Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the study programmes:

- **"Political Science and International Relations", Faculty of Fine Arts (Bachelor) (English programme)**

- **"Political Science and International Relations" (Bachelor), Faculty of Fine Arts (Turkish programme)**

- **"Sociology" (Bachelor), Faculty of Fine Arts (Turkish programme)**

- **"Political Science and Public Administration" (Bachelor), Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences (Turkish programme)**

offered by Istanbul Gelişim University

Based on the report of the expert panel, the comment of the university and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 70th meeting on 19./20. February 2018, the Accreditation Commission decides:

1. The study programmes "**Political Science and International Relations**" (**Bachelor**; English programme), "**Political Science and International Relations**" (**Bachelor**; Turkish programme), "**Sociology**" (**Bachelor**; Turkish programme), and "**Political Science and Public Administration**" (**Bachelor**; Turkish programme) offered by **Istanbul Gelişim University** are accredited according to the AQAS criteria for Programme Accreditation.

    The accreditation is **conditional**.

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

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 November 2018.**

3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2024**.

I.   Conditions for all four programmes:

1. The course descriptions and learning outcomes at programme level have to be improved with regard to completeness, specificity and coherence.

2. Adequate diploma supplements have to be presented explaining the specific qualifications of the students and reflecting the achieved learning outcomes.

3. The university has to hand in a hiring plan and timeline indicating the number and qualifications of positions to be filled and the courses and subjects which shall be taught member of the teaching staff for all four programmes.

II. Condition for both "Political Science and International Relations" programmes:

1. The courses on subject specific methodology have to be updated in order to reflect that these are courses on quantitative methods, qualitative methods and research design in Political Science/International Relations. The changes have to be documented in the course descriptions.

III. Condition for the "Sociology" programme:

1. The methodological education has to be redefined and improved towards a more structured approach.

IV. Condition for the "Political Science and Public Administration" programme:

1. Classes in the field of (New) Public Management have to be included in the curriculum.

The conditions were fulfilled on time.
The Accreditation Commission confirms this with its decision of 25./26.02.2019.

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

1. Internal Quality Assurance procedures should also cover the level of learning outcomes at programme level.

2. The introduction of a "mobility window" could help to improve internationalization.

3. The use of alternative examination forms (e.g. analysis, writing papers and oral presentations) for mid-term and/or final exams should be increased.

4. Relevant documents for public information should be translated and edited in a uniform and consistent manner.

5. For both "Political Science and International Relations" programmes there should be more Political Science modules in the specific (core) programme, e.g. by readjusting compulsory and elective courses.

6. For both "Political Science and International Relations" programmes the documentation should be improved to specify how courses contribute to the development of scientific competencies and skills generating.

7. In the "Sociology" programme the number of elective courses should be increased and also selection from neighbouring departments should be possible.

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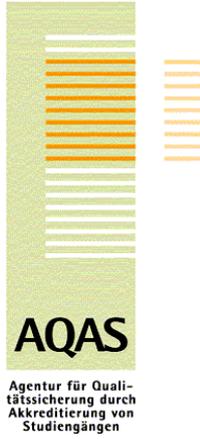
Experts' Report

on the bachelor degree programmes:

"Political Science and International Relations" (in English)

"Political Science and International Relations" (in Turkish)

"Sociology" (in Turkish)

"Political Science and Public Administration" (in Turkish)

offered by Istanbul Gelişim University

Visit to the University: November 27-30, 2017 and January 17-19, 2018

Panel of Experts:

Prof. Dr. Biray Kolluoğlu	Boğaziçi University Istanbul, Chair of Sociology, Turkey
Prof. Dr. Nicole Küchler-Stahn	Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Chair for Public and Nonprofit Management, Germany
Prof. Dr. Ferdinand Müller-Rommel	Leuphana University Lüneburg, Chair of Comparative Politics, Germany
Rachel Schutte	Political Consultant, Bonn, Germany (representative of the labour market)
Christopher Pridat	Student at the University of Erfurt, Germany (student expert)

Coordination:

Ronny Heintze & Ninja Fischer	AQAS, Cologne, Germany

I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 85 member institutions, both higher education institutions (HEIs) and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is therefore a notified body for accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

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

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of both academic studies and teaching in higher education institutions. The activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither restrained to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor to a certain type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the bachelor programmes in "Political Science and International Relations" (Turkish and English), "Political Science and Public Administration" and "Sociology" offered by Istanbul Gelişim University (IGU).

1. Criteria

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

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

Istanbul Gelişim University mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in June 2017 for "Political Science and International Relations" (Turkish and English), and "Sociology" and in September 2017 for "Political Science and Public Administration".

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

The appendix included e.g.:

- Overview of statistical data of the student body

- CVs of the teaching staff

- Information on student services

- Core information on the main library

- Undergraduate academic regulations

AQAS checked the SER draft for completeness, comprehensibility and transparency. The final version of the SER for "Political Science and International Relations" (Turkish and English) and "Sociology" was delivered in September 2017. The final SER for "Political Science and Public Administration" was submitted in December 2017.

The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Accreditation Commission on August 28–29, 2017.

Nomination of the expert panel

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

The Accreditation Commission nominated the expert panel in September 2017. AQAS informed the university thereafter about the members of the expert panel and IGU did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visits, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential points in need of additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university as well as to the panel members to increase transparency in the process and upcoming discussions during the site visits.

Site visit

Due to the later addition of the "Political Science and Public Administration" programme to the accreditation procedure, there were two site visits to guarantee that separate talks with all relevant stakeholders could take place. After review of the SER, the site visits to the university took place from November 27–30, 2017 as well as from January 17–19, 2018. One expert participated in the discussions via Skype as he was unable to attend the site visit for manifest reasons. On site, the experts interviewed in separate discussions different stakeholders, such as the management of the university, the programme management, teaching and other staff as well as students, and consulted additional documentation as well as examples of graded work from student's achievements. Both visits concluded with preliminary findings presented by the experts to the university's representatives.

Report writing

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

Decision

The experts' report together with the comments by IGU form the basis for the AQAS Accreditation Commission to make a decision regarding the accreditation of the programmes. Based on these documents, the Accreditation Commission decided on the accreditation on February 19/20, 2018. AQAS forwarded the decision to IGU. The university had the right to appeal the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

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

III. General Information on the University

Gelişim University is a private higher education institution located in Istanbul, Turkey. It started as a vocational school in 2008, having been founded by the "Gelişim Foundation for Education, Culture, Health and Social Development". In 2011, the institution acquired university status and has since expanded its programmes and number of students. Today, Istanbul Gelişim University is characterised by a student population of ca. 22.000, with a teaching staff of ca. 500.

The university structure consists of three faculties, three institutes, four graduate schools, and two vocational schools offering a wide range of graduate and postgraduate programmes: Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture; Institute of Social Sciences, Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences, Institute of Health Sciences; School of Applied Science, School of Foreign Languages, School of Physical Education and Sports, School of Health Sciences.

