

Quality assurance in SAFAA Research field

Quality assurance process in University's research field derive from the strategic goals /Goal 3, 6/ and objectives of Academy's strategic plan 2017-2021 as well as present University's general approaches to quality assurance for the coming years. Quality assurance processes in research field are derived from the University's Quality assurance policy and constitute part of it.

Quality assurance processes are aimed at effective implementation and continuous improvement of the University's research goals and objectives.

Quality assurance objective in the research field are as follows:

- To reveal educational and working needs of the key stakeholders in the research field and present valid information to relevant departments and/or top management.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of all the processes in the University's research field.
- To develop new quality assurance tools in the research field and revise the existing ones by matching them to specific features of the process and targeting time demands in the field.
- To promote transparency in research field by providing reliable information on the quality of existing processes to key stakeholders.
- To monitor the implementation of University's research strategy.

Quality assurance goals and objectives for research field are redefined after the completion of University's strategic plan taking into account the level of implementation, needs of internal and external stakeholders, national and international approaches and requirements in the research field.

Quality assurance tools for 3rd cycle are covered in the following areas: admission, academic programs and courses, research conduction and

supervision, material resources and provided services, Research strategy. Below is the description of each process in details.

Admission

Quality Assurance Center has developed a focus-group discussion procedure to collect and reveal the needs and demands of internal and external stakeholders more effectively, as well as to collect reliable information on key processes. Based on this procedure, a meeting should be conducted with a first-year PhD student to evaluate the admission process: the amount of material required for the professional examination, the approach of the commission during the examination etc. The meeting will be held among first-year PhD students of each academic year. The results of the meeting will be analyzed by Quality assurance center, after which it will be presented to the Research Center and relevant chair to get acquainted with the results.

Academic program and courses

For the effective implementation of academic programs it is important to organize properly their development and revision processes. Therefore, quality assurance tools will be embedded by the university that will enable to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the academic programs. Below are the tools that will be applied at the level of academic programs.

➤ *Evaluation on the course*

For the evaluation on the existing courses a questionnaire has been developed, which has two parts. The questionnaire also has a tool description, where the target group, the number of participants, etc., are described in details. The first part of the questionnaire includes questions on the course workload, tasks given, assessment methods, provided resources etc. In the second part, students evaluate the effectiveness of the lecturer's classroom performance: consultancy given, working approach to students, teaching methods, etc.

After completing the survey, Quality assurance center will analyse the data gathered and submit to the relevant chair, after which a meeting will be held to discuss the results of the survey between the head of the chair and lecturer.

➤ *Evaluation on the academic program*

To evaluate PhD program, Quality assurance center will carry out a focus-group discussion with graduating students according to the "Procedure for the focus-group meetings at SAFAA".

The discussion will focus on the academic programme, its human and material resources, services provided to PhD students by university etc. To evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting, participants will be given an evaluation sheet. The results of focus-group meetings will be analyzed at Quality assurance center and will be submitted to the Research Center and relevant chair.

For the continuous improvement and revision of the academic program, meetings with all stakeholders are important, so it is planned to conduct meetings with alumni and faculty in accordance with the above-mentioned procedure.

Research conduction and supervision

To evaluate the effectiveness of research conduction and supervision process 2 questionnaires for supervisors and PhD students have been developed with their tool descriptions respectively. The supervisor and PhD student will evaluate each other from the point of view of fulfilling the responsibilities, meetings during research conduction, tasks and guidance given by supervisor, student self-study, etc. The survey will be conducted separately so

that the participants to be free to express their thoughts. The results of the survey will be analysed at Quality assurance center and submitted to the Research center and the relevant chair to discuss the results. After the discussion, if there are any omissions from the perspective of the student and/or supervisors responsibilities a discussion will be held with the participation of all responsible parties.

Evaluation on the existing resources and provided services

At 3rd level, quality assurance tools are also used to evaluate the resources and services provided at university. At the moment, only focus-group discussions with graduating PhD students and alumni (Evaluation on the academic program) address the quality of the services provided but it is planned to develop separate questionnaires, through which it will be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of existing resources and services provided by PhD students and by teaching staff.

Research strategy

Quality assurance processes in the research field will also be carried out for the evaluation of research strategy. Quality assurance center will evaluate:

- The effectiveness of research strategy implementation in accordance with the action plan
- To what extent has the university achieved to defined key performance indicators.
- Demands of key stakeholders and labor market

The monitoring cycle in the research field will be summarized by an analysis carried out by the Quality assurance center, which will also include recommendations to the field.

Thus, SAFAA has developed such mechanisms of feedback and monitoring for the implementation of 3rd cycle goals and objectives, which will enable to

gather quantitative and qualitative data for the continuous improvement of
3rd cycle.