

Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the study programmes:

“Psychology” (B.A.), Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences (English programme)

“Psychology” (B.A.), Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences (Turkish programme)

offered by Istanbul Gelişim University, Turkey

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

1. The study programmes **“Psychology” (Bachelor of Arts, English programme)** and **“Psychology” (Bachelor of Arts, Turkish programme)** offered by the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences of **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**.

Conditions:

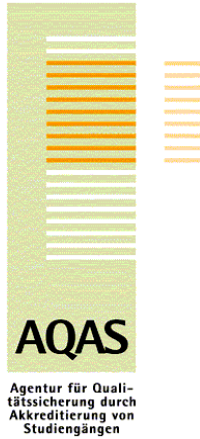
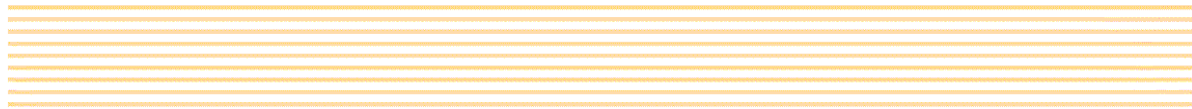
1. The training and application of statistical and testing methods have to be strengthened.
2. Course descriptions have to be revised in order to achieve transparency and coherence: Content and workload have to be provided consistently; learning outcomes need to be described in more detail with regard to knowledge and skills.

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. Sources for external feedback should be expanded, e. g. by increasing the variety of labour market cooperation partners.
2. The curriculum should provide a fairer balance between the different fields of psychology; a bias towards the clinical sector should be avoided.
3. In order to provide a fairer balance between the clinical field and other areas of psychology, future full-time academic staff should be recruited from the group of graduated psychologists.
4. Further opportunities for practical applications including the practice of oral skills should be provided to students in courses.
5. The Guidelines of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations should be considered when further developing the curriculum.
6. The availability of literature should be improved, especially that of material in English.

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



Experts' Report

on the bachelor degree programmes:

“Psychology” (Bachelor of Arts; English programme)

“Psychology” (Bachelor of Arts; Turkish programme)

offered by Istanbul Gelişim University

Visit to the University: October 11–14, 2017

Panel of Experts:

Prof. Dr. A. Esra Aslan	Istanbul University, Hasan Ali Yucel Education Faculty, Turkey
Prof. Dr. em. Hans Markowitsch	University of Bielefeld, Department of Psychology and Sport Science, Germany
Prof. Dr. Biran Mertan	Developmental Psychologist, Gazimagusa, Northern Cyprus (representative of the labour market)
Daniela Decker	Student at the University Koblenz-Landau, Germany (student expert)

Coordination:

Dr. Dorothee Groeger, Ronny Heintze AQAS, Cologne, Germany

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

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

I. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the bachelor programmes in “Psychology” 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.

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

The appendix included e.g. an overview over statistical data of the student body, CVs of the teaching staff, information on student services, core information on the main library as well as the undergraduate academic regulations

AQAS checked the SER draft for completeness, comprehensibility and transparency. The final version of the SER was handed in in September 2017.

The accreditation procedure has been 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. Involved are consequently representatives from the respective discipline/s, the labour market and students. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

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

Site visit

After review of the Self Evaluation Report, the site visit to the university took place from October 11 - 14, 2017. On site, the experts interviewed in separate discussions different stakeholders, such as the management of the university, the programme management, teaching and other staff as well as students, and consulted additional documentation as well as examples of graded work from students' achievements. The visit concluded with presenting preliminary findings by the experts to the university's representatives.

Report writing

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

Decision

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

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

II. General Information on the University

Gelişim University is a non-profit 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 and a number of 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 as well as School of Health Sciences.

The university pursues the goal of becoming an international education and learning institution by running joint projects with internationally recognised 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. It supports international student exchange programmes. 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 Counselling 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 participates in the Erasmus+ programme and encourages student and staff mobility. As outlined by the university, the number of European partner institutions is currently 73. The International Relations Office takes responsibility for the organization of mobility programmes.