Every private university in Turkey is obliged by the Amendments of the National Law on Higher Education to have a "Board of Trustees", which enters a contract with the Rector, all faculty members and all other staff. Furthermore, it decides on the budget, all hiring and termination decisions and the amount of annual tuition fees. The university has a senate as well as all other organs comparable to other public institutions.

The university pursues the goal of becoming an international education and learning institution by running joint projects with internationally recognized schools, by setting up a global research network and by providing high quality professional education in Turkish and English. A strategic plan 2016–2020 defines these objectives together with those of further developing and implementing graduate education and improving service processes as the main targets to be achieved by the university in the near future.

According to the university, its educational approach follows the principle of creative teaching and participatory learning. The university aims at educating civically engaged, self-reliant individuals by providing excellence and highest quality in its study programmes and by fostering critical intellectual development.

Istanbul Gelişim University offers continuous scholarships, free courses, internships and job opportunities to students. At the same time, it aims to support students' individual, social and academic development during university life. Students can receive consultation and help for their needs at the Psychological Counseling Guidance Unit. As outlined by the university, it supports its students in extra-curricular activities such as student clubs and student councils, summer schools and conferences.

IGU supports international student exchange programmes and participates in the Erasmus+ programme, while encouraging both student and staff mobility. As outlined by the university, the number of European partner institutions is currently 73. The International Relations Office shares responsibility for the organization of mobility.

The study programmes to be accredited are part of the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, the largest organizational body at IGU with regard to student numbers. It currently comprises 21 study programmes; students also have the opportunity to complete a double major degree. Graduate and PhD programmes complement the undergraduate education. The faculty is governed by a Dean.

IV. Assessment of the study programmes

1. Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance

> *The programme is subject to the Higher Education Institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.*
>
> *A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.*
>
> *The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.*
>
> *[ESG 1.1]*

Description

The Istanbul Gelişim University's (IGU) quality assurance policy is defined by national standards according to the Turkish National Council of Higher Education (YÖK). According to the university, these do not contradict the Quality Assurance concept outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

As all Turkish universities, IGU is required to submit an annual quality report to YÖK which is made publically available online. As discussed with the IGU management while on site, YÖK is planning on conducting an independent external evaluation of IGU in 2018. In addition, IGU is currently undergoing a large number of international accreditation processes for various degree programmes.

The experts positively acknowledged the university's ambition to be recognized as one of the top universities younger than 50 years within the next 5 years. Clearly, this has an impact on the current development of quality assurance structures.

As outlined by the university, one of Gelişim University's main objectives in quality assurance lies on the effective participation of internal and external stakeholders in all activities in accordance with international quality standards.

An Advisory Committee has been appointed by the Rector and approved by the Senate to venture opinions on learning and scientific activities. Members stem from other study programmes within the university and from the private sector; graduates of Gelişim are represented as well.

Feedback of internal and external stakeholders shall furthermore be collected within the framework of the University Quality Commission. It consists of the Rector, Vice-rector and 14 members from various faculties, institutes, vocational schools and colleges. The commission is supposed to define, implement and further develop factors necessary for the improvement of quality standards. It thus evaluates reports, surveys and suggestions by students and external stakeholders. Quality standards are monitored via performance indicators which are evaluated and presented by the Office of Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance. Furthermore, several measures are supposed to be in place to monitor the programme's quality, such as regular course and teaching staff assessment questionnaires as well as student assessment and internship evaluation questionnaires. At the end of term, student's evaluations are taken into account in a success analysis. A student council creates further opportunities for students to participate in the supervision of programmes, as presented by the university.

The incorporation of feedback of internal and external stakeholders forms the basis for the further development of study programmes. Evaluation reports have to be approved by the Rector, reviewed by Deans and Heads and acknowledged by the Senate.

Experts' Evaluation

For all four degree programmes under review, responsibilities, expectations and learning outcomes are defined and made available to students. However, particularly with regard to the intended learning outcomes they could be more clearly defined and specific to the current focus of the programmes and consistent across all media. Internal Quality Assurance procedures should be able to identify such substantive shortcomings regarding the documentation of the programmes **(Finding 1)**.

Looking at the learning outcomes for example, what are the Departments' current academic niches and research focuses for the specific degree programmes? For Political Science and International Relations (Turkish and English language degrees), reference is made to 'attaining knowledge of theories, approaches and concepts' without specifying which ones the IGU's Department of Political Science and International Relations are currently focused on. Which 'behaviors, organizations, institutions and philosophical foundations or major issues in international affairs' referenced are currently being analyzed in ongoing research and theoretical debates within the Department's courses? Descriptive, exploratory and forecasting methods are alluded to without specifying these. Similarly, for Sociology, 'qualitative and quantitative data analyses and social research methods' currently applied are not further specified, nor are 'social issues, change and transformations' explained in any detail. IGU should have procedures in place to identify learning outcomes that are either too unspecific or only loosely reflect the qualification of the programme **(compare to Finding 1)**. The introduction of a curriculum commission trained to check the formulation of each course description might also help to develop the concrete aims and learning outcomes of each programme.

The expert panel carefully reviewed IGU's quality assurance system and procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes. These procedures are publically available:

- IGU Quality Assurance Directive (Regulation No. 29423, 23.07.2015), which established a quality assurance system with goals for strategic planning (increasing student achievement, raising the qualifications of academic staff, improvement and progress of the university-specific community, increasing the efficiency and efficiency of university administration) and performance criteria for each.

- IGU Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Office Directive (based on Law No. 2547) which establishes an Office of Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance responsible for monitoring and reporting on performance criteria to the Quality Commission.

- IGU Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Office Directive which establishes IGU's Quality Commission to review evaluation reports and develop recommendations for the Rector.

- IGU Ethics Committee Directive (Senate Decision 24.06.2015, no. 7)

- IGU Student Council Directive (Senate Decision 01.08.2016)

- IGU Bologna Coordination Commission Directive

The listed policies and documents were reviewed and the panel believes they are fit for purpose.

Quality assurance monitoring takes place through various online university management systems, including for courses and programme evaluation, progression and completion rates, and even an annual evaluation of academic staff required for contract renewal. According to the IGU's management, the university's achievements toward reaching its strategic goals and targets are monitored according to specific programmes, and the data collected can be used to develop the study programmes.

An online student survey concludes each completed course and covers the learning environment and support services but does not currently include an evaluation of overall student workload nor is space for comments provided. To ensure that students complete the survey, they can only check their grades after completing it.

Based on the discussion with student representatives (via the student council) and stakeholders from the labour market, these groups are involved in the universities overall quality-assurance procedure, and to some extent for specific programmes. However, student representatives are not involved in questions related to the budget.

