+ programme

8. Korea International Cooperation Agency
9. International Associations of Universities
10. IEEE Computational Intelligence Society
11. CISCO Networking Academy
12. Oracle Academy
13. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
14. Auto Cad Design Academy
15. Azerbaijan-UK Alumni Association
16. AIESEC Alumni International

Programme Description and Appraisal in Detail

1. Objectives

1.1 Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk-Criterion)

The MBA programme with major in Operations Management provides an introduction to operations and process management and explains the operations functions within the organisation. It also wants to impart operation-management knowledge like leadership, self-confidence, motivation, decisiveness, flexibility, sound business judgement and determination.

The MBA focuses on the management of resources and activities that produce and deliver the goods and services for customers. It can play a role in enhancing a company's competitive position by providing superior products and services.

Operations Management is a major for students who wish to be involved in the management of operations process, e.g. the process of manufacturing, service delivery, distribution and supply. It provides a framework for linking all functional areas with specific skills developed for the Operations Management. The major also provides in-depth analysis of operations decisions such as new product development, project planning and control, supply chain analysis, quality assurance, project and process management techniques and production systems planning.

The objectives of the MBA are:

- to provide graduates with a high quality education in business management that will enable them to earn management positions in state and non-state organisations, business and other institutions;
- to provide students the ability to effectively and efficiently solve managerial problems related to planning, organising and controlling in all areas of business;
- to demonstrate relevant personal and interpersonal skills that include cognitive skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis as well as the capability to identify assumptions, evaluate statements in terms of evidence, to detect false logic or reasoning, to identify implicit values, to define terms adequately and to generalise appropriately.

On the successful completion of the whole programme students have to develop:

- analytical skills applying business analysis, data management and diagnostic problem-solving skills in order to make decisions in non-standard situations in an autonomous way;
- effective problem solving and decision making using appropriate quantitative and qualitative skills including identifying, formulating and solving business problems;
- leadership and team membership skills needed for implementing and coordinating organisational activities and managing change;
- an understanding of how global competitive environments are changing business practice;
- the ability to integrate business knowledge and management techniques to aid planning and control in a changing environment;
- the ability to create, evaluate and assess a range of options together with the capacity to apply ideas and knowledge to a range of situations in conditions of limited knowledge or uncertainty;

- effective communication, oral and writing, using a range of media which are widely used in business including the preparation and presentation of business reports;
- interpersonal skills of effective listening, negotiating, persuasion and presentation;
- numeracy, mathematical and quantitative skills including statistical data analysis, interpretation and extrapolation;
- management science skills to support the decision-making processes in an organisation, to use models of business problems and phenomena;
- effective self-management in terms of time, planning and behavior, motivation, self-starting, individual initiative and enterprise;
- effective performance, within a team environment, including leadership, team building, influencing;
- project management skills;
- the ability to conduct research in business and management issues, either individually or as part of a team for projects/ dissertations/ presentations. This requires familiarity with and an evaluative approach to a range of business data, sources of information and appropriate methodologies, and for such to inform the overall learning process.

Appraisal:

The qualification objectives of the programme are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group and the targeted professional field. The panel appreciates the framework for linking all functional areas with specific skills developed for the Operations Management.

The objectives embrace academic proficiency, comprehensive employability, as well as the development of the individual student's personality, especially of the development of ethical thinking.

The subject-specific and extra-curricular qualification objectives correspond with the aspired level at graduation that ASOIU wants to achieve with the programme. The panel also approves the skills to be acquired.

The programme takes into account the requirements of the Azerbaijan national qualification framework.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.1*	Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

1.2 International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)

According to ASOIU, the programme is completely taught in English and complies with international curriculum standards. The international orientation is a clear focus of the programme design and can be seen in the international components of certain modules. The curriculum takes into account international orientation of the contents in different aspects as evidenced in the module descriptions.

The MBA programme delivers an integrated experience to prepare students for leadership on an international level. Therefore, the programme design takes into account the required international aspects that assure the graduates' employability. The curriculum also

emphasises international focus of the courses both compulsory and elective (see chapter 3.4.).

ASOIU has cooperation agreements with other international Higher Educational Institutions to encourage international exchange. Cooperation with companies and industry is mainly used for the invitation of guest speakers. Furthermore, due to the fact that international guest lecturers teach in that programme the students become able to participate in discussions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds and points-of-view. This is expected to make them more knowledgeable to perform in organisations at the national as well as international level.

In addition, supporting course materials, such as case studies used by instructors, are covering relevant topics from various countries. Furthermore, the language of instruction in every module is English.

Appraisal:

The programme design appropriately takes into account the required international aspects to its graduates' employability. The programme's international dimension, especially including international questions in certain modules and teaching material, is clearly helpful in promoting students' skills in handling the international dimension in nowadays business world. Achieving this aim is specially nurtured through English as the teaching language. Furthermore ASOIU is always in contact with other Higher Education Institutions and promotes cooperation. There are also often guest lecturer from other universities to extend the student's horizon and enable them to handle international tasks. The panel also appreciates the high motivation and the willingness of the appropriate persons at the university.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.2*	International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)		X			

1.3 Positioning of the study programme

The programme is positioned in the Azerbaijan education market as an academic programme that provides high quality education in English language which also contributes to its international positioning. The curriculum wants to cover almost all sides of today's management studies worldwide and responds to the international market's requirements.

The programme wants to provide employers with individuals with necessary managerial and leadership/ decision-making/ problem solving skills to apply efficiently to the business environment today. ASOIU wants graduates to possess necessary computer and communication skills that help them quickly adapt to any work environment. They are expected to become effective team members knowledgeable in the major business areas. Therefore, graduates are readily employable in both private and public sectors. Many graduates find employment in various business related areas as marketing, sales, accounting, banking and financial services, business services, and public organisations.

ASOIU follows the constitutional principles of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is a Higher Educational Institution based on the general objectives, basic principles and requirements of the national higher education system that includes international values.