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 have the opportunity for a double major degree. Graduate and PhD programmes complement the undergraduate education. The Faculty is governed by a Dean.

III. 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

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

The establishment of the quality assurance system of the university is based on ISO 9000 Quality Management System, TS EN ISO-9001: 2015, Higher Education Law No. 2547 and "Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation". The aims, mission and vision of the university are determined according to these criteria and their appropriateness is supposed to be measured.

Feedback of internal and external stakeholders shall 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 departments. 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. Additionally, an Office of Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance has been implemented which is working in coordination with the commission. The main performance indicators set at Istanbul Gelişim University are: A) Number of Programmes, b) Number of Students, c) Number of Academic Personnel, d) Rate of fullness, e) Number of Programmes teaching in English, f) Erasmus Mobility, g) Student Activities, h) Number of Research Sources, and i) Scientific Publication Numbers of Staff.

A student council offers 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 of study programmes and acknowledged by the Senate.

Furthermore, several measures are considered to be in place to monitor a programme's quality: regular course and teaching staff assessment questionnaires as well as student assessment and internship evaluation questionnaires. As mentioned above, the university obtains data covering various activities of its programmes. At the end of term, student's evaluations are said to be taken into account in a success analysis.

Istanbul Gelişim University Graduates and Members Association was established in May 2017 to continue the university's relation with its graduates, to increase information sharing, to foster the graduates' solidarity and to follow-up on their career developments.

Experts' Evaluation

It has become clear from the discussions during the site visit that IGU is strongly committed to further developing its offers and in using quality assurance mechanisms to provide quality education. This approach is followed by all members of the university, the management, teaching and administrative staff as well as students.

The panel of experts could clearly see that the communication between university members is running effectively and respectfully which forms the basis for a profitable quality culture. Responsibilities within the programme and programme elements are clearly defined and transparent to students. The university has well-structured and defined procedures concerning quality assurance, e.g. data collection covering all relevant statistical information about students' progression is in place; decision-making bodies are implemented for the enhancement of quality; course evaluations are mandatory.

The university has been successful in increasing its student number in the recent past and students whom the panel talked to evaluated their programme generally very positively as far as the experts could detect from the talk. Student participation in the further development of the programmes is ensured by their representation in decision-making bodies on all levels. Curricular changes have been made based on the feedback by students, such as the introduction of a course on research methods and statistics. The experts can thus confirm that results of quality assurance procedures lead to concrete measures to enhance quality. As the programmes are relatively new, an alumni network is currently being established. Its concept and the first initiated steps seem appropriate in order to consider feedback of graduates in the near future.

The department could show that there is a vital and strong cooperation with the local labour market in the direct surroundings of the campus which the experts consider very positively. Private

and public institutions such as schools, counselling and rehabilitation centres, special education centres for handicapped children as well as health care facilities offer traineeship opportunities for IGU students as well as research opportunities and facilities for writing a Bachelor thesis. A traineeship protocol could guide students to apply psychological theoretical knowledge coming from various subfields of psychology to practice. At the same time clear guidelines of the protocol could help the host institution to provide appropriate experiences to the trainees. A committee composed of psychology department's academic staff members could organize and supervise the entire process of traineeship. Feedback from the labour market is being collected and considered such as the requirement for further training in working with children with special needs.

However, the scope of the labour market network should be enlarged and widened, geographically as well as concerning the type of cooperating institution. In order to depict a fuller picture of possible employment sectors to students, cooperation projects with industry, social policy actors or companies should be sought. In general, the sources for feedback could be broadened. A subject specific external advisory board, for instance, could be beneficial both to the further development of the programme as well as for the exchange between IGU staff and the scientific community (**Finding 1**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. The study programmes are subject to well-designed and adequate quality assurance procedures and are part of the overall strategic plan of the university. Relevant stakeholders are involved in quality enhancement. However, sources for external feedback should be expanded, e. g. by increasing the scope of labour market cooperation partners.