For external stakeholders, involvement and conveyance of changing societal needs often takes place though alumni and maintaining direct contacts with IGU academic staff, Deans, Department heads, etc., and thus ad-hoc and/or a result of an open-door culture cultivated at IGU. In the future, the role of representatives from the labour market and stakeholders in the quality-assurance procedure might be more formalized (official participation).

The experts positively recognize that IGU's alumni club makes efforts to monitor the career progression of graduates and to make data on alumni experiences available for further development of the study programmes.

IGU's Quality Commissions meet regularly and its management appeared forward thinking and very receptive to the needs and wishes of its stakeholders and student body in general, with innovations being made to improve the courses, daily life and services of its student body. Examples provided include the introduction of English conversation classes, while planned innovations include a summer school, expansion of its campus and new catering options (coffee shop).

Although the IGU Quality Assurance Directive introduces an extensive number of performance indicators for each of its four goals and as a monitoring system is in place, assessment of the data collected on these and other quality indicators appeared under development. Examples of concrete measures taken as a result of quality-assurance procedures to improve the degree programmes under review or to resolve identified conflicts were not readily available or were limited to system-wide changes. Documentation was not presented on changes and adjustments or improvements made to the individual programmes, and it was not clear to what extent evaluation results or recommendations relevant to the degree programmes were presented to teaching staff and students.

The existing quality assurance system could be improved by the introduction of a curriculum commission trained to check the formulation of each course description. This might also help to develop the concrete aims and learning outcomes of each programme **(compare to Finding 1)**.

Beyond this, in the long run the programmes would benefit from the incorporation of quality indicators to measure outcomes or impact (such as the publication impact factor of each staff, scope of international cooperation or volume of third party funding generated for research, overall student satisfaction trends, career progression of graduates, etc.). Such indicators might also be integrated into the online monitoring systems. A more consistent documentation of changes and programme-improvements resulting from the quality assurance processes will also increase transparency for internal management.

Conclusion

The criterion is substantively fulfilled.

Istanbul Gelişim University (IGU) has laid solid foundations for a well-functioning quality assurance process with a quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement including regular feedback mechanisms which are (in some parts) still under development. Data collected on these indicators should be regularly analyzed on both a university-wide and a departmental basis, circulated internally to assist decision-making, and a summary published, for exam-

ple, in an annual report on quality assurance. The experts believe that implemented structures and mechanisms will need a certain time to prove efficient.

2. Quality of the Curricula

> *The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*
>
> *The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.*
>
> *The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.*
>
> *[ESG1.2]*

a. Political Science and International Relations (Turkish & English)

Description

The curriculum of both programmes of Political Science and International Relations consists of 240 CP. 180 of them are composed of compulsory courses and 60 of them are composed of elective courses. 18 CP of the elective courses are composed of the non-field elective courses. The first four semesters only consist of majors and academic core modules, while the second half of the programmes allow for a specialization by various elective courses.

A typical pathway can be shown as followed:

1. Semester: English I, History of Civilizations, Introduction to Economics, Introduction to Political Science, Methods in Social Sciences, Turkish I.

2. Semester: English II, Introduction to International Relations, Introduction to Law, Introduction to Sociology, Mathematics, Public Administration, Turkish II.

3. Semester: Diplomatic History I, History of Atatürk's principles and reforms I, History of Ottoman diplomacy, History of Political Thinking I, Statistics, Turkish Constitutional Law.

4. Semester: Contemporary Political Ideologies, Diplomatic History II, History of Atatürk's principles and reforms II, History of Political Thinking II, Introduction to the European Union, Introduction to Turkish Politics.

5. Semester: Administrative Structure of Turkey, Comparative Political Systems, Export Politics in Turkey, International Law I, International Organizations, Lobbying, Logistic Service Marketing, Organizational Behaviour (Elective Course III – Out of Field), Planning and Management on Public Relations, Political behaviour, Public Relations Authorship, Regional Balkan Studies, Social Psychology I, Theories of International Relations, U.S. Foreign Policy.

6. Semester: Communication Theories, European Security and Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Analysis, Human rights, International Law II, International Economy Politics, International Security Issues in Asia, Politics in Media, Public Relations Practice and Case Studies, Radio and Television Journalism, Social Psychology II, Conflict Analysis.

7. Semester: Contemporary Issues in International Relations, European Security and Foreign Policy (Elective III), International Lobbying, Political Economy of International Relations, Politics and Gender (Elective), Regional Studies: Middle East (Elective I), Social Policies (Elective I), State Building process in Central Asia, Eurasian Studies, Turkish-American Studies, Turkish Foreign Policy I.

8. Semester: Foreign policy of the People's Republic of China, Contemporary Issues in Turkish Politics, Democracy and Identity Policies (Elective), Diplomatic correspondence, Entrepreneurship, EU – Turkey Relations (Elective III), Final Project, Political behaviours, Political campaigns, Professional English IV, Turkish Foreign Policy II, US Foreign Policy (Elective I).

Students graduating from the Political Science and International Relations programmes are expected to have the following competencies: They should be able to

— draw conceptual and theoretical connections between past and present political and diplomatic cases and to make forecasts for the future.

— review literature to analyse cases in the field of Political Science and International Relations and to use this information for personal studies.

— use the latest technology to process descriptive and exploratory research and to use this information for personal studies.

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

Experts' Evaluation

Overall, the expert team confirms that the aims of the programmes comply with the profile of the university and the department. Moreover, the desired qualifications that should be achieved through the programme are visible when analyzing the curriculum (while not yet fully when looking at the learning outcomes) Recognizing that most Bachelor-programmes in Europe in the field of Political Science cover three years only, the degree awarded to the graduates corresponds to the learning outcomes and the requirements of a comparable four-year BA study programme in Europe. It therefore fits prominently in the European Qualification Framework.

The curriculum is well documented. The teaching methods as well as the general statements about the student assessment follow international standards (except for the BA thesis – see below). The one-year English language course at the beginning of the programme is well taken. The student workload for each course is documented clearly. The number of working hours in class as well as the total number of working hours per week is calculated for all elements of the programmes. Moreover, clear information is given on the number of ECTS credits for all modules/courses. The experts positively recognize that the order of the curricular courses support the student's learning progression (i.e. introductory courses during the first semesters, followed by elective courses in the third and fourth year).

In spite of these positive aspects, some missing elements can be identified that would positively sharpen the profile of the programmes and the expert-team strongly suggests to add some of the elective courses to the required section (i.e. political behaviour; state building processes; regional studies; politics and media) and transfer some subject specific courses to the electives (i.e. contemporary political ideologies; history of political thought II; diplomatic history II). Overall, there should be more "political science" modules in the specific (core) programme such as Comparative Politics (see above) or Public Policy **(Finding 2)**.