ASOIU performs its mission following the principles, responsibilities, duties and application procedures:

- ASOIU aims to contribute to society through education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.
- ASOIU aims to focus on deep disciplinary knowledge, problem solving, leadership, and interpersonal skills; make scientific studies and reach the educational quality to internationally advanced level, establish an environment where research, creativity and innovation can flourish.
- ASOIU aims to develop the social, cultural and academic relations between the international community and Azerbaijan community in accordance with the principles of contemporary civilisation principles as well as increasing the level of international relations.
- ASOIU provides opportunities to produce scientific research and arrange educational and scientific facilities such as seminars, conferences, etc.
- ASOIU carries out all kinds of research and investigation to provide opportunities for cooperation with partnerships institutions.

Appraisal:

The quality of the programme and the learning and living environment at the university are reasons for students to study at ASOIU. The profile and the competence goals are such that the programme can compete both on the education and on the job market. The programme provides students with solid theoretical and methodological knowledge and most important with key qualifications which are essential for a further successful career. Therefore, the positioning of the study programme in the educational market and the job market is plausible to the panel.

The arguments in support of graduate employability on the basis of the stated qualification objectives are convincingly presented. The future fields of employment for graduates are plausibly set forth. During the interviews the panel got the information that Graduates are able to find a profession shortly after graduation. Hence, there is space in the job market. The panel could get an impression of the students' skills during the on-site visit and is convinced about their employability. The panel appreciates that the university thought carefully about the graduates' employability when developing the programme.

With ASOIU as a state university that offers a range of programmes, the study programme is convincingly integrated into its overall strategic concept. The study programme's qualification goals are clearly in line with the university's mission and overall strategy.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market			X		
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)			X		
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept			X		

2. Admission

Admission is managed by the State Examination Center (for local applicants) and the International Cooperation Office and International Students Dean Office from ASOIU (for international applicants). The details of the admission requirements are communicated on the website of the State Examination Center. The results of the selection are published on this website in applicants' registered account as well.

Students admitted to the programme come from two sources:

- Local students, who are citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- Students from other countries (international enrolee).

Admission requirements for local students:

Admission is based on the centralized Unified National Exams. Azerbaijan citizens need their Bachelor graduation diploma certificate to pass the entrance examination that is organised by the State Examination Center. It is established to arrange entrance exams in conformity with national standards of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The exam is held once a year during the months of May through July. Depending on the results of the exams, successful enrolees are admitted to the universities in the correspondence of their specialty choice. The admission requirements indicate that applicants have to pass exams for English language. Those students whose level of written English and communication skills is below the required standards are offered English courses arranged by the university that provides English reading, writing, and communication skills.

Admission requirements for international students:

Enrolees are admitted without passing the centralised examination of Azerbaijan. The applicants apply directly to the university electronically and have to complete and submit an application form to get registered for the programme. International Applicants also need to provide their Bachelor graduation diploma certificate. Further English language skills are not proved in the admission process.

All international applicants are reviewed by the Foreign Students Department. Eligible applicants receive a Conditional Acceptance Letter and are required to pay their first semester tuition fee. Upon payment they receive an Official Acceptance Letter.

ASOIU arranges necessary counselling services with information and guidance for students to contribute to the personal, physical, cultural and social development of students. The university aims at contributing to the social and personal development of its students as well as their academic achievement. It organises various activities to endow students in social and cultural terms, to promote a sense of unity and solidarity and to support students in their transfer to business.

The Student Union Committee arranges different activities to involve students in the social life of the university, to assess their leisure time or to help solving their social problems. Under the Student Union Committee many clubs have been founded in the university life to make students socially active in their intercultural environment. The ASOIU Foreign Student Department has been established to facilitate the international enrolee (non-Azeri speaking) application process to ASOIU and to ensure that the applicants receive support and guidance from registration through to graduation. The Department aims to understand all applicant situations and maintain a friendly and understanding relationship with them.

Appraisal:

The admission requirements are based on the national regulations. They are documented, comprehensible and openly available for interested parties via the website of the university. Information about the process of admission are available via the website of the State Examination Center. The influence of the selection of the university to select students is limited, but it has the advantage that it can take only those applicants with a high score in the entrance tests, which works towards selecting qualified students.

The selection procedure for local students is transparent and ensures that qualified students are admitted. The panel found that the students have very good language skills. They state that the language requirements managed by the State Examination Center are high enough to let the students complete the appropriate programme. The international applicants don't need to pass the centralized examination of Azerbaijan. They apply directly to the university and have to submit an application form to get registered for the programme. This application form doesn't contain information about a necessary English level every applicant has to have. Hence, it is not ensured that the students are qualified enough to successfully complete the study programme. In the statement the University informs that the required English skills for enrolees will be level TOEFL (80). However, there are no further formal written information about the necessary English level in the admission requirements.

The panel recommends the **condition**:

The HEI defines the English Level for international applicants in the admission requirements and ensures that all applicants have sufficient language skills to successfully complete the study programme.

Furthermore, the State Examination Center does not control, if the applicants have gained work experience prior to the programme. Certified proof of this experience must be shown at the time of the admission. The required professional experience must correspond to the defined qualification profile of applicants. For a MBA programme, this translates into at least 2 years of professional experience after the first higher education qualification.

The panel therefore recommends the **condition**:

The HEI adjusts the admission regulations and ensures that only applicants with appropriate work experience of at least 2 years can start the MBA programme.

For clarification of specific questions of enrolment and contents of study, applicants can directly turn to a student counselling service or to universities' staff. Personal dialogue between the applicant and ASOIU is provided. Furthermore, all necessary information are published on the programmes' homepage.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			x		
2.2	Counselling for prospective students			x		
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)			x		
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)				Condition MBA	
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)				condition	
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			x		

3 Contents, structure and didactical concept of the programme

3.1 Contents

The following table shows the Curriculum of the programme:

FIRST YEAR I. SEMESTER

CODE	COURSE NAME	ECTS	HOURS
MBA 7025	Statistical Business Analysis	6	3
MBA 8000	Managing in the Global Economy	6	3
MBA 8015	Strategic Business Communication	6	3
MBA 8025	Financial Statement Analysis	6	3
MBA 8030	Legal Environment: Ethics and Corporate Governance	6	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS/ECTS		30	

