

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ASSURANCE CENTRE

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY



YEREVAN 2012

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ASSURANCE CENTRE

Approved
by YSU Academic Council
at the session No 1 of September 27,2012

AC Chairman, Rector _____ A.Simonyan

**YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY**

YEREVAN 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. GLOSSARY	5
3. CONCEPT OF THE QUALITY.....	7
4. YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES	8
5. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM .	10
6. YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY	12
7. MAIN AREAS OF YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	13
8. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM	16
9. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES.....	21
10. YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK AND INFORMATION SYSTEM	24
11. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT.....	25

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The YSU strategic plan of development of 2010-2014 has defined the main directions that the University will follow in its long-term perspective to realize its mission and major strategic goals providing quality education, high-quality researches and quality public services. The key to these strategic goals lies in the creation of effective and efficient system of quality assurance (QA) which is anchored in high-quality education, scientific researches, as well as in infrastructures and supporting services and meets the needs of the University and the country.
2. According to the European standards and guidelines the system of internal QA of HEI should be comprised of the following 7 main structural parts:
 - quality assurance strategy, policy and corresponding procedures and standards,
 - official procedures for validation of programmes and qualifications, for current monitoring and periodic review,
 - consistently used and published criteria, regulations and procedures for student assessment,
 - transparent mechanisms and criteria for staff competences evaluation,
 - learning and other supporting resources adequate for the requirements of study programmes,
 - collecting, analyzing and applying proper information to effectively manage the educational process,
 - publication of constantly updating, impartial and objective information regarding programmes and awards.
3. The mission of YSU QA system is to promote the enhancement of confidence in the main areas of YSU activities (education, science and public services) and to certify that the quality and the current standards of the degrees awarded by the University are maintained, continuously improved and effectively managed.

4. The general policy of YSU QA is realized in the context of the vision, mission and essential values of YSU. It is based on the principle of achieving and maintaining high standards of quality.
5. The aim of YSU QA policy is to support the University to fulfill its mission and strategic goals in accordance with national and international standards.

2. GLOSSARY

- **Assessment/evaluation** – a process of systematic quality analysis of HEI or a study programme which results in judgements and/or recommendations in regard with the HEI or the programme.
- **Self-evaluation** – a process of systematic collection of data, questioning of students and graduates, holding interviews with the academic staff resulting in a self-study report.
- **Peer-review** – a process of evaluation by external experts regarding the quality and effectiveness of the HEI or study programme and its staffing.
- **Accreditation of programme design** – a process in the result of which the educational subdivision gets the official approval of the HEI to develop a new study programme according to the presented proposal.
- **Programme validation** – a process by which the HEI evaluates the quality of the newly designed programme and the capacity of the programme team to realize it according to the established standards.
- **Programme monitoring** – a process which considers the effectiveness of the programme in terms of the achievement of the determined goals and expected learning outcomes and brings to light issues connected with the quality education to share the best practices of improvement measures.
- **Periodic review of the programme** – a process by which the HEI evaluates the achievement of standards and goals of the programme and the actual

delivery quality by the outcomes of the whole phase of its realization and takes a decision whether to continue the programme or make changes in it.

- **Standard** – determined requirements and conditions against which the required quality of the HEI or the programme should be assessed in order for them to be accredited or licensed.
- **Criteria** – benchmarks determining the degree of attainment of certain objectives and/or standards.
- **Qualification descriptors** – statements that determine the outcomes of qualifications at corresponding levels of higher education and demonstrate the main differences between them.
- **Academic standards** – requirements related to the level and amount of knowledge, abilities and skills that the student should meet to be awarded the applied qualification.
- **Study programme profile** – a distinguishing description of the awarded qualification based on its specific goals which indicates how the given qualification relates to the accepted qualification framework and working environment.
- **Quality** – a multifaceted category that relates to the institutional mission and objectives as well as to the accepted standards within a given institution, programme or discipline. Depending on what it is used for there exist different definitions of quality – “quality as excellence”, “quality as fitness for purpose”, “quality as improvement”, etc.
- **Quality assurance** - a continuous process of quality assessment, monitoring, maintenance and improvement of the institution or the programme.
- **Quality audit** – a process of quality assessment by which a competent external body checks the existence of the internal quality procedures of the HEI or the study programme, their fitness for purposes and their actual performance.
- **Internal quality assurance system** – a management system by which the HEI realizes its quality assurance policy and objectives with the help of established procedures and mechanisms.