A second suggestion is related to the methodology courses. According to the expert-team the methodological training is not yet fully sufficient with regards to the subject specific methodology. The courses on "Mathematics", "Research Methods in Social Sciences" and "Statistics" should clearly reflect that these are courses on quantitative methods, on qualitative methods and on research design in political science/international relations (i.e. applied subject-specific methods) The experts believe that this issue is not a question of documentation but requires a redesign of these courses in order to fulfill the requirements of the programmes under review **(Finding 3)**.

Generally speaking the defined learning outcomes of both programmes could be more specific **(Finding 4)**. On course level, some descriptions are truly helpful while others are quite vague and unspecific. The experts are optimistic that newly implemented quality assurance structures will lead to a more equal level of learning outcome descriptions. However, in both programmes the curriculum description provides no clear information about the exchange between teaching and research in political science/international relations. It is, for instance, not evident how students are involved in research activities of staff members. The expert-team therefore suggests documenting more clearly in which courses the competencies for scientific skills are trained to generate a good research environment **(Finding 5)**.

The expert-team also suggests including a "mobility window" for outgoing and/or incoming international students (preferably in the third year) or alternatively the possibility for internships. This must ideally be integrated into the module structure. Faculty members should actively support their students to study abroad in one of the many international programmes of Gelişim University **(Finding 6)**.

Critical reflection should be given to the fact that there is no final BA Thesis required in the programmes. While this practice is acceptable following the national regulations it is crucial to recognize that most students at European universities develop their final "writing skills" by finishing a BA thesis. Since these skills need to be developed in the programmes under review in short papers and essays that are required in some courses can only be a precondition for achieving excellent "writing qualifications". The future development of the programmes should pay increased attention to paper writing as a form of exam as these skills are an essential requirement of the labour market for graduates in political science and international relations **(Finding 7)**.

Conclusion

The criterion is partly fulfilled.

The study programmes have a clear structure and the desired qualifications should be achieved by the programmes. The overall impression of the expert panel is that Political Science and International Relations (Turkish & English) is comparable to similar programmes within Europe. Nonetheless, the programmes have some shortcomings regarding its structure which should be solved by integrating the above-mentioned courses in the mandatory programmes' structure. In addition to this, by integrating a "mobility window" in the curriculum IGU would strengthen the internationality of the programme and IGU's students would gain important international experience.

2.2 Sociology

Description

The curriculum of the programme in Sociology consists of 240 CP. 150 of them are composed by the compulsory courses and 90 of them are composed by elective courses. 24 CP of the elective courses are composed by the non-field elective courses. All elective courses are placed in the third and fourth year of studies.

Within the first two years, students of Sociology will have completed their major courses and most of the academic core courses, whereas year 3 and 4 focus some academic core courses and the elective courses.

A typical pathway of the study programme can be shown as followed:

1. Semester: Introduction to Philosophy, Mathematics, General Psychology, Introduction to Political Science, Introduction to Sociology I, Turkish Language I, English I.

2. Semester: Introduction to Philosophy II, History of Psychology, Introduction to Sociology II, Sociology of Institutions, Social Anthropology, Turkish Language II, English II.

3. Semester: History of Atatürk's principles and reforms I, Statistics I, History of Sociology I, Sociology of Gender and Family, Quantitative Research Methods, Sociology of Education, Sociology of Youth.

4. Semester: History of Atatürk's principles and reforms II, Statistics II, History of Sociology II, Sociology of Industry and Work, Sociology of Religion, Social Stratification, Qualitative Research Methods.

5. Semester: Contemporary Sociological Theories, Sociology of Media, Electives.

6. Semester: Political Sociology, Electives.

7. Semester: Academic Core Courses, Electives.

8. Semester: Urban Sociology, Electives.

Students graduating in the Sociology programme are expected to have the following competencies: They should be able to

— Evaluate social facts in a sociological context,

— have social and cultural empathy,

— apply the research methods in social sciences,

— apply qualitative research techniques,

— apply quantitative research techniques,

— apply techniques of analyzing data in social sciences.

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

Experts' Evaluation

Generally, the Sociology programme is set up well and the combination of courses seems reasonable when looking at the development of qualification in graduates that is demanded by the market. However, particularly in comparison to the *Political Science and International Relations* programmes, *Sociology* has not yet achieved the required level when it comes to the definition of its learning outcomes. Most of the intended learning outcomes (e.g. "evaluating social facts in a sociological context" or "having social and cultural empathy") are inexplicit and loosely defined. Thus, the expert panel highly recommends that the intended learning outcomes of the programme should be defined more specifically including more state-of-the-art concepts and theoretical approaches (**compare Finding 4**).

For instance, formulated learning outcomes such as "applying quantitative research techniques and techniques of analyzing data in social sciences" are referring to the same set of skills and must be stated in a less general way, whereas learning outcomes such as "applying the research methods in social sciences and applying techniques of analyzing data in social sciences" could be formulated better as "acquainting students with qualitative and quantitative research methods". By defining the learning outcomes in more precise manner, the programme would benefit and would prevent possible overlaps and imprecise categorizations. Following this principle, the relation between the curricular structure and the learning outcomes would be more visible.

In its current design, the programme emphasizes on empirical social research methods regarding its learning outcomes but in fact qualitative and quantitative research methods are not taught after the second year. An introductory course covering a wide-range of research methods would familiarize the students with different research approaches. This would be very beneficial toward the

end of the programme. Specialized courses on quantitative and qualitative methods would also create a solid foundation for sociological analysis. The expert panel has also observed that the stakeholders seek after these skills in IGU graduates. Hence it can be concluded that the methodological education in the programme requires a more structured approach that better fits to the improved version of intended learning outcomes **(Finding 8)**.

The expert group initially believed that there is an over-emphasis on philosophy courses which usually is not common in sociology curricula. Yet, during the site visit the expert panel understood that philosophy courses are necessary to fulfill the requirements for obtaining teaching qualifications for social sciences and sociology teachers at middle and high school levels in Turkey. Recognizing this context these curricular elements fit well, however, it came as a surprise to the experts as this career option was not very transparent in the description of the programme.

The number of elective courses is very low and should be increased, and the programme is structured in such a manner that students can only begin taking electives quite late (only in their third year). The programme would be improved by including elective courses already in the second year, especially complimentary electives, which are electives from neighboring disciplines such as Political Science, Psychology, Public Administration, and Economy **(Finding 9).**

As to the departmental electives, while there are quite a few of them on course or curriculum lists, they are not offered in a manner to allow students to actually choose from them. The number of electives that are actually offered each semester is quite limited and should be increased in order to keep the character of electives and allow students a real choice (**compare to Finding 9**). Nonetheless, this issue is of an organic nature related to the issue of limits of the academic staff. The number of departmental electives cannot be increased with the current number of faculty members without actually increasing the course load of the permanent academic staff. Likewise, it has to be pointed out that the expert panel highly recommends not increasing the course load of permanent academic staff without amplifying the existing staff, but by including other departments potential to increase the selection of elective courses **(compare to Finding 9)**. Following this path would also create time for research for the actual teaching staff. Yet, a restructuring that would allow neighboring departments to be able to cooperate with one another, especially in enabling students to take electives from neighboring departments, would increase the number of choices for the students without necessarily substantially increasing the number of academic staff or course loads. This can be carried a step further by creating the mechanisms for allowing students to take courses from different faculties, too. Thus, a more permeable structure within faculties among different departments and cooperation among different faculties would be very beneficial. In this context, the expert panel recognizes that this would probably require a change of some policies within IGU, however, the panel believes that increased cooperation and coordination between departments will be of benefit for the whole university.