FIRST YEAR II. SEMESTER

CODE	COURSE NAME	ECTS	HOURS
MBA 8040	Decision Making	6	3
MBA 8045	Analytics Experience	3	1.5
MBA 8115	Managerial Accounting and Control Systems	3	1.5
MBA 8125	Digital Innovation	6	3
MBA 8165	Leadership and Organizational Behavior	6	3
	ELECTIVE	7	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS/ECTS		31	

SECOND YEAR III. SEMESTER

CODE	COURSE NAME	ECTS	HOURS
MBA 8135	Corporate Finance	6	3
MBA 8145	Strategic Marketing Management	6	3
MBA 8155	Operations Management	6	3
	ELECTIVE	7	3
	ELECTIVE	7	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS/ECTS		32	

SECOND YEAR IV. SEMESTER

CODE	COURSE NAME	ECTS	HOURS
MBA 8820	Global Competitive Strategy	6	3
	ELECTIVE	7	3
	ELECTIVE	7	3
	ELECTIVE	7	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS/ECTS		27	

TOTAL ECTS CREDITS : 120

ELECTIVES:

	Electives 6 courses
MGS 8710	Operations Planning
MGS 8730	Project Management
MGS 8740	Operations Strategy
MGS 8750	Simulation
MGS 8760	Quality Management
MGS 8770	Service Operations Management
MGS 8030	Knowledge Management
MGS 8130	Problem Solving
CIS 8060	Supply Chain Management
IB 8690	Global Operations Management

The name of the programme is Operations Management, the qualification awarded at the end of the student's studies is Master of Business Administration.

The curriculum is based on the following modules:

- Core courses (3-6 courses)
- Functional core (4-6 courses)
- Capstone core (1 course)
- Electives (6 courses)

The core courses are offered first (including the content of management, economics, statistics, analytic experience), followed by the functional business courses ("Managerial Accounting and Control Systems", "Corporate Finance", "Operations Management", etc.). The capstone core in the form of the module "Global Competitive Strategy" is taught before moving on to the elective courses. Elective courses are offered mostly in the second year once students have developed a strong business foundation and are more confident of their area of main interest based on which they select elective courses. Each semester a variety of different electives are offered giving students a wider range of choice. Students wishing to continue their further scientific education may start with their thesis instead of taking three elective courses.

Different teaching methods are used to combine theory and practice in the programme. The university has developed activities to deepen the students' competences by organising lectures, workshops and presentations of significant experts from practice. The teachers also use their personal work experience to enrich the lectures with examples from the practice such as in-class discussions, case studies, brain-storming, team presentations/projects, papers, etc. In-class discussions improve the communication skills of students so they are able to express their thoughts or ideas. Brain-storming helps students to generate creative ideas through intensive discussion. Case studies improve students' analytical thinking abilities and enhance their team-work competence.

Interdisciplinary thinking is one of the important aspects of the programme's objective that aims to establish critical thinking, self-confidence, self-efficacy, problem-solving, creativity, etc. A variety of interdisciplinary courses are offered in the programme in order to deepen the learning experience of students allowing for interdisciplinary thinking (e.g. "Leadership and Organizational Behaviour"- in this field of study the content is composed of the investigation of the impact of effective management in an organisation and a clear understanding of human behaviour and social processes).

Ethical Aspects are based on national traditions and principles of multiculturalism that merges national and international features. ASOIU creates the opportunity to learn and to work with people from a variety of cultural and ethical backgrounds. Due to this reality in the discussions of cases, the lecturers try to take into consideration the sensitivity of the issue of ethics, e.g. "Legal Environment: Ethics and Corporate Governance".

Students from ASOIU are required to conduct different types of course assignments, e.g.

- individual or group project assignments,
- presentations,
- discussions,
- case studies,
- team work,
- quizzes, etc.

All these enable students to develop their ability to do scientific research, acquire presentation skills and use scientific methods.

MBA students have to complete the course "Business Research Methods" which aims to advance their understanding of research, the methods of research, and how research findings can be used to improve the understanding of the environment and the development of suitable solutions.

According to ASOIU, the university prepares each course's exam in accordance to its content and learning objectives. It is designed to assess a student's ability to apply theoretical knowledge. In addition to the final exam of each course the results of a mid-term exam along with other evaluations (oral examination, presentations, team work, quizzes, etc.) are taken into consideration in order to determine the final grade of the student. The final exam is regularly the exam paper and has a duration of 180 minutes. By working on their thesis, students improve their ability to do scientific work. The students also have the possibility to choose some elective modules instead of writing a final thesis.

Appraisal:

The curriculum of the programme adequately reflects the qualification objectives of the study programme. In the view of the panel the contents of the courses are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. Elective courses enable students to acquire additional competences and skills according to their individual interests. Due to the contents and the learning outcomes of the programme the programme description "Operations Management" and the awarded degree "Master of Business Administration" are reasonable.

The contents of the Master programme refer to the students' prior professional experience. However ASOIU has to check that every applicant has appropriate work experience (see chapter 2). Furthermore the panel states that the implied contents of the programme are in line with the EQUAL MBA Guidelines.

Theory and practice are sufficiently combined throughout the curriculum. Theoretical questions are geared towards application fields to promote employability. Many lecturers bring their business and educational skills with knowledge of recent developments into the programme and link the practical application to the theories discussed in the seminars. In its subjects the programme is interdisciplinary and thus promotes interdisciplinary thinking. Moreover the achieved outcomes show the preparation of the students for an occupation requiring interdisciplinary knowledge. Interdisciplinary thinking is especially suitable to promote the achievement of the competence goals. Ethical aspects are a very important aspect for ASOIU, who wants to take into consideration the sensitivity of the issue of ethics. This content is contained in many courses and part of the curriculum. Ethical implications are appropriately communicated. The panel positively acknowledges that methodological competences and scientific practice are thoroughly trained so that students acquire methodological competences and are enabled to do scientific work on the required level.

Paper, exam paper and project work are ways to test the knowledge and competence of students. The level of performance in examinations and the theses are aligned with the learning outcomes of the courses in terms of form and content. The requirements are in line with the level necessary to attain the desired qualification level. The system of continuing examination including a mid-term and a final examination helps ASOIU to check if students are falling short of expectations and enables the university to support those students.