- **Quality improvement** – a process of continuous quality improvement via quality management.
- **Quality evaluation** – a process of external quality assessment of the HEI or study programme.
- **Quality management** – an aggregate of measures taken regularly at institutional or programme level to assure the quality of education.
- **Quality control** – a process of internal or external quality audit of the HEI or the programme.
- **Quality policy** – an official statement of the general intentions and the principles of the HEI in the sphere of quality assurance.
- **Quality culture** – a system of universally accepted and integrated principles of quality to be found in the organizational culture or the management system of the HEI.
- **Quality assurance European standards and guidelines** – a pan-European official document developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) and adopted at the Bergen summit of 2005 which comprises corresponding standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in the HEIs, as well as for the quality assurance agencies.
- **Accreditation** – a process by which the governmental (or non-governmental) authorized body evaluates the quality of the HEI or the study programme in order to officially recognize it as having met the pre-determined minimum criteria or standards. It consists of three successive phases: evaluation and preparation of an appropriate report, an expert visit and assessment, an assessment report making.

3. CONCEPT OF THE QUALITY

6. The quality concept which underpins the YSU QA system jointly ensures the principles of “fitness for purpose” and “fitness of purpose”. That is, YSU, its

structures and processes are of high quality if they fit the purpose which they are intended for. On the other hand the basic goals should in itself be well-grounded, adequate and appropriate.

7. The principle of quality as “fitness for purpose” emphasizes the need to meet generally accepted standards. Here the focus is on the effectiveness of the processes at work both at YSU or programme levels aiming at fulfilling its goals. The YSU mission, goals and objectives are the principle guidelines of quality as “fitness for purpose” model as they determine the framework of planning, monitoring and measuring of the outcomes. They also promote the relationship with the stakeholders, such as the employers, the economy, the government, the students and the parents.
8. Hence, in the YSU QA system the quality standards are both “fitness for purpose” (i.e. the guarantee to achieve the defined goal) and “fitness of purpose” (i.e. the appropriateness of the chosen goal, consideration of the expectations and requirements of the stakeholders).

4. YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES

9. Below the underlying core principles of YSU QA policy are introduced.

Principle 1. **Systematic approach:** all the areas of YSU activity- educational, research and administrative- are liable to assessment and accountability.

Principle 2. **Centralized regulation:** there exist common regulatory and procedural base and assessment standards for QA processes which all the educational subdivisions conform to. Here the role of the coordinator is granted to the Academic Council (AC) which plans the corresponding activities, validates the regulatory documents and procedures, controls the pre-determined processes and considers the

outcomes. To fulfill these objectives YSU has founded a QA standing committee and a QA administrative structure – QA centre.

Principle 3. **Decentralized realization of the processes:** as far as separate subjects are concerned the faculties and the chairs (centres) are responsible for the QA processes of academic standards and programmes. The conformity of the QA decentralized processes with YSU common criteria is provided by a common regulatory and procedural base and by the QA centre and the QA standing committee.

Principle 4. **Self-evaluation:** the YSU activity is assessed according to its goals, that is to what extent the determined goals have been fulfilled. The established model of QA presumes the existence of a system of planning and evaluation. The goals should be planned and the actions should be measurable. The determined goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, real and timed (SMART).

Principle 5. **Improvement:** YSU QA system aims to promote continuous quality improvement processes at the university. Self-evaluation is considered to be an important means to improve the quality of education at the university. The student, graduate and employer surveys are viewed as a crucial tool for continuous quality improvement.

Principle 6. **An approach based on benchmarks and evidence:** YSU estimates its achievements according to national and international benchmarks. The YSU QA methods are based on evidence where the outcomes and the stakeholders' feedback information (including the students, the academic staff, the employers and the public) lead to analyses and conclusions and on these grounds improvement actions are planned.