To strengthen the internationality of its students, IGU should also consider the possibility of internships and a "mobility window" for incoming/outgoing students when further developing the programme (**compare to Finding 6**).

Conclusion

The criterion is substantively fulfilled.

After redefining and streamlining the learning outcomes and an adjustment of the teaching of methods the programme will be in line with the expectations towards a bachelor programme in Sociology. An increase in the number of truly available elective courses will further make the programme more attractive to students.

2.3 Political Science and Public Administration

Description

The curriculum of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration consists of 240 CP. 180 of them are composed by the compulsory courses and 60 of them are composed by elective courses. 18 CP of the elective courses are composed by the non-field elective courses. The elective courses comprise course for example with juridical-administrative character (e.g. Law of Property and Inheritance, Tax Law and Turkish Tax System or Comparative Public Administration) or are non-field courses (e.g. Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Psychology or Sociology). The study programme has in total 22 academic core courses, 13 major courses and 11 elective courses (which can be either non-departmental or departmental elective courses). The major courses will be completed within the first two years (semester 1–4), whereas the elective courses will be taken in the last two years (semester 5–8).

A typical pathway can be structured as followed:

1. Semester: English I, Introduction to Political Science, Introduction to Public Administration, Methods in Social Sciences, Microeconomics, Turkish I.

2. Semester: English II, General Law, History of Political Though, Introduction to Sociology, Macroeconomics, Turkish II.

3. Semester: Administrative Law, History of Atatürk's principles and reforms I, Introduction to Constitutional Law, Management and Organization, Political Behaviour, Public Finance.

4. Semester: EU and Turkey, History of Atatürk's principles and reforms II, History of International Relations, International Law, Public Diplomacy, Turkish Public Administration.

5. Semester: Contemporary Democracy Theories, Regional Policies, Urbanization and Environmental Issues,

6. Semester: Local Administrations, State and Civil Society, Turkish Constitutional Law

7. Semester: Global Environmental Policies, Society and Politics, The State's Private Law

8. Semester: Information Technologies in Public and E-Government, Project Management, Thesis.

Students who graduated from Political Science and Public Administration Department are expected to have the following competencies:

- to draw practical, conceptual and theoretical connections between past and present political and public issues and policies,

- to be able to review literature to conduct studies on politics and administration,

- to understand power dynamics of local and national politics at individual, organizational and interorganizational levels,

- to understand structure and operations of public agencies and democratic decision-making and implementation processes,

- to develop a fair understanding of local, national and global policy issues,

- to analyze and understand political and administrative behaviour.

Experts' Evaluation

Overall, the expert team confirms that the aims of the programme comply with the aims of the university in general and the department in particular which – from the experts' point of view – presents both advantages and challenges.

After being informed of typical career paths in the Turkish public sector, the expert panel acknowledges that the current design of the programme strongly meets labour market needs. It was confirmed in different discussions that a central factor of success in the public administration field is the preparation for centralized exams, such as the 'KPSS', which grant access to jobs in the Turkish public sector. This finding is also strongly reflected in discussions with second semester students of the programme, the majority of which based their choice of IGU on the expectation to be offered a position in the public sector after graduation. Remarkably, it appeared that the student body did not base these expectations on the course topics or subjects offered by the programme but rather on the reputation of key-players in the field of Turkish public administration who are currently staff members at IGU.

On the one hand, these findings demonstrate a very high level of trust of the addressees in the programme; on the other hand they also reveal the challenges faced by the programme when it comes to the fulfilment of relevant criteria for an academic accreditation procedure.

Firstly, the quality of the intended learning outcomes varies greatly. While some offer a clear perspective of what is to be expected by the subjects taught, others are rather inexplicit in nature and loosely defined. Thus, the expert panel highly recommends reviewing the intended learning outcomes of the programme **(compare to Finding 4)**. By defining the learning outcomes in a more precise manner, possible overlaps could be detected and corrected which would allow for some replacements of classes in the curriculum.

This is very important since, secondly – to prevent the impression that the programme in question is viewed rather as a preparation for an exam than an academic programme – the panel strongly recommends adding managerial classes from the field of (New) Public Management to the curriculum **(Finding 10)**. These topics do not only offer a more theoretical approach to the latest challenges faced by the public sector, but they would also offer a fruitful supplementation of the current rather law-intensive classes. Quite a few potential topics (e.g. change management, strategic management) are currently found in the list of departmental electives. Unfortunately, the course description is very generic and the specifics of the public sector are neither addressed in the intended learning outcomes nor in the list of topics. Instead, the module description dominantly refers to (private?) businesses instead of public sector entities.

Adding to this, according to the expert's opinion, the number of listed electives is quite high compared to the number of teaching staff available. This leads to the reasonable concern that most of electives will not or cannot be currently offered and underlines the expert's suggestion to integrate management-related courses into the mandatory part of the curriculum.

Thirdly, the expert panel strongly recommends strengthening the research profile of the department of Public Administration. The currently available staff is highly involved in administrative duties of the university which puts a natural limit to research activities in their teaching field. Other staff has an excellent background in practice of Turkish public administration. Hence the link between research and teaching in the study programme is rather weak at this time. Consequently, the implementation of current (own) research in the teaching process should be a priority for the future. The expert panel recognizes likewise that strengthening the research profile of the department requires a significant increase of faculty members in the near future as these issues are clearly connected. While at this time the teaching capacity is adequate for the current development of the programme, the time required for development of staffs' research and its integration into the programme is limited by the high teaching load.

Fourthly, as already stated for the other study programmes under review, the expert-team also suggests defining a clear "mobility window" for outgoing and/or incoming students **(compare to Finding 6)**. This calls for the implementation of at least two or three modules taught in English, which are eligible for recognition by the universities of visiting students. Again, the introduction of core elements of Public Management could be helpful in this context. Moreover, faculty members should actively foster the idea of student participating in one of the many international programmes of Gelişim University by enabling them to read academic literature from the field of Public Administration/Public Management and write texts in English.

Last but not least, recognizing the limits of external regulations, IGU should also consider the possibility of mandatory internships for their students in this programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is substantively fulfilled.

With some curricular adjustments and clearly formulated outcomes the programme meets the requirements of the criterion.