The students have the possibility to write a final thesis or to choose elective modules instead to get the necessary amount of ECTS-points. They get support from the chosen teacher who supervises the procedure of the thesis. The students have to prove their ability to do scientific work in their thesis. The panel states that this ability is not proven by choosing electives with other examination methods than writing a final thesis.

Students who chose the electives have to pass a written exam as final examination method. The panel criticises that this method is not comparable to a final thesis, because it does not prove sufficiently the ability to do scientific work.

In the view of the panel it is not sufficient if graduates from a MBA programme did not complete the programme without writing a thesis. For the panel it is not adequate to replace a thesis with another examination method on Master level. In the statement the university announces to make the thesis mandatory for the MBA programme. However, there are no formal modifications about the new arrangement in the university's constitution.

The panel therefore recommends the accreditation of the programmes on the following **condition:**

The university ensures that all MBA students write a final master thesis.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.1 Contents					
3.1.1* Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2* Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3* Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.4 Interdisciplinary thinking			X		
3.1.5 Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6* Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7* Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)					condition

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
Criterion)					

3.2 Structure

Projected study time	2 years, four semesters
Number of Credit Points (CP)	120 ECTS points
Workload per CP	30 hours per ECTS point 810 - 960 hours per semester
Number of modules	20 modules, thereof 6 electives
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	630 hours - 21 ECTS points
Number of contact hours (For MBA programmes: Please describe in which way the substantial proportion of structured contact according to the EQUAL MBA Guidelines is ensured.)	3600 hours for four semesters

The programme consists of modules and assigned ECTS points per module on the basis of the necessary student workload. The curriculum consists of 120 ECTS points, 78 of which are compulsory courses with one business prerequisite and the remaining 42 ECTS points are elective courses. The workload is divided among the semesters between 25-34 ECTS points per semester. A student is required to complete 120 ECTS points in order to obtain the MBA degree. Most of the required courses are 6 ECTS points each which equates to three lecture hours per week. Every elective course has 7 ECTS points. Each course is conducted once a week. Some courses have prerequisites where students are required to take the prerequisite course before proceeding to the next dependent course. The calculation of ECTS points involves class hours, midterm and final exams depending on the course requirements as well as independent studies and self-studying. There are fifteen weeks of classes in total - including one week for midterm exams. Final exams are usually conducted after the fifteen weeks of classes.

Course descriptions provide detailed intended learning outcomes, the course contents, the type of course (compulsory/elective), amount of ECTS-points, name of lecturer, teaching methods and examinations.

The assessment of student performance for each course is done by the course instructor. Student course performance is evaluated by using different assessment methods, which include mid-term exam, final exam, assignments, term papers, quizzes and in-class activities. In the evaluation process students are given a mark which is out of 100 (an accumulation of mid-term exam mark, final exam mark, quiz mark, presentation/paper/assignment mark, etc.) and then at the end of the semester the cumulative average mark of the student is converted to a letter grade. Letter grades are organized on a 4.00 point grading scale. The letter grades and their equivalent grade point are given below:

Percentage	Course Grade	Coefficient
90-100	AA	4.00
85-89	BA	3.50
80-84	BB	3.00
75-79	CB	2.50
70-74	CC	2.00
65-69	DC	1.50
60-64	DD	1.00
50-59	FD	0.50
49 and below	FF	0.00

Grades AA, BA, BB, CB, and CC are varying levels of unconditional “Pass” status for the successful score. Grades DC, DD and FD indicate the “Conditional Pass” status, where the students are regarded as successful given that the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is equal to or above 2.00. The grade FF indicates “Fail” and the student is required to repeat the course in the proceeding semester.

All courses in the programme use a variety and combination of assessment measures, such as assignments, in-class activities, projects, etc. All methods of assessment are specified in the course syllabi, which are distributed or made available to all students at the beginning of each semester. At the end of each semester, students are also requested to fill out a course and instructor evaluation survey. Changes and improvements in the curriculum are made based on these evaluation results. There is also a suggestion box located outside of the programme student administration office. Furthermore, the programme dropout rate of 30, 40, or 50 per cent is relatively high.

ASOIU is composed of an internationally diverse student body. It is very sensitive towards issues related to discrimination and works towards providing an environment that encourages a dynamic multicultural educational environment. The university ensures gender equality and non-discrimination in the relationship with faculty and students. Students with disabilities as well as students in special family conditions with single or ill parents, or students with problems are provided with necessary assistance throughout the programme and examinations.

Appraisal:

The panel comes to the conclusion that the programme’s structure supports the successful implementation of the curriculum with special regard to the electives as well and is suitable to reach the defined learning outcomes. The programme consists of modules and assigns ECTS points per module and course on the basis of the necessary student workload. The modules provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes and the information defined in the ECTS Users’ Guide. The studies include a substantial proportion of structured contact.

Module descriptions were provided in English.

The university ensures gender equality and non-discrimination in the relationship with faculty and students. Students in special circumstances, such as foreign students are particularly assisted. The panel learnt that students with disabilities are supported with appropriate actions concerning time and formal standards/requirements throughout the programme and

examinations, even when the number of students with disabilities at the university is very small.

The university provides exam regulations that inform the students about the process of exam organisation during the semester and the exam rules. ASOIU also provides transfer regulations: the study programme is designed so that students can study for a certain time at other HEIs. The panel learnt that students can apply for recognition of study periods abroad. The panel got the impression that recognition of study periods abroad is not problematic for students, as they are even encouraged to take part in exchange programmes as part of the university's internationalisation strategy.

Even though student workload has not systematically been evaluated, students were satisfied with the actual workload and confirmed that finishing their studies within the planned period was possible. The general feasibility of the study programme's workload is ensured by a suitable curriculum design with plausible calculations of workload as well as an adequate number and frequency of continuing examinations throughout the courses and in total in each semester. The delivery of the study programme is well organised and interaction between students and staff works very well. Support services on academic and general issues are ensured by the lecturers and tutors. Statistical data from the study programmes of the Faculty showed dropout rates of 30, 40, 50 per cent or even higher in the last years. ASOIU explains that many of these students dropped out due to personal reasons. The panel learnt from the students that there is no relation to the feasibility why students drop out of their programme.

