

INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR
ACCREDITATION AND RATING

«06» 05 2026г
№ 21765

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**To the Rector of
Azerbaijan University**

Dear Dr. Saadat Namig!

The Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) expresses its gratitude for your trust in education quality assessment and informs that at the meeting of the Accreditation Council on April 30, 2026 (Minutes No. 101) the following recommendations of the External Expert Panel aimed at further improving the quality of the educational programme was adopted:

7008003 Social Work (060805 Social Work) (level: master's degree)

Standard 1 Quality assurance policy

1. Ensuring public access and transparent monitoring of the Quality Assurance Policy: it is recommended that the approved Quality Policy be published in the public domain on the university's official website, accompanied by a brief explanatory note outlining its objectives, basic principles and key areas of implementation. The quality assurance unit should systematically disseminate information about the Quality Policy and related procedures through the website, social networks and information boards in order to increase the transparency of the university's activities, raise awareness among students, staff and partners, and strengthen the culture of quality. At the same time, the Quality Policy should be updated regularly (every two years), thereby confirming the university's commitment to the principles of openness, accountability and continuous improvement. Implementation deadline: September 2026.

2. Clearly define responsibilities for business processes in quality assurance, differentiate the functions of each position. Bring into compliance the University's s Chart ("The administrative and functional management structure of Azerbaijan University) with the actual situation. Review the job descriptions of managers, clearly define the responsibility of each manager for the quality of the educational program, and draw up a matrix of responsibilities taking into account all processes of the university's quality assurance system. Implementation deadline: September 2026.

Standard 2 Development and approval of the program

1. To launch the Advisory Board of the department "Organization of Social Work", directed at the continuous and systematic work with program stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, partners) for periodic monitoring, review, and revision of the program content. The Advisory Board should include the most enthusiastic, responsible, committed, and competent representatives of the student community, alumni, employers, and international partners. The structure, duties, and responsibilities of the Board should be officially recognized by the AU's formal documentation, and the minutes of the meeting should be kept and stored systematically. Implementation deadline: December, 2027.

2. To reinforce the involvement of stakeholders through obtaining annual expert evaluation of syllabi within the Social Work EP. The written and signed practitioners' reviews of syllabi for the crucial teaching courses should be collected from employers, with specific propositions for improving certain elements, and the department "Organization of Social Work" should further monitor this work to ensure the required amendments are made by the faculty in charge. Implementation period: December, 2027.

3. To renew the reference lists and recommended readings in the syllabi and ensure that they include the sources for the last five years, excluding a few fundamental works in the discipline written by prominent founders in their fields. This measure will help the AU follow the Department's strategy and enrich references with the latest academic articles from international peer-reviewed journals and global databases, including the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, and OECD. Implementation period: December, 2027.

Standard 4 Admission, access, recognition and certification of students

1. The university administration should consider strategies to attract applicants with higher entrance exam scores, thereby enhancing competitiveness and academic preparation within the program, in order to identify potential learning challenges early on and predict academic risks. Develop a plan to identify and predict risks. Regularly publish analytical reports comparing students' entry levels with their subsequent academic performance. Implementation period: December, 2027.

2. University administration should enhance the international orientation of educational program by ensuring that at least five percent of students from the program participate in exchange programs every academic year. The leadership of the educational program is required to develop a prospective plan for student participation in international academic mobility. Implementation period: December, 2027.

Standard 5 Teaching staff

1. To design a comprehensive human resource management policy, including a detailed description of the major HR functions: recruitment, selection, adaptation, employee performance assessment, dismissal, career development, and promotion. The detailed criteria for the employee selection, assessment, promotion, and career professional development should be clearly and transparently stated, including the

procedure of open demonstration lessons. Implementation period: September, 2028.

2. To separate the HR Department from the Graduate Career Counseling and Work with Alumni function for further sophisticated focus on effective human resource management. Implementation period: September, 2028.

3. To provide a more decent support for faculty professional development and research potential utilization by decreasing teaching workload for productive scholars, equipping them with licensed research software, and expanding opportunities for faculty international conference participation (abroad) and publication fees coverage on a competitive basis. This recommendation could be implemented through enhancing the existing faculty motivation program, initiated in 2025. Implementation period: September, 2028.

Standard 6 Educational resources and student support system

1. Optimize the library collection by systematically disposing of outdated materials and targeting the acquisition of relevant resources related to the disciplines of the accredited educational program, as well as increasing the space of the library reading room and workplaces for master's students' scientific research education. Implementation period: 2027–2028 academic year.