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]

Description

With the Bachelor programmes in "Psychology" the university pursues the goal to qualify psychologists who are sensitive to the problems of society and who have gained a broad and flexible world view. The programmes shall cover different fields of and current topics in psychology and train students in experimental studies and field research techniques. The duration of study is 8 semesters in which 240 ECTS credits have to be acquired. The programme is offered in both English and Turkish with a comparable curriculum though the range of electives may differ.

The curriculum, as outlined by the university, comprises 46 courses which include general cultural courses and field lessons. In the first 4 semesters, courses are mainly compulsory and cover various topics of psychology, related social sciences as well as research methods. Those include e. g. "Physiological Psychology", "Social Psychology" and "Life-span Developmental Psychology" as well as "Statistics". Language courses and a class on the "History of Ataturk's Principles and Reforms" are mandatory – as nationally prescribed by the Turkish Council of Higher Education YÖK – as well.

In the advanced semesters, students are supposed to choose from a variety of electives which amount to 10 classes. Courses may stem from psychology or other study programmes. Psychology courses include e. g. "Child Psychology", "Psychology of Language" and "Current Issues in Psychology". The pool of non-major electives comprises classes from Economics, Politics or Management, for example. Students may thus sharpen their profile with regard to the career they want to pursue. Mandatory courses in the advanced semesters cover for example "Cognitive Psychology", "Organizational Psychology" and "Psychological Testing". The final semester covers, amongst others, a thesis module.

Cross-subject competences and soft skills shall be conveyed as well, such as the ability to work independently and in a team. Methodological skills are trained in various assignments, presentations, project and group works according to the university. Graduates shall be trained in tools and tests for psychological assessment.

Potential career opportunities for graduates are defined by the university to be various public institutions such as ministries and social services, psychological counselling centres, hospitals and clinics, human resource departments or school counselling services. Students may also pursue an academic career by continuing with graduate education. The curriculum contains, among others, a course on "Ethics in Psychological Applications & Research".

Seminars given by specialists and visiting lecturers shall provide an insight into professional opportunities. Furthermore, the Centre for Career Development supports students in doing a voluntary internship and in offering seminars and conferences.

The programme is run by a Head who is supported by lecturers, research assistants and faculty secretariats in coordinating the programme. A Scientific Committee convenes for the course proposals and approves new ones.

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

The university has without doubt achieved great success in establishing a dynamic, ambitious higher education institution in a relatively short time. The panel of experts welcomes the introduction of the programmes in "Psychology" as the demand for qualified academic staff in the region is relatively high and graduates will certainly encounter favourable career opportunities.

The Turkish and English-speaking programmes are identical in their curricular structure. Programme learning outcomes are defined by the university and include subject-specific as well as cross-subject aspects and they reflect the appropriate level of the European and national qualifications framework. The curriculum has been modified based on the experiences gathered by the first cohort of students and evaluated by the university; the experts acknowledge the efforts by the university to further develop and improve the curriculum.

The current curricula are offered exclusively for the two programmes with the exception of the nationally prescribed courses in foreign languages, Turkish and Turkish history. The curricula cover courses on Psychology, Methodology and cross-subject topics. It becomes obvious, however, that the curriculum is somewhat biased towards the clinical sector. This field of psychology is doubtless important and relevant; however, different fields of the subject should be reflected in a more balanced curricular structure so that students become equally familiar with the varying fields of psychology and potential employment opportunities (**Finding 2**). The content of the curriculum should thus be broadened to avoid an unproclaimed bias towards the clinical sector. Curricula of other psychology departments in Turkey should be used as benchmarks. Fields of psychology which could be strengthened within the curriculum are, for example, industrial psycholo-

gy/occupational psychology, organizational psychology, neuropsychology, development psychology or school psychology.

Among the elements worth highlighting in the programme is the requirement of a thesis in which students apply their theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, a considerable part of the curriculum is defined by elective courses which allow students to focus on individual strengths and interests – even though the range of electives offered depends on the availability of staff. Obligatory and elementary elements are defined in an ideal course plan; credits are assigned accordingly.