Nonetheless, in the view of the panel, dropout rates of this amount reduce the success of a study programme. Hence, the panel recommends observing and analysing the amount and given reasons of dropouts as well as taking measures to reduce the number of students who leave the university without finalising their studies.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2	Structure					
3.2.1*	Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.2*	Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3*	Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4	Equality of opportunity				X	

3.3 Didactical concept

Faculty members are encouraged to use a variety of teaching methods and encourage interactive learning in order to promote learning and to accomplish the objective outcomes of the programme. Each method is individually oriented towards developing the student's knowledge and understanding. Such methods include:

- The case study/ exercise methods help to improve the student's critical thinking and decision making
- In-class presentations enable students to develop their abilities in the preparation and delivery of course related topics

- Brain-storming enables students to develop their ability in the identification of innovative solutions
- Group projects teach students how to work as part of a team and teach them how to distribute tasks and responsibilities in an equitable manner
- In-class discussions help instructors measure the students level of understanding of topics discussed.

Students are motivated to actively participate in the courses and get marks, which have influence on the modules' final grades.

Nearly all the sources that are used by the instructors to teach students are the editions of European and American textbooks. A syllabus is distributed to students at the beginning of each course. It covers all the information about the sources recommended by the instructor. The alternative sources, including the links on online internet sources, are provided by instructors as well. All the main recommended textbooks are available at the ASOIU Library. The case studies and similar exercises conducted in class are also available in the textbooks or other sources which students are directed to, or are provided within the classes by the course instructors.

ASOIU knows about the importance of guest speakers/lecturers, especially from the industry, in order to give students a better understanding of the application of theory to practice. It contributes to the increase of students' qualifications. Guest lecturers are regularly invited, their contribution forms an integral part of the study programme's didactical concept.

Successful Master and doctoral students are used as lecturing tutors/teaching assistants to support the students in the learning process and to develop competences and skills, as well as providing administrative support to lecturers in the following ways:

- help students to think beyond the course and encourage them to actively participate in university life;
- prepare time schedules for lectures, exam schedules, distribute auditoriums;
- offer personal support on a range of topics that might include academic difficulty, emotional and social problems or illness;
- provide support for international students;
- collaborate with students, parents, instructors, administrators to determine student needs and problems and assist them accordingly.

Tutors work with students starting from the first year until graduation.

Appraisal:

The didactical concept of the study programme is described, plausible and oriented towards the programme objectives. The logic of the teaching methodology in principle is adequate to lead students to the final qualifications. It is described and explained in a transparent manner. The lecturers use a variety of teaching methods, which promote the theoretical knowledge as well as the application skills of the students. The teaching and learning concept encourages the students to participate actively in the courses for example by group projects or in-class discussions.

During the on-site visit the panel had the chance to examine examples of accompanying course materials. These are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required level. They are handed out by the lecturers or accessible online. They are user-friendly and encourage students to engage in further independent studies.

The panel appreciates that guest lecturers are invited to ASOIU. They come from companies, the industry and from other Higher Education Institutions abroad. Through their

guest lectures and insight in economy, they contribute to the students' qualification process with their special experience.

Every group of students has its tutors starting from the first year until graduation. They support the students in their individual learning process. Every tutor can be reached in defined office hours every day. They are also available via mail. Lecturing tutors contribute to the students' learning process and are systematically integrated into the teaching activities. Each tutor offers personal support on a range of topics that might include academic difficulty, emotional or social problems. The students are also encouraged to actively participate in university life. The tutors also help international students to get in touch with the universities life. The panel appreciates that all students can develop social competences and skills among other things.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.3 Didactical concept					
3.3.1* Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2* Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3 Guest lecturers			X		
3.3.4 Lecturing tutors		X			

3.4 Internationality

In terms of international and intercultural aspects, the whole programme is taught in English language. The curriculum, as specified in the objectives, also emphasises courses with an international focus and content (e.g. "Managing the Global Economy" or "Global Competitive Strategy" and others). These courses provide students with the necessary skills to handle international tasks contributing to the students' employability. The programme prepares students to effectively work within the international working environment. Examples of courses or content with an international focus are "Managing in the Global Economy" and "Global Competitive Strategy".

In total there are 352 students out of 9000 from different countries studying at the various graduate and undergraduate programmes:

- 259 who are studying at Bachelor level,
- 43 at Masters level,
- 6 at PhD level,
- 44 at foundations course.

These students have a wide range of their origin-country: they are from Turkmenistan, China, Vietnam, Greece, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Georgia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Germany, India, Russia, Iraq, and Ukraine.

ASOIU works with agents and representative offices in 22 countries to attract young people to study at the university. The personnel working in these offices guide prospective students by advising them in regards to their choices about the area of study.

The majority of the faculty members is from Azerbaijan, but some of them graduated from other countries, such as in the USA, Great Britain, Russia, Norway, etc. There are also some foreign teachers with extensive international academic and professional experience who are invited from time-to-time to deliver lectures at the programme. Some members of staff attend

international conferences held in different countries to enhance their qualifications as well as publish academic articles in internationally recognised journals.

The medium of instruction in the programme is English. Lecturers/instructors deliver lectures in English and recommend the course reading materials in English as well.

Appraisal:

International contents are part of the curriculum. Students are thus prepared for the challenges in an international working environment. Through practical examples, students are enabled to act in an intercultural environment.

With only 5% of international students the international composition of the student body is very low. Hence, the students do not benefit a lot from communicating and working with international students. Nevertheless, they study in an international environment because of the internationality of the guest lecturers and the faculty. The international composition of the faculty consists of teachers from different countries and teachers with international academic and professional experience. This composition promotes the acquisition of international competences and skills for the students. Moreover, the teaching language in the study programme is English. Hence, lectures and course materials are 100 per cent in English language. This is a key element and can be assessed above-average. Internationality plays a central role in the study programme's profile.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.4 Internationality					
3.4.1* International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2 Internationality of the student body				X	
3.4.3 Internationality of faculty			X		
3.4.4 Foreign language contents		X			

3.5 Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)

Students acquire managing, leadership, communication and public-speaking skills as well as cooperation and conflict handling from the courses at ASOIU, e.g. "Decision making", "Operations Management", "Project Management", "Leadership and Organizational Behaviour", "Managing the Global Economy" and "Legal Environment: Ethics and Corporate Governance". Additionally, students improve their communication skills by presenting their papers or projects and by preparing case studies. In addition, in the courses, students regularly work on group projects that help them to work effectively in teams, experience team dynamics and practice conflict resolution skills.