Principle 7. **Expanded participation of the personnel:** YSU encourages the expanded participation of the academic and administrative staff in the QA and improvement processes, stimulates individual undertakings of educational (faculty, chair, centre) and administrative subdivisions in QA processes.

Principle 8. Involvement of students and external evaluators: The full participation of students, graduates and employers in the QA processes is the primary guarantee of the efficiency of the system, as well as the requirement of European standards. The following ways of their participation in different areas is premeditated:

- student surveys on the efficiency of teaching,
- graduate satisfaction surveys from the education received at YSU,
- employer satisfaction surveys from the graduates,
- self-evaluation processes at the institutional, faculty and programme levels.

Principle 9. Interconnection between the internal and external QA processes: The internal QA is the basis of external assessment and is shaped taking into account the standards and procedures of the latter. Hence, the YSU institutional and programme self-evaluation processes are the basic links between internal and external QA processes.

5. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

10. The main goals of the YSU QA system are:

- to guarantee the maintenance of high-quality standards in all core areas of YSU activities,
- to create a regulatory and organizational base for external QA assessment and accreditation of YSU and its study programmes, ensure a link between internal and external quality assessment processes,

- to promote continuous quality improvement of education and development of quality culture at the university,
- to make it possible for YSU to assure itself, its stakeholders and external evaluators that the adopted QA policy, system and processes are effectively carried out,
- to ensure YSU accountability to the students, employers, the foundation (the Government) and other financing organizations for the quality of education,
- to contribute to the strengthening of cooperation between national, regional and international QA agencies and universities.

11. The following objectives of the YSU QA system proceed from the goals set:

- to support the maintenance of academic standards, QA of study programmes and their continuous improvement through systematized processes,
- to create conditions to fulfill quality self-evaluation, external assessment and accreditation of study programmes,
- to provide accountability procedures for QA and initiate corresponding processes,
- to ensure the transparency of QA processes and procedures and the active participation of students, major employers and external experts in them,
- to create necessary prerequisites and stimulating mechanisms for continuous quality improvement of the offered education,
- ensure that the quality of YSU study programmes meet the expectations of all the stakeholders and that the YSU graduates gain the required knowledge and skills.

6. YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

12. The QA policy defines the YSU principal approaches regarding the QA issues and the ways of their realization. The process of its realization requires a certain procedural guideline which, on the one hand, provides detailed information on those means by which the policy is carried out and, on the other hand, regulates and transforms those means into specific actions.
13. Through QA policy YSU creates such a system of QA which clearly defines the principles, guidelines, QA system structure and procedures of the realization of QA institutional processes.
14. The purpose of YSU QA policy is to introduce a QA official, transparent and reliable system based on the activity outcomes and on the functioning processes of internal and external evaluation.
15. The objectives of the YSU QA policy are as follows:
 - to provide guidelines to develop and fulfil internal quality processes and procedures,
 - to provide guidelines to determine internal quality criteria and standards in line with accepted European requirements,
 - to promote the endorsement of the culture of continuous quality improvement and its further development in the University,
 - to help reveal those areas of YSU activities that are strong and are worth of special attention in order to provide continuous quality improvement in short-term and long-term perspective,
 - to harmonize different areas and processes of quality assurance in the University,
 - to strengthen the role of QA centre in quality management and development,
 - to promote the fulfillment of YSU mission in line with its strategic goals and objectives,

- to continuously improve the QA system through periodic revisions, to perfect and modernize the QA processes, procedures, criteria and official documents concerning them,
- to ensure the adequacy of QA policy and strategy to YSU mission, strategic goals and objectives.

7. MAIN AREAS OF YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE

16. The processes, mechanisms, standards and procedures included in the YSU QA system should make it possible to evaluate the quality of the following areas:

Area 1. Study programmes and courses. The quality of the development and delivery of the programmes and courses are evaluated through corresponding guidelines and procedures. The quality of the programme performance and the compatibility with its purposes are carried out by “Current monitoring and periodic review of the YSU programmes” approved by the YSU Academic Council. The primary goal of programme monitoring is the assessment of the programme performance quality and the use of resources. The purpose of periodic review is the promotion of the YSU mission and strategic goals and the recognition of qualifications. The programme review involves both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Quantitative analysis supposes collecting and analyzing the numerical data referring the programme. These data are presented in the self-evaluation report. Qualitative analysis consists of two parts – self-analysis which is carried out by the programme performing unit and evaluation by a peer-review group.