Research, statistic and psychological testing courses are integral parts of the programmes as they lay the ground for the acquisition of methodological skills of the students. However, as was observed by the experts, the courses are not specific enough to fully deliver the intended learning outcome. Training in statistical and testing methods within the curriculum has thus to be strengthened (**Finding 3**). Furthermore, application parts should be increased when it comes to methods. A clear focus on the development of skills of students should also cover presentation skills, in particular oral skills. Instructors could make better use of in-class presentations, e.g. of results achieved from small research projects to help students strengthen this important competence (**Finding 4**).

All of the above mentioned aspects would automatically be addressed if the curriculum would be aligned more stringently with the suggested qualification standard of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (**Finding 5**). The suggested curriculum model is neutral in relation to the organisation and sequence of the learning programme and devoted to the orientation of students in the different sub-specialities and in the major theories and techniques in psychology. The Bachelors' degree curriculum is based broadly on psychological knowledge and understanding in relation to individuals, groups and society/systems. It makes a distinction between knowledge (psychobiology/developmental/social/personality, etc.) and skills (applying above mentioned explanatory theories and technological theories in assessment within research) related to psychology as an explanatory science aiming at understanding behaviour of people, and as technological science aiming at interventions that allow effective change of people's behaviour.

The European Certificate in Psychology ("EuroPsy") as the basic standard for independent practice in psychology represents a major step forward in promoting the mobility of psychologists and the access of clients to psychological services of high quality across Europe. A curriculum based on these standards would be highly beneficial for the university in offering its graduates broader career options. The experts are certain that it would also help the university in attracting the best students.

Conclusion

The criterion is partly fulfilled. Programme learning outcomes are defined and include subject specific as well as cross-subjects aspects. The curriculum is designed to achieve the intended learning outcomes with the exception of statistical and testing methods whose application has to be strengthened. Curricular modifications are recommendable to provide a fairer balance between different fields of psychology and to help students improve their oral skills. The Guidelines of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations should be considered when further developing the curriculum.

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 Gelişim 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 are supposed to encourage mutual interaction and assign presentations for oral practice. Practical applications shall train students and involve them actively in the learning process. Students receive readings and assignments for self-study. Teaching is supposed to be student-centred and proactive.

Distance education complements regular class hours. As outlined in the self-evaluation report, non-psychology courses such as “Turkish”, “English” and “Principles of Atatürk” are digitally taught.

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 being published on the student information system OBIS. Make-up exams for excused students are being offered.

Experts’ Evaluation

Teaching methods contain a variety of forms even though lectures seem to be the most prominent one. Practical applications are included in some of the courses. However, further training in this respect should be provided (**Finding 4**, see Chapter III.2). For example, application and seminar courses should be added or increased so that students gain further knowledge of application. Along with the practical experience which students will gain thereby they will also practice their oral skills in presenting evidence and in summarizing results.

In order to master a large number of students as well as to provide learning opportunities to part-time students and others, the university offers obligatory courses such as foreign language courses and the “History of Ataturk’s principles” via online courses. However, this mode of delivery only complements the regular face-to-face classes and does not replace in-class courses. The experts acknowledge the benefit of these additional online courses and support the university in offering them as additional opportunities for studies. These courses appeal to a diverse student body and enable flexible learning paths.

Assessment regulations and procedures are defined and made available in published form to students.

The assessment of students contains examinations, namely midterm and final examinations which are suitable for the achievement of the learning outcomes. However, as mentioned above, oral presentation skills can be further trained within the programme; this could be reflected in a greater variety of assessment forms.

Registration for and administration of exams are well taken care of by the university. Requirements for the examinations are provided at the beginning of the class. Exams are held during exam weeks; an overlap of exams does not occur. Help and assistance to students with special needs are offered. The grading scale is documented in the regulations. Students can question their grades and assessment and in case of a potentially wrong calculation the university will review the assessment. In case of further disagreement, universities in Turkey are free in choosing complaint procedures at their institution in addition to the formal escalation step of appealing to court. IGU decided to only offer the formal procedure for students to bring an issue to the court. The panel of experts would like to encourage the university in thinking about and offering lower-scale escalation steps in solving disagreements and complaints about grades and assessment. As appealing to court constitutes a relatively formal and time-consuming procedure, it might hold students back in bringing forth their complaint.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. Teaching, learning and assessment methods are suitable to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The department should, nevertheless, encourage students further to train their practical and oral skills.