The leadership, communication and public speaking skills are acquired through such courses. These help the students to enter the professional community easily and quickly.

Appraisal:

Through various methods the students acquire communication and public-speaking skills as well as cooperation and conflict handling skills in the study programme. This is documented in the module descriptions. They are supported by means of suitable didactical and methodological measures, for example group projects.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.5* Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3.6 Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)

The employability of graduates from the programme is based among others on the following elements:

- a strong link between theory and practice,
- the training of methodological competencies,
- English language courses,
- international content,
- the promotion of systematic work and
- training of social skills.

The language of instruction being English also improves students' employability. The internationality of the programme provides students with the knowledge to perform in national as well as international organisational settings thus also improving employability.

The curriculum has been designed to introduce students to the major business functional areas of management, marketing management, operations management, corporate finance, financial statements, legal environment of business and organisational behaviour. The possession of these major business functional areas improves the employability of MBA students. The programme aims to provide the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to become an effective entrepreneur and manager in a variety of organisational settings, both national and international.

Appraisal:

The programme's aim is to provide the students with skills of their appropriate professional field. To reach this aim the programme has combined theoretical knowledge with practical application both at a local/national as well as at an international level. The university has stated convincingly that graduates of the programmes find a profession shortly after graduation of the programme.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.6* Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

4 Academic environment and framework conditions

4.1 Faculty

The programme consists of both full-time and part-time members of staff. Full-time members are required to actively participate in programme's day-to-day activity and in the process of development, design and improvement of the curriculum as well. Part-time staff members are the representatives of private and public sectors, they provide teaching service for the programme, transferring the knowledge from the practice directly to the students.

The university provides extensive staff information for all programmes, where the qualification level, the academic career and the main publications of each teacher are described.

The decision making structure in the faculty and the department is as follows: The department is under the control of the faculty as far as strategic decision making is concerned. The Dean has the overall responsibility of all the strategic decisions concerning the department belonging to the faculty. The Chairperson of the department is responsible about the day to day running of the department (including matters of the staff, secretarial staff, students, the laboratories and other teaching material). The Chairperson arranges meetings with the teaching staff at regular intervals to solve any problems by either contacting the Dean or to the appropriate staff of the university. Faculty members cooperate with each other e.g. when changes may be necessary in the curriculum. In addition, members of staff conduct scientific research and write academic papers together. Furthermore, the organisation of academic events such as conferences and the invitation of guest speakers are done in cooperation.

The Faculty involved in the programme at hand consists of 14 full-time lecturers (three of them are Professors, eight of them are Associate Professors, one of them is PhD holder, two have a Master degree- one of them with a PhD in progress). Furthermore, there are 23 part-time lecturers (two of them are Professor, one of them is Associate Professor, seven of them are PhD holder, 13 have a Master degree and seven have a Master degree with a PhD in progress).

As it's indicated, about 60% of the programme's staff have Doctor of Science or Philosophy doctor degrees. One of the important criteria in staff recruitment and employing process is the lecturer's academic qualification. About 40% of staff members are Master degree holders but their contribution to the teaching process on the programme is very important because of their practical experience. As part-time staff members work in various industry fields, their day-to-day activity is close to practice, so they are the first providers of the practical knowledge and experience to students. One of the major goals is to give students a set of practical knowledge applicable in business fields. It provides the students with the advantage of experiencing the application of theory to practice. Additionally, ASOIU pays attention to questions of the invitation of guest speakers from various industry fields.

Students studying at ASOIU are always able to address the dean of their programme and ask all kind of questions related to their learning process. Students are provided with the information on descriptions of general and elective courses taught, the list of tutors, etc. Successful Master and doctoral students are used as student tutors to support the students in the learning process. They act as a key point of contact for students with regular meetings throughout the student's programme. The tutors are responsible for guiding students in their course selection and registration process. They also provide academic support when students require and therefore student advisors are very familiar with the students. Due to student familiarity the tutors provide guidance in regards to career planning as well when students request, too.

Appraisal:

The structure and number of teaching staff correspond with the programme requirements. A list of all involved lecturers shows the availability of the required capacity to implement the programme. According to the CVs the academic ability and the practical experience of the teaching staff is in line with the requirements of the programme for teaching. The staff's pedagogical/ didactical qualifications are in line with their tasks and have been verified. Besides, a high number of lecturers have long-year experience in teaching. The teachers have the possibility to attend international conferences concerning e.g. their specialty. During the on-site visit the panel noticed that some of the teachers could improve their English language skills. The panel recommends to encourage their development of English language skills. The University wants to involve more instructors with PhD and Master's degree from different foreign universities. The panel appreciates that, but recommends to further strengthen the English language skills of the lecturers who already teach at ASOIU.

The practical business experience of the faculty corresponds to the requirement of the programme to integrate theory and practice. Besides the regular academic staff, there are teachers from the industry that teach in the programme.

The faculty members cooperate with each other for the purpose of tuning the modules towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of all those teaching in the programme take place regularly.

As affirmed by students during the on-site visit, the counselling of students by staff and the tutors is intensive. Student support and coaching are an integral part of the services provided by the tutors and teaching staff. It is offered on a regular basis. Emails are answered fairly quickly. Where necessary, the students are given support with academic and related issues.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.1	Faculty					
4.1.1*	Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2*	Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.3*	Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4	Practical business experience of faculty			X		
4.1.5*	Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6*	Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.7(*)	Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended-learning/distance learning programmes)					X

4.2 Programme management

The programme is managed by the Programme Director. He coordinates the activities of everyone involved in the programme. He has the responsibility of:

- training quality, organisation of educational, scientific, financial and economic activities and budget
- execution of the programme
- representing the programme in the relationship with government agencies and organisations
- identifying the programmes' administrative and functional management structure
- concluding labour contracts and other agreements with employees
- professional development, setting out their authorities, approving job descriptions
- approving regulations governing the activities of the programme
- identifying international relations, controlling its membership with foreign organisations,
- distributing of the courses to faculty members
- dealing with student issues that cannot be dealt with by the student tutors
- arranging meetings with members of staff to discuss programme issues and initiate any necessary changes.

