

The Internationalization Strategy of Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction

Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction attributes great importance to international exchange in teaching and research, and promotes the cooperation with universities and other partners worldwide. The international orientation includes all aspects of university life: research, teaching and administration. As at January 2018, Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction has more than 100 partner universities across the world. With these partners, the university maintains a number of cooperations in research and teaching, including 2 (Erasmus+ and Mevlana Exchange Program) programs for student exchange. Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction places great value on "Internationalization", and the Internationalization Strategy that is detailed in the following emphasizes this.

Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction strives to increase public attention on an international level by "Internationalization" and to strengthen the international orientation within the institution. The objective of "Internationalization" accents the international position and reputation of the university with regard to high-profile research and teaching, research cooperation's and the education of future scholars, specialists.

The "State Strategy on Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan" approved by Presidential Decree in October 2013 sets the government's priority for the reform of the sector, mainly related to quality, socio-economic relevance, human resources capacity, governance and overall participation/access to education. In the strategy, the government has clearly expressed its will to approximate the education and training system of Azerbaijan to the EU policies and practices in this area, which grants a clear comparative advantage for the EU engagement. Since joining the Bologna Process in 2005 Azerbaijan has progressed with the implementation of certain tools, notions and objectives of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), however an EHEA compatible quality assurance system for higher education is not in place.

To shoulder the required reforms, substantial capacity building is required for education providers - teachers, administrators, directors/managers, trainers/masters and the responsible administration/management in Azerbaijan. Major refurbishing is also urgently required in many educational institutes.

The Internationalization Strategy refers to the first (Strengthening of the University's academic position) and second (Constant improvement of the quality of education while providing favorable conditions for the education of people with outstanding talents) strategic direction of the University's development.

In terms of strategic direction of development, strengthening of the University's academic position, the internationalization strategy directly relates to the following strategic objectives:

- (1) increasing international activity in the field of scientific research, in particular with regard to increased participation in European research programs and projects;
- (2) expansion of international cooperation in the field of the exchange of academic staff and students
- (3) Promoting partnership with international universities, funding bodies and other private and public organizations

In terms of strategic direction, Constant improvement of the quality of education while providing favorable conditions for the education of people with outstanding talents, the internationalization strategy is directly related to the following strategic objectives:

- Development of a broad and comprehensive education at all levels and forms of education and for various types of studies;
- Intensification of international student exchanges within international programs and bilateral agreements.

The Internationalization Strategy also refers to one of the strategic goals within the strategic direction of development, the development of various forms of cooperation with the social and economic environment, namely: Obtaining international institutional accreditation.

Operational activities in the field of strategic direction of development strengthening of the university's academic position and the quality of education

- Obtaining international accreditation (both programmatic and institutional),
- Constant increase of the number of foreign professors, with their inclusion in the implementation of projects and research programs undertaken by the university;
- Integration of foreign professors with the university's academic community (e.g. "open lectures", participation in department seminars, etc.);
- Cooperation with foreign publishers (patronage, business contracts, etc.);
- Arranging a system of internships at foreign research centers for young employees;
- Intensification of scientific cooperation (joint conferences, projects, etc.) with strategic international partners; (a need to define a suitable list);

- Expanding the scope of scientific cooperation with "non-university" research centers abroad (research institutes, scientific foundations, international institutions)
- Introduction of studies in English with foreign partners;
- Expanding the mobility of students within bilateral agreements (especially in cooperation with European and Turkish universities);
- Actions in favor of the "system of two degrees" with selected foreign universities;
- Increasing the internationalization of Management Studies, MBA (existing as well as planned for the start of International Business);
- Attracting international accreditation (substantive) for selected courses;
- Introduction (based on European funds) of the system of internships for assistant professors (based on the principle of their incorporation into our range of courses, foreign exchanges and program content).
- Continuous improvement of the organization and operation of the Office of International Cooperation, and creation of a central service point for international students in the International Relations Office.