Area 2. **Academic staff.** Staff evaluation process comprises the criteria on qualifications, research work and continuous professional development. The minimum standards of involvement in the processes of qualifications, research work and continuous professional development are defined by educational subdivisions (faculties, chairs, centres). Developing the standards that the academic staff should meet such procedures as competitive election of the teaching staff, their appointment and promotion are taken into account.

Area 3. **Teaching and learning.** Quality assessment of teaching and learning comprises the following:

- application of effective tools, such as class inspections by the head of the department,
- student assessment of the courses and the teaching process,
- teaching portfolios and assessment of colleagues,
- assessing the quality of teaching the performance of individual assignments by the teaching staff, procedures of progression and appointments of the staff, etc. are taken into account,
- the teaching staff development and professional training units and the QA centre have a guiding and supporting role in the process of teaching improvement which is carried out through continuous professional development of the lecturers, through implementing improvement programmes and through granting academic awards of excellence.

Area 4. **Students' grading.** Existence of both mid-term and final assessment QA mechanisms. Having no external evaluators the chairs should elaborate transparent grading mechanisms of students that are in conformity with the YSU students' grading guidelines. They at least should have explicit grading standards and criteria and supporting procedures that guarantee the authenticity of students' grading and the reliability of the grades.

Area 5. Supporting services. The quality assessment of the supporting services that are provided to the students, faculties, chairs and centres, as well as the record keeping system is included in the QA system.

Area 6. Resources and infrastructures. The quality assessment of resources and infrastructures comprises the measuring of the availability and adequacy of classrooms, library, reading halls, communicative means, educational laboratories and appropriate equipment.

Area 7. Research activity. The quality assessment of the YSU research activities involves the following areas:

- the management, the long-term strategy and the short-term programmes of the YSU research activities that demonstrate the YSU interests and intentions in this area,
- the rate of internationalization of research activities,
- the research potential of the YSU faculties, chairs, research centres and groups,
- the adequacy of YSU research subdivisions to current requirements,
- the financial volumes of international and local research grants according to separate substructures,
- interconnection mechanisms between research activities and educational processes,
- commercialization of the research results,
- scientific publications.

Area 8. Public involvement. To promote the process of recognition and external support for the University and its activities YSU should contribute to the intellectual, educational and cultural progress of the society as far as possible. The quality assessment of public services includes:

- the assessment of the relationship with the public, i.e. effective information, published materials, modes and means of spreading

information, purposefulness of PR activities, public opinion studies about YSU, the YSU involvement in programmes aimed at public needs, etc.,

- life-long learning system, i.e. continuous education and training courses, possibilities for the YSU students, graduates, teachers, public employees and the wider public to continue their education at YSU, etc.,
- the YSU involvement in the activities of state and non-state structures.

8. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

17. The main subdivisions and structures involved in the YSU QA system and the allocation of responsibilities between them are as follows:

YSU Academic Council

- approves the QA policy and QA strategy, discusses the results of the QA processes in the framework of YSU annual report and recommends improvement measures,
- fulfils the discussion and approval of the outcomes of the QA processes and the conclusions of the QA standing committee of the Academic Council.

YSU Rector:

- supervises the regular work of the YSU QA policy and QA strategy, guidelines their realization, ensures the harmonious employment,

integration and collaboration of the QA system with the YSU other management bodies,

- manages the YSU self-evaluation process.

Vice-rectors:

- realize the effective management and control of the QA system,
- provide functional relationship and collaboration between the main structures involved, particularly the faculties, the QA centre, the educational-methodological department and other subdivisions concerned,
- organize the YSU self-evaluation process, the preparation of the self-assessment report and the planning and control of successive actions.

QA standing committee of AC:

- acts as an expert and control body to assess the conformity of QA procedures and criteria with accepted standards,
- prepares and presents the regulatory, procedural and criterion documents, the documentary packages of new and reviewed study programmes to the Academic Council for approval,
- guarantees the quality assurance and assessment procedures, the criteria and academic plans of study programmes, other regulatory and normative documents relating to the QA to be approved by the Academic Council.