3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

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

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

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

[ESG 1.3]

Description

Learning, Teaching

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

The curriculum is conveyed most often via seminars, according to the university. Instructors encourage mutual interaction and assign presentations for oral practice. Students receive readings and assignments for self-study. Teaching is supposed to be student-centered and proactive.

Distance education complements regular class hours. As outlined in the self-evaluation report, several courses are delivered face-to-face as well as digitally, among those Turkish, English and "Principles of Atatürk".

Assessment

Instructors decide on the examination type and evaluation tool. The "Associate Degree and Undergraduate Education-Training and Examination Regulations" allow for exams, homework, application, quiz, report, presentation, verbal assessment, thesis presentation, document presentation, expert appraisal and computer-assisted presentation. Exams are supposed to be made with a mixed system consisting of open ended and close-ended questions. In addition, assignments, presentations and active participation in class are graded and form part of the overall student assessment. The ratio to be taken into account in evaluating student's success is provided by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Special examinations for students with disabilities are offered.

Examinations take place mid-term and end-of-term. A Planning Unit bears responsibility for the organization of the examinations. Times and locations are published on the student information system OBIS. Make-up exams for excused students are offered.

Experts' Evaluation

Methods of teaching and learning used in both programmes are appropriate and aim for the Intended Learning Outcomes which are – as it has been stated – formulated in a very general manner. However, also after their revision, the experts believe that the teaching and learning methods will be equally suitable. One reason for this is that the methods used also consider the students' needs and are adapted if necessary. To give an example, following the wishes of many students in Sociology who wanted to pursue a teaching career, methods as well as content were adapted accordingly. A limited number of courses with a high number of attending students are offered via long-distance learning while the majority of courses are held face-to-face. Furthermore, student-driven projects as well as student presentations followed by in-class-discussions actively include students and enable them to take an active role in the learning process. According to the teaching staff, students are encouraged to develop their own perspective and form their own output. The discussions with students positively confirmed this assumption.

When it comes to assessment, all regulations, procedures and requirements are documented online and are available. They follow the regulations of YÖK and are specified through own internal university regulations, and it seems that IGU has chosen to apply YÖK's regulations on grading and assessment quite strictly, putting limitations to flexibility. Course-specific details about examinations are announced in the beginning of each course. While the assessment methods in general are appropriate, the overall grade mainly consists of the results from the midterm and final exam, which are mostly written exams, e.g. multiple-choice tests or essays. While other examination types may be used to during the course, they contribute little or nothing at all to the final grade since internal university regulations restrict a wider variety of other examination methods in midterm and final exams. They only give the possibility that up to 30% of the midterm and 10% of the final exam score are contributions by forms of assessment other than a written exam. However, it is important that other examination methods such as presentations, papers and oral exams are also included in the midterm and final assessment of students, especially during the third and fourth year of study. It needs to be stressed that using different kinds of assessment fosters relevant (soft) skills for the work and academic environment. Consequently, the current practice can be assessed as an acceptable minimum with regards to variety of examination forms. However, when refining the learning outcomes the question of assessment of the required competencies should be considered and alternative examination forms should become possible. This way, professors may assign their students to write papers or to give oral presentations in place of written midterm or final examinations. Sociology students should write more papers, do more oral presentations, and engage in more group projects to develop the soft skills that are sought after by the stakeholders among university graduates (**Finding 11**).

The organization of exams follows a consistent pattern: The exams usually take place during one or two weeks, which are announced with the academic calendar. The exact exam times are made public in the week prior to the exams. Should there be an overlap, e.g. in the case of double major students where two exams take place at the same time, arrangements can be made with the teaching staff to find an alternative date. Compensation regulations for students with special needs are in place. For failed courses, the university offers make-up exams as well as summer schools. At this time only limited long-term data regarding examinations is available as the programmes are still relatively young.

Apart from that, students are also encouraged to transfer their academic knowledge to different contexts. This is especially facilitated not only through projects and fieldwork, but also student clubs and conferences. Altogether, methods of teaching and learning support theoretical as well

as practical approaches to the subjects at hand, even though the assessment methods should include more practical approaches. However, the teaching staff is committed to include both aspects as much as it fits in the course and its learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The criterion is substantially fulfilled.

Methods of teaching and assessment are transparent and the teaching staff is committed to the (individual) needs and growth of students. Nonetheless, the assessment methods, especially those of midterm and final exams should be more varied in order to familiarize students with a broad spectrum of examination types.

4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

[ESG 1.4]

Description

Admittance to the study programme

Admission to the programmes is based on a central examination system regulated by the national Council of Higher Education. The requirement for admission to Gelişim University is a pre-defined score in the Transition to Higher Education Examination and the Undergraduate Placement Examination. Furthermore, students must pass a foreign language proficiency test if a programme is offered in English. Opportunities for transition to IGU from vocational high schools or other higher education institutions are subject to the "Regulations on Transfer among Associate and Undergraduate Degree Programs, Double Major, and Subspecialty and the Principles of Credit Transfer among Institutions in Higher Education Institutions".

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

Progression

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

Creditation and recognition

Istanbul Gelişim University is part of the European Higher Education Area and applies ECTS credits to all its study programmes. ECTS credits and workload are assigned on the basis of the weekly course hours, midterm and final exams as well as other assignments, laboratory work, seminars and other learning component. In addition, IGU uses local credits.

Outgoing students sign a learning agreement and receive full academic recognition of their courses taken abroad. According to the university, ECTS credits transfer is guaranteed. Likewise, incoming students receive a Transcript of Records with ECTS credits and grades for recognition at their home institution.

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

Certification

Students receive a Diploma Supplement on completion of their studies in English and Turkish. The Diploma is based on the model developed by the European Commission, the Council of Eu-

rope and UNESCO and provides a standardized description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies completed by its holder.

Experts' Evaluation

Formal requirements for admission are clearly defined and available in published form, according to national regulations, and data is available on students' admissions, progression and completion. Specific language prerequisites relevant for an individual study programme are published in admissions criteria, supplemented by a year of English language training prior to the regular course of study (for programmes taught in English language), and thus reflect substantive qualities needed for the English language programmes.

The selection procedure for the study programme follows defined criteria and procedures that are publicly available, yet centrally regulated by YÖK. The admission and placement of students is entirely dependent on established entrance quotas and the results of YÖK's placement test. Students with the best scores get their first choice of the university and department they want to study at. Consequently, universities in Turkey cannot choose students on their own, although departments can have an additional specific qualifying examination, such as English language requirements.

Regulations for recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, previous periods of study, and prior learning are in place and are documented in a legally binding form available to students.

Currently, student progression at IGU is strictly regulated to focus on mid-term and final exams as the main method of student assessment.

A number of learning agreements are in place to facilitate the mobility of students. It can be stated that institutionally the framework for international exchange is well set and tools are prepared, in the next step these regulations need to be used more frequently in practice.