An Advisory Board holds meetings on a regular basis to improve the programmes' quality.

All students are free to address the dean to be guided in any academic issues they may be facing. Students can also reach course instructors via e-mail addresses, provided to students by course syllabuses at the beginning of each semester, and also via the programme web page and the programme page created in Facebook.

The Foreign Students Department provides support to international students regarding the admission and registration procedures. The Department also arranges events to help enhancing the multicultural environment of the university.

Administrative staff consists of 13 employees. Academic studies, conducted by the members of staff, are financially supported. Funds are allocated by the programme so that the staff members can attend international conferences.

Appraisal:

As the panel came to know, the programme management coordinates the activities of everyone involved in the programme and ensures that the programme runs smoothly. It successfully takes initiatives to promote the systematic development of the study programme in a manner which includes all relevant groups. The process organisation, administrative support as well as decision-making processes and responsibilities are determined transparently.

Faculty members and students are supported by the administration in the organisation of the study programme. Several offices and services are responsible for the support of all involved parties in the study programme. Faculty members can attend training programmes to develop their skills.

An advisory board has been installed. The results of the advisory process are taken into account in the development of the programme.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.2 Programme management					
4.2.1* Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.2.2 Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty			X		

4.3 Cooperation and partnerships

ASOIU has cooperation agreements with more than 58 other higher educational institutions. The network is used for exchange of students. Most of them are Russian or Turkish institutions. The other partner institutions are in countries like Kazakhstan, China, Ukraine or USA.

ASOIU uses learning agreements to ensure that the students' studies abroad are transferable into the appropriate programme.

The Master of Business Administration programme was founded in 1998 in accordance with the project "Partnership to Develop the Master of Business Administration Programme and Faculty capabilities" at the ASOIU in partnership with the Georgia State University/Robinson Business School of the USA.

Cooperation with companies and industry are mainly used for the invitation of guest speakers (see chapter 3.3) in order to give students a different perspective and a better understanding of the application of theory to practice. The information presented by these speakers shall contribute to the students' qualification and skills development.

Appraisal:

ASOIU has various cooperation agreements with higher education institutions. The programme was founded in accordance with the Georgia State University/Robinson Business School of the USA. The cooperation had a clear impact on the conception of the study programme and is still used for the purpose of student exchange possibilities.

Furthermore, the university uses its network of companies and industry to invite guest lecturers, which benefits all students by providing insights into practice (see chapter 3.3). Both kinds of cooperation bring benefits to students that participate in exchange or in the guest lectures.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.3 Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*) Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)			X		
4.3.2(*) Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes)			X		

4.4 Facilities and equipment

The building of the university consists of three floors. The programmes' floor is 500 m² including classrooms, offices, labs, and corridors. The table below describes the classrooms and the IT equipment of the university.

Table 4.2: Faculty classrooms, their capacities, and teaching equipment

Class-room	Area (m ²)	Student Capacity	Equipment of Teaching
Room 238-1	50m ²	66	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection/ Air conditioner /10 computers
Room 238-2	30 m ²	15	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection
Room 238-3	30 m ²	15	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection/ Air conditioner
Room 238-4	30 m ²	30	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection
Room 238-5	45 m ²	40	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection
Room 238-6	30 m ²	24	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection
Room 238-11	40 m ²	32	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection
Room 238-12	18 m ²	10	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection
Room 315-Linqofon	50 m ²	18	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection/ Air conditioner/Radio
Room 337	70 m ²	40	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection/ Air conditioner/
Room 263	57 m ²	10	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Internet connection
Room 303	30 m ²	24	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection/ Air conditioner/
Room 1623	60 m ²	14	Whiteboard/ Computer/ Projector/ Internet connection/

Computer rooms for business simulation games and audio-training and lecture rooms are equipped with

- computers
- network
- Internet and
- audio-visual equipment.

The library is 1245 m² in size and keeps about one million books. All students are strongly encouraged to use the library effectively for their researches during their studies.

The Reading Hall is 217 m² in size and can serve 80 readers at once. It is equipped with computers and internet connection.

Online access to a variety of databases is available, such as:

- EBSCO,
- ISI Web of Science,
- Science Direct,
- TAYLOR and FRANCIS,
- Emerald, and
- ULAKBİM.

The library is open each working day for 9:00–19:00 time interval. The library's staff consists of 18 persons.

Appraisal:

The quantity, quality, media and IT facilities of the teaching rooms meet the standards required for the programme. Access to the internet through laptops via wireless LAN is provided free of charge. A sufficient number of group rooms is available. The building is equipped with elevators. Nonetheless, there are some barriers that impede the access for disabled people to some rooms of the building. But ASOIU sufficiently assured to provide barrier free access in case that disabled students are enrolled.

The opening hours of the library take students' needs sufficiently into account both during and outside of semester time. Access to the literature to digital media (e.g. electronic media, databases) is ensured. The literature expressly required for the study programme is available in a local library near to the rooms where the programme is offered.

During the on-site visit the panel had the opportunity to see the local library for the MBA programme. The literature was partly outdated e.g. books like Financial Policy from 2003, Fuzzy Logic from 1993, Management in Information Systems from 2002 or Fundamentals of Informatics from 1999. The panel recommends to refresh the range of books in this local library to gain access to current literature for the students. ASOIU also confirms this and informed the panel in the statement that the inventory of the provided books is going to be extended. Therefore new books are purchased. This has to be checked in case of a possible re-accreditation.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.4	Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1*	Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.4.2*	Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

4.5 Additional services

The career counselling services are provided at ASOIU Alumni and Career Center of the University. It is aimed to assist students and alumni in entering the job market. Students are also able to address the dean of the programme to achieve the information regarding career counselling and placement. Additionally students are able to find all appropriate information about career opportunities that are published periodically on the programme's web page and the Facebook group.