YSU QA Centre:

- ensures the quality control of the development and delivery of the study programmes and checks their conformity with established standards,
- systematizes and controls the fulfillment of the QA processes and procedures of programmes at educational subdivisions,
- prepares QA procedures for the development, approval, current monitoring and periodic review of the programmes, follows and supports their realization in the YSU subdivisions,

- organizes the periodic review processes of study programmes in accordance with QA procedures,
- is accountable for the organization of the process of the teaching and learning quality assessment (student surveys),
- is accountable for the systematization and realization of the processes relating to the quality assessment of teaching and learning,
- evaluates the teaching and methodological competences of the academic staff and their effectiveness.

YSU faculties:

- are responsible for the organization and realization of all the processes of QA and control at the faculty level,
- organize the development, realization, current monitoring and periodic review processes of the study programmes of the faculty in line with QA procedures ,
- provide necessary resources (academic staff, laboratory equipment, professional literature, etc) and other learning means to successfully carry out the programmes in line with the programme requirements,
- organize the self-assessment of the programmes of the faculty and the making of the corresponding report in the framework of the annual monitoring, periodic review and accreditation processes of the programmes,
- ensure and control the quality of the research activity at the faculty.

QA faculty commissions:

- control the realization of the development of study programmes, the changes in them and their QA processes,
- control the proper resource and methodological sufficiency of the programmes,
- are responsible for the teaching QA and internal control at the faculty, as well as for the control of the consistent realization of the resolutions adopted at the University level.

Students:

- are involved in the quality assessment processes of education by participating in the student surveys regarding the effectiveness of teaching, learning and grading and in graduate satisfaction surveys,
- are involved in the academic councils of YSU and faculties, in the QA standing commissions of the YSU AC and the faculty academic councils,
- take active part in the YSU QA processes as representatives of student self-governing bodies (student council, student scientific society, etc.)
- according to the established procedure take part in the YSU self-assessment processes and the preparation of the corresponding report as members of the self-assessment working group.

External experts, ANQA, graduates and employers:

- carry out external evaluation of the YSU activities, the QA system and the study programmes in the framework of institutional and programme accreditation processes,
- are involved in the commissions of the final testing of the graduates (final examination and final paper defense),
- on the YSU initiative can take part in the intermediate and term assessment processes of the students,
- take part in the graduate satisfaction surveys from the received education,
- take part in the employer satisfaction surveys from the YSU graduates.

Figure 1 illustrates the scheme of the YSU QA system. It shows the hierarchic link between the main units and structures involved in the system.