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 programme 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.

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. 1 ECTS credit equals 25,5 hours of workload. 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 credit 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 Europe and UNESCO and provides a standardized description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies completed by its holder.

Experts’ Evaluation

IGU adheres to the nationally prescribed admission criteria for higher education admission. Students are distributed according to their central examination test results. Generally, IGU accepts students with average scores, which is why the university should monitor the introductory phase of new students and continuously offer special support in this important phase of studies.

Each programme is designed for 120 students; the department has been successful in the past in increasing its student number to now currently 235 students in the English and 398 in the Turkish programme. Data on the applicants and their number is being collected by the university. The university provides a large number of scholarships, about 95 % of Psychology students receive support; information about this support is transparent and known to students.

As the programmes have been running for a fairly short time, data on student progression and graduation is still limited. However, the university keeps track of records in all programmes and data is made available in the data management system.

IGU encourages its students in going abroad and offers Erasmus scholarships. Eligible students are selected with the help of a language test. The number of outgoing students is still relatively low. However, all procedures and processes are in place (e.g. learning agreements) for a fair and full recognition of courses and learning outcomes. The department has already signed Erasmus agreements with a number of universities. It aims at expanding the network in the upcoming years. The experts support the university in this approach.

Graduates receive a diploma supplement.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. Procedures for any aspect concerning the student-life-cycle are in place.

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 SER. Among those are 43 professors, 10 associate professors, 180 assistant professors, 148 teaching assistants, 70 research assistants as well as 15 lecturers. IGU outlines 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.

According to the university, teaching staff for “Psychology” includes 3 professors and 10 associate professors with various teaching hours ranging from 3 – 24 hours. Positions are defined as continuous by the university.

The university encourages staff to conduct research by offering a financial incentive for the publication of articles. Didactic training and further education is supposed to be fostered by the participation in trainings, conferences and seminars, both at national and international level.

Experts’ Evaluation

The number of staff is sufficient for the deliverance of the programmes and the panel of experts was convinced that students feel well taken care of by their professors and instructors. In terms of quantity, teaching staff is sufficient as the panel acknowledges that the department constitutes one of the largest departments at IGU with regard to the number of teaching staff. The continuity of staff which could be observed by the experts can be interpreted as a reflection of the good atmosphere within the department. The university is continuously advertising new positions to further increase the amount of teaching staff. The experts encourage the university to continue this development.

However, the number of staff stemming from the field of psychiatry is relatively high. There is currently only one full professor of psychology. Future full time staff should be recruited preferably in the field of graduated psychologists, even though the experts are aware that hiring qualified teaching staff in the field is challenging in Turkey (**Finding 6**). A larger number of academic staff coming from the field of psychology would naturally influence the balance between the clinical field and other areas of psychology in a beneficial way (see also Chapter III.2). As it is the objective of the university to be an international higher education institution, hiring international staff could facilitate the search for qualified staff; inviting guest lecturers for short-term intensive courses may be considered as well.

Courses of the English programme can only be taught by staff who received a certain score in the foreign language national examination, which has to be re-taken at fixed intervals. The university supports staff in improving their language skills by granting bonus payments for high scores in the test.

The university encourages its academic staff to engage in research with the help of financial incentives. Researchers receive a bonus for the publication of articles in national and international academic journals. Furthermore, patent applications are awarded by the university, even to students. Overall the experts gained the impression that staff feels well supported by the university in their academic work and research.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. The experts commend the university on their committed and enthusiastic staff. To provide a fairer balance in the future, full-time academic staff should be recruited from the group of graduated psychologists.

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 Avcılar, Istanbul. Overall, facilities shall comprise 24.400 m² 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.

Information, consultation and guidance

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' personalities.

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 by 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

Generally, the university offers great support in providing financial resources for the successful running of the programmes. Adequate and sufficient facilities are provided on the campus at Avclar which include modern classrooms, spaces for self-study and social exchange. The university recently purchased a large-scale building nearby which shall be used to expand the facilities even further.