Graduates receive diploma documentation explaining the qualification gained, including context, level, and status of the studies. As described above, due to the necessity of a clearer documentation of the programmes' learning outcomes this also effects the diploma supplements whichin their current form do no reflect the qualification appropriately (Finding 11). However, it is noted that as the English language Political Science and International Relations programme was only initiated in 2014, there have not yet been any graduates at the time of the accreditation process (November 2017).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

For the IGU degree courses under review, consistently applied, pre-defined, published regulations are in place, which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification. Nevertheless and to the intended international scope of the university, it would be beneficial to invest more into English language course (as already planned by IGU). In order to do this, international exchange might be improved through the strategic promotion of Erasmus programmes at home and abroad (for example, amongst the Turkish student populations abroad) and/or by loosening language requirements for incoming and outgoing students. Erasmus quotas/scholarships might also be divided more equally across departments and not solely divided based on grades and language exam results. Moreover, more flexibility in recognition of the courses taken while abroad might help ensure foreign credits are accepted at IGU and vice-versa, and applied to the course of study.

5. Teaching Staff

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

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

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

[ESG 1.5]

Description

As outlined by the university, human resource management is supported by the "Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Office" with the aim of a consistent distribution and equal workload of members among the faculty. Currently, IGU employs overall 466 full time academic staff, according to the numbers given in the self-evaluation report. Among those are 43 professors, 10 associate professors, 180 assistant professors, 148 teaching assistants, 70 research assistants as well as 15 lecturers. IGU outline that it adheres to a defined process for hiring new staff. Within the scope of the Turkish Higher Education Law, appointment and promotion conditions for higher education institutions are taken as the basis for recruitment and appointment of teaching staff.

Teaching staff for both programmes includes 9 professors with a minimum teaching load of 9 semester week hours. Positions are currently filled with yearly renewal of contracts.

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

Experts' Evaluation

The university has adopted Higher Education Council's recruitment procedures and follows them in hiring academic staff. There are transparent procedures in place for the recruitment and development of the staff. All academic staff involved in teaching is qualified and competent while the quantity of academic staff is currently at the absolute minimum level for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (particularly true for the field of Sociology). It is undoubtedly obvious that with a further increase in student numbers additional staff will be required. At this time the staff situation is marked by a high teaching load and very limited time for research. Hence the university will have to present a concept explaining the planned staff increase in the programmes **(Finding 12)**. The human resources involved in teaching within the programmes is well documented, including their academic and other relevant qualifications. Yet the breakdown of quantitative involvement (teaching hours) in the programmes of each academic staff was not clearly transparent to the experts while this didn't cause any concerns. The teaching load of the individual academic staff members was hard to identify and basically happened during the discussions. It seemed to the experts that there wasn't a clear standard teaching load connecting to different positions and transparency could only be created in the interviews on an individual level per staff member. Probably a standardized and transparent regulation on teaching hours and course loads for academic faculty would contribute to a healthy and even more productive teaching and research environment. In case these standards exist, at least they were not known to the teaching staff.

The problem of the scarcity of the academic staff within the study programme of Sociology and Public Administration could be observed in many aspects of the university functions involved in teaching and research, e.g. the limited number of elective courses that are offered to students, or high course loads of the academic staff **(compare Finding 12)**. It is important to acknowledge that this problem is well understood and recognized by all the echelons of the university administration. The departments are recruiting at all levels (professor, associate professor and assistant professor). Regarding the study programme of Public Administration it is very critical to recruit

scholars with an explicit expertise in the field of managerial aspects of public administration. Those scholars should not only be capable of teaching the respective subjects but to conduct research in these fields.

While the quality of the academic personal fulfils international standards, the contracts of the academic staff seemed to show great variation while most were (formally) limited to one year. For the continuity and stability of the curriculum, however, it seems advisable to implement a core staff of tenured professors that are also offered stability for an increased time. Faculty members receiving longer contracts (e.g. three to five years) would also contribute to guarantee the quality of teaching and research in the study programmes. While the experts recognize that IGU uses common practice in Turkish foundation universities, deviating from this practice would create incentives for staff members and contribute to stability that will benefit the academic developments of the departments (**Finding 13**).

Conclusion

The criterion is substantively fulfilled.

The current staff situation reflects an acceptable minimum. Gelişim University needs to find and develop creative incentives to make this university attractive especially for young scholars and to amplify the teaching staff particularly of the *S*ociology and the Public Administration study programmes. By increasing the teaching staff, including other departments into the curricular structure and a stable environment for the academic staff, IGU allows also room for long term research projects. Through these activities study programmes will also benefit in a holistic manner.

6. Learning Resources and Student Support

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

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

[ESG 1.6]

Description

Facilities and resources

IGU is distributed over 3 campuses in the neighbourhood of Avcilar, Istanbul. Overall, facilities shall comprise 24.400 m^2 of indoor areas with classrooms, conference rooms, reading rooms and exhibition rooms. Students can benefit from 13 fully equipped computer laboratories and several libraries, as defined by the university. In addition, the campuses host cafeterias, health centres, a fitness club and a radio and television studio.

Students can access learning material and online courses via a Learning Management System provided by IGU. A Student Information System and a Student Mail System facilitate registration and the information exchange. The Department of Information Technology monitors all soft- and hardware systems and IT areas for students and staff.

IGU Library and Documentation Centre currently contains ca. 115.000 items of learning material, including electronic sources such as E-Books and online journals. The seating capacity amounts to 200. According to the university, the library and documentation centre is designed to meet all kinds of information and documentation requirements of its students, academic and administrative staff.

The study programme is financed mainly by tuition fees. According to IGU, the financial resources of the university are determined and distributed in the budget period every year considering the physical and technical requirements for the sustainability of programmes as well as student and teaching staff numbers.

<u>Information, consultation and guidance</u>

Information to interested students is distributed in so-called Promotion Days, in which the university presents its programmes and schools. During registration, students receive guidance and support by the Directorate of Public Affairs as well as by the Head and research assistants.

According to the self-evaluation report, IGU aims to support students' individual, social and academic development during university life. The university applies an academic advisor support system in which advisors help students with all academic as well as administrative issues during their studies. Instructors offer regular consultation hours. The university highlights the Psychological Guidance, Counselling and Research Center, the Centre for Continuing Education as well as the Office of Career Development as further support units which offer guidance in personal as well as professional development and growth of students.

Among the services offered by the Office of Career Development are consultation, seminars and conferences, the invitation of experts and specialists as well as the allocation of internships. The Psychological Guidance, Counselling and Research Center holds meetings, seminars and organizes social activities to help students adapt.