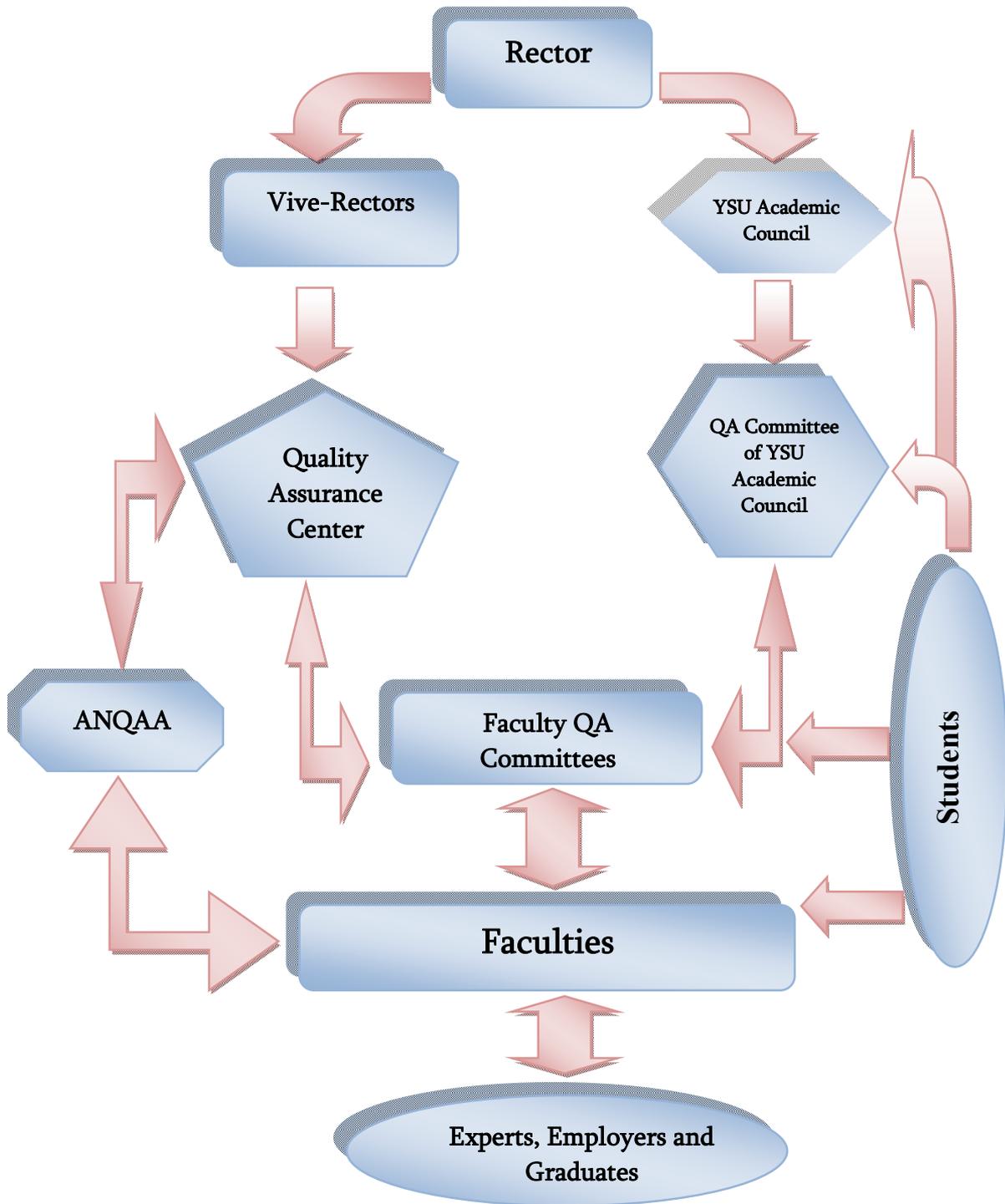


Fig.1. The organisational scheme of the YSU QA system

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

18. The YSU QA procedures aim to plan and transform the processes preceding from the QA policy into concrete actions and guideline their realization.
19. Below the YSU QA processes and procedures are presented by special areas:

Maintenance of established educational standards:

- the educational standards are at the appropriate level for the given qualification determined in the qualification framework of European Higher Education Area and the National Framework of Qualifications,
- the educational standards meet the demands of the corresponding state, professional, legislative bodies and other identical institutions,
- the educational standards are periodically reviewed for them to be up-to-date and adequate,
- in the process of the development, monitoring or revision of the educational standards the feedback of both internal and independent external experts are being used.

QA of study programmes:

- the study programmes have a clearly defined and published goal, expected learning outcomes and chosen methods of teaching, learning and assessing which promote the achievement of those outcomes by the students,
- the QA of study programmes is based on the procedures of programme planning, constant accreditation (preliminary approval), indispensable documentation, testing of the recommended programme, official approval, annual monitoring, periodic assessment and review procedures and on the student and graduate feedback mechanisms,

- the students are involved in the current monitoring and periodic review processes of the programmes (student half-year surveys and annual satisfaction surveys that evaluate the content of the programmes and courses, the teaching methodology and the quality of programme delivery),
- to assess the quality of the programmes the opinions of external evaluators are taken into account,
- the QA processes focus on those programmes where there might be decline of quality (newly opened programmes or programmes with continually low indicators).

Student assessment:

- assessment of the learning outcomes of the course or separate module (mid-term and final examinations),
- assessment of the learning outcomes of the programme (final testing which includes final examinations and the graduation paper defense),
- annual student surveys regarding the students' grading system in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the employed criteria, modes and methods,
- regular staff surveys on the students' grading process in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the employed criteria, modes and methods.