ASOIU wants to stay in continuous contact with its graduates who are kept up to date with the activities and developments of the university. On Facebook the ASOIU Alumni and Career Center has setup a network among the programme's graduates. Since two years, ASOIU also organises Alumni Celebration Ceremonies to keep in contact. For the university it is very important to inform the graduates as well as the students about the main activities like

- arranged trainings,
- seminars,
- conferences,
- career exhibitions,
- meetings with alumni and
- other news and information for alumni.

Appraisal:

Career counselling and placement services are offered to the students and graduates to promote their employability.

An alumni organisation has been set up with the aim of developing an alumni network. Moreover the panel appreciates that alumni activities as meetings and expert courses are planned foresighted. It is an integral part of the services and is offered on a regular basis. ASOIU provides sufficient resources.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service			X		
4.5.2	Alumni Activities		X			

4.6 Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)

ASOIU is a state university. Moreover the source of financing is students' fees, too. Fees for education constitute the main source of the income. As ASOIU argues, financial activity is given by the fact that the number of students is not falling.

Appraisal:

ASOIU is financed by the Republic of Azerbaijan. The programme also finances itself through tuition fees, which cover the running costs. Therefore, this criterion, which refers in particular to private HEIs, the panel judges as fulfilled. The programme is funded for the entire accreditation period so that students will definitely be able to complete their studies.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

5 Quality assurance and documentation

ASOIU strives for quality in teaching and aims to build up mechanisms that allow a continuous self-reflection of its performance that is based on results of a quality assurance system. The established quality assurance and development procedure of the university regularly and continuously monitors and develops the quality of the programmes regarding to its contents, implementation and outcomes.

At the end of each semester students are asked to complete an online survey for each of their courses in order to gain feedback in relation to the course and the course instructor. This survey is carried out through the e-university “unibook”. The aim of the questionnaire is to acknowledge the administration to increase the quality of teaching and achievement. The results are analysed and provided to the Programme Director and the appropriate teacher. This process provides feedback resulting in making necessary improvements in order to increase the instructor’s teaching quality and if necessary make improvements regarding to the content of courses.

At the end of each semester the Programme Director holds an “end of semester evaluation meeting” in order to discuss the overall outcomes of the semester with course instructors. This meeting is the base for discussing and identifying the issues and problems faced by the instructors and students. It is implemented in order to find suitable solutions to the emerging problems. Teacher with very good results are awarded.

The ASOIU Alumni and Career Center is also in continuous contact with the alumni, so any information provided can be used to make improvements to the programme if it’s needed.

The content and curriculum of the programme is available on the university’s web page. The programme’s content and curriculum are also provided in promotional catalogues. Course plans, examination schedules and examination rules are announced online as well as on the programme’s notice board positioned in front of the entrance of the programme hall. All relevant material is suitably documented and published and for everybody accessible.

Activities during the academic year are announced on the programme’s web page, Facebook page and notice board. All the announcements regarding the programme documents or/and the programme related events and activities are also done by the programme’s dean.

Appraisal:

The panel members came to the conclusion that ASOIU has specified quality targets for the development of programmes and regularly assesses their implementation. Its system of quality assurance and development is designed comprehensively so that continuous quality improvement of the institution can be achieved. There also exists a quality assurance and development procedure, which is used systematically to continuously control and monitor the quality of the programme.

The lecturers are involved in the process of quality enhancement via the “end of semester evaluation meeting” with the programme management. Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a described procedure. The course evaluation provide information on the students’ satisfaction with their studies. The used survey for the course evaluation checks on various subjects. There is also a question regarding the workload.

There is no formalised process of informing the students about their course evaluation. The panel therefore recommends to provide the students with information on the results of

evaluations and quality assurance measures. The University states that tutors explain the results of the evaluation. The panel therefore recommends to formalize this procedure.

There is also no external evaluation by alumni, employers or other parties. The university informed the panel that they are planning to develop a survey for alumni, but it is currently in the formation process. The panel appreciates the plan of ASOIU to involve the alumni in their quality assurance. The panel recommends to implement a survey and to involve external parties more strategically in the quality assurance.

The study programme's aim and curriculum have been suitably documented and published. Students have access to all relevant information on the programme (e.g. regulation, course descriptions, information on examinations, etc.). In addition, the university regularly publishes current news and information about the study programme.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties				X	
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year			X		

Quality profile

HEI: Azerbaijan State Oil & Industry University

Master programme

Operations Management (Master of Business Administration)

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1 Objectives					
1.1* Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
1.2* International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
1.3 Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1 Positioning of the study programme in the educational market			X		
1.3.2 Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)			X		
1.3.3 Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept			X		
2 Admission					
2.1* Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.2 Counselling for prospective students			X		
2.3* Selection procedure (if relevant)			X		
2.4(*) Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)				Condition	
2.5* Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)				Condition	
2.6* Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3. Contents, structure and didactical concept					
3.1 Contents					
3.1.1* Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2* Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3* Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.4 Interdisciplinary thinking			X		
3.1.5 Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6* Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7* Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)				Condition	
3.2 Structure					
3.2.1* Modular structure of the study			X		

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
programme (Asterisk Criterion)					
3.2.2* Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3* Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4 Equality of opportunity				x	
3.3 Didactical concept					
3.3.1* Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2* Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3 Guest lecturers			X		
3.3.4 Lecturing tutors		X			
3.4 Internationality					
3.4.1* International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2 Internationality of the student body				X	
3.4.3 Internationality of faculty			X		
3.4.4 Foreign language contents		X			
3.5* Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.6* Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4. Academic environment and framework conditions					
4.1 Faculty					
4.1.1* Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2* Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.3* Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4 Practical business experience of faculty			X		
4.1.5* Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6* Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.7(Student support in distance learning *) (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended-learning/distance learning programmes)					X
4.2 Programme management					
4.2.1* Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.2.2 Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty			X		
4.3 Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(Cooperation with HEIs and other *) academic institutions or networks			X		

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
(Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)					
4.3.2(Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes) *)			X		
4.4 Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1* Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.4.2* Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.5 Additional services					
4.5.1 Career counselling and placement service			X		
4.5.2 Alumni Activities		X			
4.6* Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5 Quality assurance and documentation					
5.1* Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2 Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1 Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2 Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3 External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties				X	
5.3 Programme documentation					
5.3.1* Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.3.2 Information on activities during the academic year			X		