2. Establish a specialized research laboratory (Research Center) by creating a dedicated research facility for master students, equipped with individual and collaborative workspaces, computers, software, and access to datasets, that could provide a structured research infrastructure for master's scientific and methodological support. Implementation period: 2027–2028 academic year.

Standard 7 Information management

1. To enhance the rigor of student evaluations and monitoring of their academic progress through more sophisticated differentiation of their academic achievements and drop-out rates. This measure will help improve the attainment of learning outcomes and the overall quality of preparation. Implementation period: September 2028.

2. To improve the content and functioning quality of the E-university platform through the mandatory allocation of all teaching and learning materials before the official start of the semester, including signed and stamped syllabi and teaching aids, and continuous monitoring of all the necessary information, relevance, and availability for master's students. Implementation period: September 2028.

3. To institutionalize the work with graduates and alumni through a formal and systematic framework for engagement, including the designation of an appointed staff and unit for coordinating career counseling and alumni relations activities. The specialized unit should create opportunities for graduates' employment, databases of prospective interested employers, and open vacancies mailing. and monitor and analyze the dynamics of labor market opportunities within the examined majors. Implementation period: September 2028.

4. To establish a new body – the Alumni Association, led by a formally appointed head. The Association should operate based on an approved annual action plan, outlining networking activities, professional events, mentoring initiatives, and

institutional collaboration mechanisms. The robust official information channels should be developed to provide regular information inflow and outflow for building the AU image as a socially responsible education establishment taking part in the advancement of its former students. Implementation period: September 2028.

Standard 8 Public information

1. To develop integrated multimedia evidence of alumni excellence. The AU should institutionalize the curation of a dedicated digital showcase on its official website to highlight the professional trajectories of its most distinguished graduates. This initiative should move beyond a simple list of names to encompass multimedia success narratives, including high-definition video testimonials, longitudinal success stories, and in-depth interviews that illustrate how the program's Competency-Based Education model translates into real-world impact. By leveraging the university's active social media channels, these narratives would serve to bolster institutional and public trust, while providing prospective students with a tangible vision of the "Social Work" career path. Implementation period: September 2028.

2. To establish a comprehensive career mapping and labor market directory. To further enhance transparency and support student progression, the university should augment its public information platforms with a granular directory of strategic labor market stakeholders and potential employers. This resource should provide profiles of organizations where graduates have secured high-level placement, such as the DOST Agency, the Social Services Agency, the Probation Service, and NGOs, as well as specialized sectors like the National Observatory on Labor Market and Social Protection Issues. This directory should explicitly link Program learning outcomes to the specific operational needs of these entities, thereby providing a clear roadmap for vocational trajectories in both the public and non-governmental sectors. Implementation period: September 2028.

Standard 9 Continuous monitoring and periodic program evaluation

1. It is recommended that the university strengthen the participation of students, employers, and other external stakeholders in the program revision cycle. The establishment of permanent advisory councils within faculties-comprising representatives of industry, employers, and alumni-would facilitate the systematic inclusion of expert opinions and labor market perspectives in the process of updating and improving program content. Implementation period: 2026-2027 academic year.

Standard 10 Periodic procedures for external quality assurance

1. To formalize stakeholder involvement in cyclical QA follow-up. AU should establish a structured and documented mechanism ensuring the involvement of employers, alumni, students, and professional partners in monitoring the implementation of accreditation recommendations and evaluating program improvements across study cycles. These measures will ensure an evolution from a program-level endeavor for quality improvement into a sustainable, cyclical system of external quality assurance and will strengthen the transparency and accountability of executives' decisions. *Implementation period: September, 2027.*

The External Expert Panel made the following conclusions on the criteria of IAAR Standards: 10% of strong criteria, 80% of satisfactory criteria, 10% requiring improvement criteria, no unsatisfactory criteria.

Taking into account the results of the external assessment, IAAR Accreditation Council decided that Azerbaijan University meets the necessary requirements for obtaining international accreditation:

- international programme accreditation of educational programme:
7008003 Social Work (060805 Social Work) (level: master's degree) **for 5 (five) years.**

In case of disagreement with the decision of the Accreditation Council, the educational organisation has the right to appeal to the IAAR Appeals and Complaints Commission.

The Review Report of the External Expert Panel, which reflects overall experts' assessment of the educational programme for compliance with IAAR standards is attached to the letter.

Please accept our congratulations to the Azerbaijan University with the positive international accreditation outcome and we look forward to fruitful future cooperation!

We wish you good health, creative success and fruitful activity!

Annexes:

- Accreditation Certificate – 1 sheet

- Report on the Results of the EEP on Educational Programmes - 74 sheets

**Yours sincerely,
General Director**



Dr. Alina Zhumagulova