



Sumy State University

**GUIDELINES
FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT
SUMY STATE UNIVERSITY**

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I. Policy for quality assurance

Sumy State University develops an institutional culture where the importance of quality assurance and enhancement is strongly emphasized.

The University has developed and implemented a continuous quality improvement strategy and internal quality management system which is based on high academic standards and principles of integrity and transparency.

The University's culture of quality assurance is based on the institutional mission and values in coherence with the Laws of Ukraine "On Education", "On Higher Education" and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

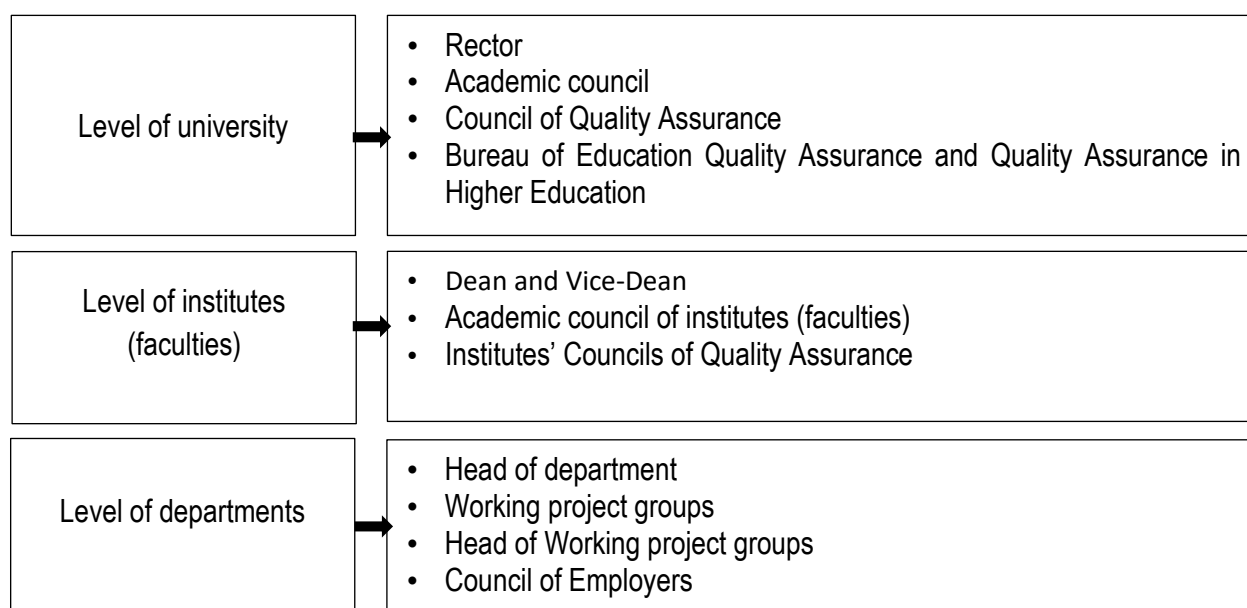
The institutional strategy, policy, and procedures provide the framework for quality of programmes, student admission, progression, recognition, teaching staff, learning resources and student support, information management, public information.

The policy for quality assurance is available at the SSU website <http://sumdu.edu.ua/int/en/study/policy-of-quality-assurance-of-higher-education.html>

II. Institutional structure of internal quality assurance system

The institutional basis for quality assurance includes 3 levels: university level, level of institutes (faculties), level of departments.

Institutional structure of internal quality assurance system is presented on the picture 2.1.



Picture 2.1. – Institutional structure of internal quality assurance system

The university level is represented by the rector, the Council of Quality Assurance, Bureau on Quality Assurance of Educational Activities.

The Council of Quality Assurance is an advisory body that develops a strategy for quality assurance in higher education. Functions of the Council of Quality Assurance are determined by Regulation on the Council of Quality Assurance and are available publicly on the SSU website <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=f8c0ca32-d6e3-e711-926d-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>.

The main tasks and responsibilities of the Bureau of Education Quality Assurance and Quality Assurance in Higher Education comprise monitoring of the quality of education at the University; monitoring of the quality assurance in higher education; coordination of the work of the University departments in the domain of the quality of education; prompt responses (preparation of the drafts of orders and other documents on education quality assurance) to the detected violations of the standards for quality assurance in the educational process at the University; analysis and summarizing of the state of education and higher education quality at the University, preparation of the proposals to the Scientific Council, the rector and relevant consultative bodies on how to improve this activity according to the latest teaching and learning techniques, preparation of the corresponding recommendations and other regulatory documents. The activity of the Bureau of Education Quality Assurance and Quality Assurance in Higher Education is regulated by Regulation on the Bureau of Education Quality Assurance and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and available for the constituencies on the SSU website <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=84bf286a-cbbd-e411-ac3a-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>

Bodies providing quality assurance at the level of institutes (faculties) are Institutes' Councils of Quality Assurance. Their main functions are related to the evaluation of study programs and the formulation of recommendations for their improvement; analysis of resource provision of study programs; the quality of the teaching staff; condition of educational activity at the institute (faculty). The activity of Departments' Councils of Quality Assurance is regulated by Regulation on Institutes' Councils of Quality Assurance and available for the constituencies on the SSU website <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=fccfb209-0883-e511-808b-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>.