Students can make use of several interdisciplinary laboratories at the Faculty, such as an SPSS laboratory and an observation room. The university has furthermore initiated the building of four new laboratories which will be beneficial to the programme and which will provide further research opportunities and spaces for practical application. The experts encourage the university to proceed in this manner.

The description of the curriculum is available in a module/course handbook which documents all curricular elements. However, the description of single courses is currently incomplete and at times only superficial. The course descriptions thus have to be revised: course objectives and course content must match; the learning outcomes for each course need to be described in more detail with regard to knowledge and skills to be acquired; the course content has to be updated and made coherent; finally, the workload needs to be allocated for all courses (**Finding 7**).

The curricular outline and the organisation of classes ensure that students can complete their studies within the expected time period.

IGU offers several libraries. Professors and instructors regularly order new books; the library asks for a list of suggestions twice a year. Students have access to online journals at university as well as from their home devices as the university runs memberships in international databases. E-books are accessible as well. Nevertheless, the experts would encourage the university to increase its number of books, especially the number of hard copies in the library, as for example of standard textbooks in psychology. Furthermore, the availability of English literature should be improved which seems to be lacking at the moment (**Finding 8**). Software relevant for the programme may be used on campus, as for example SPSS in a special laboratory.

Student support is one of the strengths of IGU. Several options covering counselling as well as financial support and assistance are granted to provide ideal study options. Generally, all instructors are readily available and offer office hours. Communication between staff and students has been reported to be very fruitful and effective. Several administrative units with committed staff exist to provide guidance.

In order to prepare students for English speaking programmes preparatory and weekend courses in English are offered, free of charge. These may also be used by students wanting to go abroad and improve their English skills. The university covers travel costs for students participating in the

Erasmus programme or who wish to go abroad. Procedures are in place for the support of incoming students whose number, however, is still fairly low.

Among the offers by the Careers Service, the Peer Mentoring Programme should be highlighted. The university trains students in becoming peer mentors for their fellow students and thus lays the foundation for this valuable support service. Even though an internship is not mandatory, the university supports students in finding places for voluntary internships. Several agreements with local institutions have been signed.

Subject-specific support is provided, among others, in the financial support of the Psychology Club. The club is very active in organizing Psychology Days, summits and seminars. Students thus gain the opportunity to experience their field of study outside the classroom.

Conclusion

The criterion is partly fulfilled. As programme learning outcomes are defined, the description on the course level is currently insufficient and needs to be revised. Resources are provided prominently by the university. However, the availability of literature should be improved, especially that of English-speaking material. Support services can only be described as excellent.

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

Experts' Evaluation

The university has set up a database for recording students' admission, progression and graduation. The university thus collects relevant data. An alumni network is currently being implemented; feedback from graduates is therefore collected informally at the moment. The university is in close contact with labour market representatives; however, as mentioned before the scope of the network could be increased (**Finding 1**, see Chapter III.1).

Information on the study programmes, such as learning outcomes, admission criteria and course descriptions is available online. Relevant stakeholders receive adequate information on the programmes – with the exception that content of course descriptions needs to be revised (**Finding 7**, see Chapter III.6).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. Data management is handled well by the university.

IV. Recommendations of the panel of experts

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

- “**Psychology**” (in English; B.A.)
- “**Psychology**” (in Turkish; B.A.)

offered by **Istanbul Gelişim University**.

Findings:

1. Sources for external feedback should be expanded, e. g. by increasing the scope of labour market cooperation partners.
2. The curriculum should provide a fairer balance between the different fields of psychology; a bias towards the clinical sector should be avoided.
3. The training and application of statistical and testing methods has to be strengthened.
4. Further opportunities for practical applications including the practice of oral skills should be provided in courses.
5. The Guidelines of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations should be considered when further developing the curriculum.
6. Future full-time academic staff should be recruited from the group of graduated psychologists.
7. Descriptions and learning outcomes of courses have to be revised to achieve completeness and coherence.
8. The availability of literature should be improved, especially that of English-speaking material.