Staff development procedure

- multidimensional assessment of the efficiency of the teaching staff performance which includes teaching staff assessment by the students (student surveys on teaching efficiency), teaching staff assessment by the immediate chief (the head of the department), teaching staff assessment by their colleagues, self-assessment of the teaching staff,
- qualification improvement and professional training of the teaching staff based on the above mentioned assessments,

- procedures of competitive election, appointment, progression, financial incentives (differentiated allowances in particular) of the teaching staff.

QA of educational resources and supporting services

- assessment of the fitness of the qualitative and quantitative descriptors of the resources with the programme requirements,
- revelation/discovery and assessment of the educational and individual needs of the students,
- quality assessment of the educational resources and supporting services through annual surveys on student satisfaction, which evaluate the work of the library and the reading halls, the computer centres and the availability of the Internet, the furnishing of the classrooms and educational laboratories, the activity of the graduate and career centre, the efficiency of other consultative services,
- quality assessment of supporting services offered to the educational subdivisions through the staff surveys carried out every three year which evaluate the infrastructures of YSU and their management, the work of the library, reading halls and computer centres and the availability of the Internet, the furnishing of the classrooms and educational laboratories, etc.

Research activity assessment:

- research incomes according to their sources,
- the balance of international research incomes in the general research budget,
- the research fund per participant,
- the number/balance of the lecturers involved in research projects,
- the number/ratio of the regular scientific researchers to the number of the main teaching staff,

- the quantitative ratio of the main teaching staff to the post-graduates,
- the number of defended dissertations,
- the involvement/balance of the post-graduates in research projects,
- the number of scientific publications, their ratio to the number of the teaching staff.

Public involvement assessment:

- the number and volume of the published materials regarding YSU,
- how operatively the information regarding YSU is disseminated,
- the results of the public opinion study regarding YSU,
- the number of programmes/projects intended for the public needs where YSU is involved,
- the number and diversity of programmes on life-long/continuous education and training courses,
- the number/balance of listeners involved in these courses/programmes in the general student contingent.

10. YSU QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

20. The YSU QA documentary provision and the information system comprise:

The QA handbook (guide) which includes:

- the general representation and organizational structure of the QA system,

- the goals, objectives and strategic provisions of the QA policy,
- the QA principles, processes, procedures and distribution of responsibilities between different levels of management and subdivisions, the relation and cooperation with other YSU management bodies,
- the brief representation of QA core processes and the package of determined procedures of quality assessment,
- regulations and methodological materials on the realization of QA particular processes,
- official approval of YSU educational standards,
- other important materials for the realization of the QA system.

The on-line resource data base of the QA/accreditation which includes:

- all the official documents referring the YSU QA system, i.e. the QA concept paper, the QA handbook, the documents concerning study programmes, the academic staff, the student assessment, the quality and assessment of learning resources,
- all the records and reports regarding the outcomes of the realization of the QA processes,
- the analytical reports and adjacent documents of self-assessment prepared for institutional and programme accreditation,
- the forms and records of different surveys and other activities,
- other materials and documents regarding the provision of the information system.

11. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

21. The strategy of continuous quality improvement is the most important constituent of the YSU QA policy which is aimed at ensuring continuous and

steady quality improvement of educational processes in accord with the changing demands and needs of the students and the labour market. Its main purpose is to create and apply supporting mechanisms for constant and continuous quality improvement of education, as well as necessary prerequisites to develop a Quality culture.

22. To fulfil the strategy of continuous quality improvement YSU proceeds from the following principles:
 - the QA processes are regulated, they are monitored and periodically reviewed,
 - the QA processes are based on the reports of quality monitoring, on the feedback of the students, graduates and the employers and on the statistic data of the graduates' employment.
23. The YSU mechanism of continuous quality improvement is based on a four-cycle process:
 1. Planning: the main objectives and the measurable expected outcomes are defined;
 2. Realization: to achieve the expected outcomes all the necessary actions and measures are taken;
 3. Assessment: the achieved outcomes are checked and measured against the expected ones, the difference is evaluated;
 4. Improvement: additional measures are developed and planned to correct the faults and errors and to achieve the anticipated outcomes in the next stage of performance.