Representatives of internal quality assurance system at the level of departments are working project groups. The main functions of these groups are connected with monitoring of study programmes concerning quality of a study programme, its relevance, analysis of material and technical support; quality of the teaching staff. Working project groups design curriculum and other documents related to a study programme.

External stakeholders (employers) take part in the assessment and improvement of the programme quality as well through the Council of Employers. The activity of the Council of Employers is regulated by Regulation on the Council of Employers, which is available on the web site of SSU <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=188136f0-d6e3-e711-926d-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>

Students are involved in the internal quality assurance system through participation in the Council of Quality Assurance of the University, Departments' Councils of Quality Assurance and through participation in student surveys.

III. Design and approval of study programmes

The University designs study programmes based on the standards of educational activity and higher education standards in the fields of knowledge (specialties, specializations) for different forms of training with the formulation of the learning outcomes (competencies), taking into account the world trends in higher education, the requirements of the national and international labor markets.

All study programs are accredited and meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

Stages of design and approval of educational programmes:

- the educational-methodical department prepares uniform forms of components of study programmes;
- working project groups are created for design of study programmes by the rector's order;
- a working project group designs a study programme;
- employers (members of Council of Employers) make a review of a study programme;
- a study programme is discussed at the meetings of the Institutes' Councils of Quality Assurance and the Council of Quality Assurance of the University;
- a study program is approved by the Academic Council of the University.

Procedures concerning design and approval of programmes are regulated by the Regulation on the internal quality assurance system at Sumy State University (Part 3) which is available at web site of SSU <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=8aee6554-1539-e611-b47a-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>.

IV. Assessment of Students

Sumy State University strongly believes in reliable and transparent assessment measures.

These measures indicate students' movement toward the established learning outcomes of each course and each program, and ensure successful completion of the requirements for graduation.

SSU strongly believes in the value of multiple assessments as means of measuring academic progress as well as successful course completion.

Assessment is an integral and essential part of the learning process and is carried out at various times throughout a course. A comprehensive assessment scheme includes both formative and summative assessment which aims to be appropriate to, and compatible with, the purposes and contexts of the learning.

Formative assessment is done during a course, and provides the opportunity for immediate evidence of student learning in a particular module or at a particular point in it. Formative assessment is carried out through written or/ and oral peer and teacher feedback, learner self-assessment, project work evaluation, a short answer test, report feedback, etc.

Summative assessment is comprehensive by nature, provides accountability and is used to check the level of learning at the end of the course. This form of assessment aims to ensure that students have met the course aims and objectives (i.e. achieved the learning outcomes). The summative assessment system includes written examinations, end-of-module/course tests, and master thesis defence.

The assessment is carried out according to the module-rating system. The organization of the module-rating system is based on the systematic assessment of learning outcomes and the accumulation of appropriate rating points. The accumulation scheme is used to motivate students and improve their performance. During a semester student's individual performance (laboratory papers, semester projects, individual works, etc.) is evaluated by a grade. Final grade is calculated after the final exam by summing up all the points gained. The assessment rests on a 100-point scale and its correlation with the ECTS and the national (four-point) scales which are illustrated by table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Assessment scales

Pass/Fail systems	National grade-system	A-FX grade	Points	Description
Pass	5 ("Excelent")	A	90-100	excellent performance, outstanding knowledge and skills
	4 ("Good")	C-B	74-90	strong performance, good knowledge and skills
	3 ("Sufficient")	E-D	60-73	knowledge and skills meet minimum criteria
Fail	2 ("insufficient")	F-FX	0-59	knowledge and skills do not meet minimum criteria / below minimum

				criteria
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Students are informed about the assessment procedures through the course syllabi, and through the institutional grading system which is easily accessible at the SSU web site.

Procedures of assessment of students' learning achievements are regulated by the Regulation on the organization of educational process at Sumy State University (Part 7), introduced by the order of the Rector No. 0452-I dated 22.06.2016.

The Regulation on the organization of educational process at Sumy State University is available on web site of SSU <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=d8ae04b7-0a39-e611-b47a-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>.

V. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

The rules of admission to Sumy State University were developed by the University's Admissions Committee in accordance with the Conditions of Admission to Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine, which were approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (Order No. 1236 of October 13, 2016). Current admission rules are included in the Unified State Electronic Education Database and are available at http://vstup.sumdu.edu.ua/images/docs/prog_vstup_vuprob/2017/pravila_2017.pdf. So the admission requirements and procedures are formally defined, transparent and same for all applicants.

The rules for student progression, recognition and certification are determined by the the Regulation on the internal quality assurance system at Sumy State University (Part 11).

The Regulation on the internal quality assurance system at Sumy State University is available at the SSU web site <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=8aee6554-1539-e611-b47a-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>.

VI. Quality assurance of teaching staff

Sumy State University aims to create a good working environment for its staff, and to support their professional development and well-being at work.

SSU teaching staff is hired according to the requirements of accreditation, and in keeping with the mission and vision of the university.

Requirements for a lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and professor qualifications and positions assigned procedures are defined in "Regulations on competitive selection, vacancy filling and conclusion of employment agreements (contracts) for scientific and pedagogical staff at SSU", approved by the Rector's order No. 581-I of 17.10.2016. The document is available at <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task>.

All vacant positions are posted on the SSU website and are advertised through various appropriate publications.

All applicants receive recommendations of the meetings of the departments. The heads of departments and professors are recommended for the position by the academic council of the faculty and are approved by the academic council of the university. The employment contracts of the personnel range from one-year contracts (doctoral student) to five-year contracts (associate professors, professors).

The hiring process is led by the Human Resources Division, in coordination with the appropriate Vice Rector, and with final approval of all new employment by the Rector.

According to "Regulations on professional development for scientific and pedagogical staff" approved by the Academic Council, protocol No. 4 dated 08.11.2012; order of the Director of 08.04.13 No. 305-I, every teacher should take a professional development course to upgrade his/her qualification within a five-year term of employment.

The procedure for attracting foreign visiting/external lectures into the University study programmes is regulated by the Rector's order "Concerning the Involvement of Foreign Experts in Teaching" and the decision of the Academic Council "On the Recognition of Diplomas and Degrees Acquired in Foreign Universities" (Approved by the Order of the Rector, No. 1445-I, dated 18.09.2014). The documents are available at <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=1> and <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=2>.

Strategic directions for the development of the teaching staff of the University are determined by "Prospects for personnel provision at Sumy State University (with changes and amendments)", approved by the Academic Council, protocol No. 8 of 14.03.2013. The document is available at <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task>.

Twice per year, there is an evaluation of the quality of the teaching on each of the subjects on the study programs. The evaluation is based on a students' survey. The aims of this survey are to:

- identify problems related to teaching;
- enable solutions for the continuous improvement of the study program;
- form part of the evaluation of the set of teaching merits, for promotions or contract renewals, granting temporary leave and evaluating the teaching activities of the department to which the teacher is assigned.

Every teacher receives his/her results of students' survey on-line through Teacher's Private Cabinet.

Conditions of students' survey are regulated by the Regulation on the organization of the students' assessment of educational activities during the study of courses. The Regulation is available at <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=7c7de133-99aa-e711-8a45-001a4be6d04a&kind=1>.

VII. Learning resources and student support

The University has a responsibility to ensure that all students have access to academic guidance and learning support and that there is a provision for personal welfare in conjunction with specialist services outside the department. Departments are required to define and communicate clearly to students how they may assist them to realise the benefits of reflecting on and recording learning, the development of employment awareness and career planning.

To assure academic quality the University has a commitment to provide appropriate resources for studies. The academic space is equipped with new technology including classrooms, library, faculty offices, residential facilities and open spaces for learning. All the resources are designed upon the needs of users and easily accessible (e.g. wireless campus, e-learning platform, etc.).

Research activities are an essential part of the training in the Economic Cybernetics programme. Students are involved in research through training sessions with elements of research work, pre-diploma practice, scientific conferences and competitions at University and All-Ukrainian level, participation in the department's research projects, etc. In order to promote scientific activity, a Scientific Society of students, postgraduates, doctoral students and young scholars of the SSU has been founded. The Society's activities are regulated by the "Regulation on the Scientific Society of Students, Postgraduates, Doctoral Students and Young Scientists of the Sumy State University". It is available at <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=4>.

Career services for SSU students are provided by the Practice and Employers Relations department which liaises effectively with potential employers, concludes agreements on professional and research staff training, informs students and graduates of existing vacancies, consults on application procedure, etc. Detailed information on the regulation of activities of the department can be in the Register: <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=6>.

Student self-government bodies are created and operate at the SSU to ensure that students have the opportunity to protect their rights. A student's director and a student's directorate have the right and opportunity to solve the study and welfare problems, protect students' interests and participate in the management of the institution. The regulations on student self-government are located in the normative base of the SSU.