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

The university offers assistance to a diverse student body: Working students benefit from courses carried out via distance education. International students receive support by the International Relations Office, which organizes an orientation programme and offers guidance concerning visa and other administrative issues. Students with disabilities are supported by a Disabled Student Unit within the framework of the "IGU Regulation on the Advisory and Coordination of Higher Education Institutions". The unit provides guidance and makes arrangements to facilitate the student life of disabled students. For example, special examinations are offered which address the individual need of the student. According to the university, the campus and its facilities are suitable for disabled students.

IGU actively supports students in their effort to found student clubs and student councils. Moreover, it organizes summer schools and conferences. These bodies invite various experts and specialists from private and public sectors to the university and they also organize technical visits.

Experts' Evaluation

A detailed general overview of courses is provided by the university's online platform which includes all information necessary. The courses offered do not overlap in an unfavourable manner; they are rather built subsequently as consecutive courses. The transparency and evident course of study enable students to complete their studies within the expected four years. Summer schools are another instrument for students to catch up on the courses they might have missed or failed. As already discussed, ERASMUS or a year abroad is the main reason for the few cases when the duration of the studies is extended.

Learning Resources

The IGU is well equipped with material resources such as computer laboratories with relevant and up-to-date software and hardware which facilitate productive student work and research. Rooms are appropriate for the size of the courses and for courses with a large audience, well-equipped distance-learning facilities are in place. Besides, additional workspaces and hard copies of important literature are available in the library. The university also owns licences for relevant journals and academic sources which can even be accessed by the students from their home. More-

over, additional literature can always be requested by students and teaching staff and is usually acquired without any problems.

Student Support Services

As discussions on site have shown, students feel very well-informed about the programmes and their opportunities during orientation and prior to beginning their studies. Most importantly however, a well-developed institutionalized student advisory service is in place. While student services offer help with administrative requests and are fully institutionalized, students are also assigned a publicly announced student advisor for individual and programme-associated questions. The students-per-advisor ratio depends on the total number of students and is currently appropriate.

Additionally, not only teaching staff pursues an open-door policy when it comes to students but the dean can also be approached by students – even without an appointment. The students noted the support with great appreciation. This is not only the case for academic-related individual requests but also for student clubs. Student activities receive support through the university, either financially or logistically. Besides, the students have a representative in the respective bodies of the university as an instrument to express their opinion.

Incoming foreign students at IGU - while low in numbers - are not only offered a scholarship but also a room in the dormitories. They also profit from the student services proved through the staff of the university. Outgoing students, participating in the ERASMUS programme, conferences or doing a language course abroad are eligible to receive additional scholarships.

While internships and practical phases are neither mandatory nor do they award any credits, students are supported in finding internships. The university, in particular the Career Department, and alumni serve as a contact point between the students and stakeholders as well as other institutions and companies.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

Not only did the management, deanship and the teaching staff explain the different student support systems but the students praised it as well. They were satisfied with the support they receive in various areas such as internships, student clubs as well as individual needs.

7. Information

> *Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme. [ESG 1.7]*
>
> *Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders. [ESG 1.8]*

Description

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

The university publishes information on study programmes on its website. Students and staff receive information via the Student Information System, the Student Mail System and the Personnel Information System. The university confirms that it collects data on students' profiles and progres-

sion, their satisfaction as well as on the effectiveness of teachers with the help of an information system.

Experts' Evaluation

Course descriptions and other relevant documents are readily available in the respective teaching language of the programmes.

Through contacts with various stakeholders and through the university's relevant focal points (Office of Career Development), information on the labour market requirements is collected and analysed. A generally comprehensible description of potential employment fields for graduates is available and provided on the IGU website. Information is available in printed form in the entry area of the IGU campus on sectors graduates are employed in; data is also available on how many graduates continue in further education programmes (Master-, PhD-programmes etc.).

Data and information is collected in an appropriate way through the online monitoring system on composition of the study programmes' student body, the duration of studies, average GPA, rate of completion or success rate, reasons for non-completion, and other relevant information. However, neither analysis of this information nor the changes in the study programme resulting from such analysis are yet readily available. As programmes are quite new this can be understood at this point.

Curriculum documentation (including course descriptions and requirements) is available in various published and online media and information is publically available in Turkish and partially in English. Recognizing that such information requires frequent updates, the experts found that information on the degree programmes should be consistent across media and should easily be found online. Currently, consistency and accuracy should be improved as many documents presented to the expert contained partially contradicting information which made it necessary to clarify many issues during the site visit. Evidence for effective and efficient data collection and their use for programme improvement are still vague on the institutionalized level and could only be found when discussing individual cases. Clearly the system is still under development in accordance with the quick growth of the university. Regular monitoring of critical information and performance indicators could be honed by an introduction of an online published annual report. Quality Commission decisions and the implementation of these might be made publically available in a summarized form to ensure that the analysis of information collected and the resulting changes in the study programme are clearly documented. Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications should be made partially available in published form appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders, especially in English. In this field it should be recognized that information used for external/promotional purposes and academic self-documentation partly differ – not by providing evidently wrong information, but possibly due to different translations leading to potentially different understandings in different audiences. To enhance the presentation of the study programmes for the public and on an international level, all relevant documents might be translated and edited in a uniform and consistent manner **(Finding 14).**

Conclusion

The criterion is substantively fulfilled.

With a more uniform and consistent approach towards editing and translating publicly available documents IGU will further improve their public impression.

Recommendations of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to accredit with conditions the study programmes

- **"Political Science and International Relations" (Turkish and English),**

- **"Sociology",**

- **"Political Sciences and Public Administration"**

offered by **Istanbul Gelişim University.**

Findings

1. Internal Quality Assurance procedures should also cover the level of learning outcomes at programme level.

2. For both "Political Science and International Relations" programmes there should be more "political science" modules in the specific (core) programme, e.g. by readjusting compulsory and elective courses.

3. For both "Political Science and International Relations" programmes the teaching of methodological competencies needs to be redesigned to increase relevance for the programmes.

4. For all programmes course descriptions and learning outcomes have to be improved to achieve completeness, specificity and coherence.

5. For both "Political Science and International Relations" programmes the documentation should be improved to specify how courses contribute to the development of scientific competencies and skills generating a good research environment.

6. The introduction of a "mobility window" could help to improve internationalization of all four programmes.

7. The use of alternative examination forms (e.g. analysis, writing papers and oral presentations) for mid-term and/or final exams should be increased.

8. In the "Sociology" programme the methodological education has to be redefined and improved towards a more structured approach.

9. In the "Sociology" programme the number of elective courses should be increased and also selection from neighboring departments should be possible.

10. In the "Political Science and Public Administration" programme, managerial classes from the field of (New) Public Management have to be added to the curriculum.

11. For all programmes adequate diploma supplements have to be presented explaining the specific qualification of the students and reflecting the achieved learning outcomes.

12. IGU has to present a concept explaining the planned staff increase in all four programmes.

13. To increase the continuity of the teaching staff the personnel should get contracts for more than one year.

14. Relevant documents for public information should be translated and edited in a uniform and consistent manner.