Students worries, concerns and conflicts can be adequately dealt with by the student self-government bodies, by the Coordinator of the programme, support staff of the Dean's office, by the deputy director of educational activities, who are in charge of caring for learners' needs. In case of disagreement with the modular assessment, semester certification or assessment of master thesis, a student has the right to appeal. The procedure for appeal is regulated in item 7.7 of the "Regulation on the organization of educational process at Sumy State University". In addition to this, there are psychological and social services, a family support center, and a legal clinic at SSU, which operate to take support students.

Sumy State University has created opportunities for development of students. Students of the program can participate in various cultural activities organized by the Center for socio-cultural development and Cultural center of the SSU, engage in drama school "Courage", to work in the newspaper ERI BT "UAB" "Akademiks", engage in various sports clubs. Issues of organizing meaningful youth leisure are also taken care of by the student club "Sportline". Among the tasks of the club is the creation of a youth communicative platform for the exchange of experience and multicultural communication. The activities of all structures providing non-academic support to students are regulated by the provisions placed in the Register: http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html#section_22.

VIII. Information Management

University information system services allow monitoring of the quality of its activities and the adoption of effective management decisions for its improvement. To ensure the effective management of the quality of educational activities, internal software products have been developed at the university.

The information and analytical system "University" provides a common mechanism for working with documents, makes it impossible to duplicate them, helps to effectively search them; provides the possibility of parallel execution of operations, which reduces the time of movement of documents and increase the speed of their execution; control the learning process, including exam sessions and modular rating system; contains a large number of different reports; simple and user-friendly interface; improves the interaction of dean's departments with university departments, etc.

Information Services Platform "Personal Student's Cabinet" and "Personal Teacher's Cabinet ". The student's office provides an opportunity for a higher education student to receive the information necessary for the organization of his learning, to form his own trajectory of training, to participate in various questionnaires, to monitor his current progress, financial status of his contract for studies, and so on. The teacher's office provides an opportunity to conduct electronic journal of educational groups, to quickly track their schedule and changes therein, to receive curricula, information on the progress, results of the students' survey on the quality of the organization of educational activities in the study of educational disciplines and other necessary documents.

A corporate mail server ensures the integrity and confidentiality of mail, antivirus control, spam protection, and the blocking of banned content by means of corporate information security policies; allows one to exclude unauthorized access to mail, and prevent unwanted or deliberate removal of mail by employees.

IX. Public information

Sumy State University is committed to transparent information for the public, and takes responsibility for the accuracy of all published data and information.

Sumy State University has developed rules and regulations which define the rights and duties of the parties concerned: the University and its students. The rules are based on the Laws "On Higher Education" and "On Education" of Ukraine. All documents regulating the rights and responsibilities of all participants of the educational process are available on the SSU website: <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.htm>.

The documents that regulate organization of the educational process are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Changes to the existing rules and procedures may be introduced due to changes in the legislative base of higher education of Ukraine and the requirements for improving the quality of professional training of students at Sumy State University. Proposals for amendments are submitted for consideration, discussion and approval by the Academic Council of the University.

Information that should be included in the documents on higher education (scientific degrees) of the state standard is determined by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (No. 193 dated 31.03.2015). Information contained in the diploma and diploma supplement of SSU complies with this resolution and is regulated by the "Procedure for issuing and sample documents on higher education in Sumy State University", which is placed in the Register: <http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmp=1>. The diploma supplement is both in Ukrainian and English and is meant for national and international use. It allows all interested parties to gain insight into the structure, content and level of the successfully completed degree, as well as an individual's performance. The diploma supplement is attached to the degree certificate along with the transcript of records. It includes the information about the University, courses included into the degree, as well as the students' grades of the courses.

X. On-going monitoring and periodic review of study programmes

The main goal of the monitoring and review of educational programs is to confirm their relevance taking into account the world trends in the development of the relevant field of knowledge and demand in the labour market, improving the efficiency of the organization of the educational process and meeting the needs of higher education graduates.

The monitoring and review system provides for the appropriate procedures for obtaining and analyzing information on the content and organization of the educational process by program through:

- expert assessment of the relevance of the contents of study programs and the readiness of graduates for professional work by representatives of the labour market (members of Council of Employers);
- assessment of the condition of the organization of educational process for students, monitoring of the success and achievements of students;
- evaluation of the relevance of the content of study programs and the organization of educational process by institutes (faculties), departments and teachers;
- summarizing and responding promptly to current information regarding the content of the study program, problem situations and violations of its implementation.

Procedures concerning on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes are regulated by the Regulation on the internal quality assurance system at Sumy State University (Part 3) which is available at SSU [web site http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=8aee6554-1539-e611-b47a-001a4be6d04a&kind=1](http://sumdu.edu.ua/ukr/general/normative-base.html?task=getfile&tmpl=component&id=8aee6554-1539-e611-b47a-001a4be6d04a&kind=1).