# Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University

# Strategic Plan

# 2022-2026

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# Overview of Strategic Activities Carried out in ATMU 2018-2021

In the spring of 2018, after ATMU came under the control of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the institutional needs of the university were valued in a short period of time, and a short-term strategy and a proper action plan were developed in order to improve the efficiency of its activities. ATMU has achieved a number of accomplishments as a result of the mentioned activities.

Initially, the university has identified the factors that pose a risk to the transparency of the teaching and evaluation process and has taken appropriate measures to eliminate them. In order to improve the efficiency of these measures, a number of staff changes were made, the process of controlling the organization of exams was perfected.

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State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan

- Initially, the university has identified the factors that pose a risk to the transparency of the teaching and evaluation process and has taken appropriate measures to eliminate them. In order to improve the efficiency of these measures, a number of staff changes were made, the process of controlling the organization of exams was perfected.
- As the second priority direction, a number of activities were carried out in order to improve the content of education in ATMU. ATMU has actively contributed to the development of state programs on the "Organization of tourism business" and "Tourist guidance" specializations at the bachelor level. The university took part in the redevelopment of educational programs considering the experience of international higher education institutions and the changing demands of the labor market. Another crucial achievement of ATMU in the direction of improving the quality of education was the successful passing of the prestigious TedQual and ISO 9001:2015 - Quality Management System audits of the World Tourism Organization of the university's tourism education programs.
- As the third direction, the strengthening of the university's staff potential was among the main goals. Recruitment procedures of the academic staff were developed, the hiring process of the professors and teachers for the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years was organized via a competition. The main goal of the competitions was to attract highly qualified representatives of academia and industry to the teaching process at the university.

A significant part of the changes carried out in ATMU took place within the framework of the project "increasing the potential of the Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University" implemented jointly with the support of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the development program of the UNO. Guidelines were developed for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching, learning and evaluation in ATMU, and trainings were conducted for the relevant administrative and academic of the university by a Turkish specialist within the framework of the project along with the conducting the above mentioned international certification audits. As a part of the mentioned project activities, the website of ATMU was reestablished, the basic version of the educational management system "EduMan" was launched in order to automate the educational processes at the university. In addition, a number of international publications were bought and included in the university library fund in order to meet the need for teaching means of the ATMU.

As another direction, the relations of the university with the industry have been further strengthened, the process of organizing long-term production experiences of ATMU students in international and local partner enterprises has been successfully continued

UNITED NATIONS

Active participation of ATMU in the Erasmus+ project called "Establishment and Development of Quality Assurance Centers in Azerbaijan Universities (EQAC)" made a priceless contribution to the formation of the quality assurance system at the university. The experience of European universities in the field of quality assurance was studied and applied at ATMU, and the opportunities for continuous knowledge exchange with international and local partners assisted to change approaches to management, teaching, learning and evaluation at ATMU, bringing them closer to modern education standards.

EQAC

ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF
QUALITY ASSURANCE
CENTERS IN AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITIES



State Tourism Agency
of the Republic of Azerbaijan

During the recent period, international educational partnerships of ATMU were also successfully implemented. Thanks to the active support of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the funding of the flagship dual degree program implemented by the university with the IMC Krems University of Applied Sciences in the field of "Tourism and Leisure Management" was continued, and student - collaborator exchange programs with partner universities operating in the European Union and Turkey were successfully carried out.

University of
Applied Science

European Union

# LEADING POLICY

## MISSION

Our mission is to turn into a higher education institution that prepares specialists who will be competitive in the international labor market and contribute to the sustainable development of society.

## GOAL

Our goal is to become a hub of education, innovation and research that inculcates the necessary competencies to learn, change and transform individuals in accordance with our mission.

## VISION

Our strategic view (vision) is making ATMU an internationally competitive higher education institution; taking a place among the leading higher education institutions of our region and the world in terms of education; training and conducting research especially in the field of tourism and management; making regular contributions to the strengthening process of the staff potential of our country with national values and meeting international standards; improving regularly the material and technical base of ATMU in order to achieve these goals; improving the knowledge and skills of staff; as well as increasing the number of specialists with advanced international experience in the field of education and research in the staff; and continuously expanding international cooperation.

# Quality Assurance Values

We believe that in order to achieve our goals and successfully fulfill our mission, our staff, students and other interested parties must adhere to the following values:

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

contribution of the university to the fair development of society should be in the limelight.

## INTEGRITY

our personal behavior and professional activities should meet the highest ethical standards.

## TRANSPARENCY

publicity should be ensured in our activities considering the social importance of our mission.

## RATIONALITY

while making decisions, their logic, consistency and purposefulness should be assured.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

the effectiveness of the results of the decisions should be regularly reviewed.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

an environment of free exchange of ideas, criticism and revision of conventional views in the university should be preserved.

## INTEREST IN KNOWLEDGE

an environment forming enthusiasm for intellectual research and independent learning in individuals should be established

## INNOVATION

the active use of innovative approaches, technological achievements in education, research and other fields should be promoted

# A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIC AIMS

**Effective management** increasing the result orientedness and flexibility of the decision-making process

**Human resources policy**
forming the highly qualified staff potential

**Educational content**
innovativeness of educational content and delivery methods

**Student achievement**
forming as a competitive specialist

**Tangible-technical base**
Improving the necessary tangible-technical base and infrastructure

**Research and progress**
developing the scientific-research potential and innovation culture

**Digital transformation**
forming the digital infrastructure and skills

**Internationalization**
expanding the international cooperation in education, research and other activities

**Diversification of education**
expanding the existing educational opportunities

**Financial sustainability**
increasing funding resources and optimizing costs

**Working with interested parties**
deeping partnerships with the main interested parties

**Branding**
forming the educational system serving the recognition of the university and implementing the marketing measures

# *Schematic Representation of The Relations Among Strategic Aims*

**Initial resource base**
**(basic needs to be met for the institutionalization of the university)**

-Effective management
-Necessary tangible-technical base
-Competent staff potential
-Modernity of the educational content
Financial sustainability

**Transformative opportunities**
**(fields to be developed for the university to gain a competitive advantage)**

-Student-centered education
-Research and progress
-Diversification of education
-Digital transformation
-Internationalization
-Branding
-Working with interested parties

**The final goal**
**(the position we want to reach by forming an initial resource base and benefiting a transformative opportunities)**

-Turning into an advanced education, innovation and research center of the region

# STRATEGIC AIMS

**The content of strategic aims was developed by answering the following questions:**



**AIM**

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?



**INTENTION**

## WHY DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?



**STRATEGIES**

## HOW DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?



**INDICATOR**

## HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

# Aim 1. Improving the Efficiency of Management in ATMU

Intention – The implementation of the strategy requires, firstly, to increase the efficiency of the rules related to the management of the university, to optimize the internal structure of the organization, and most importantly, to form a quality assurance system in the enterprise. The mentioned measures are of exceptional importance for forming new norms of activity and promoting behavioral change. As the effective implementation of this goal contributes to the effective execution of all other strategic objectives, the realization of other aims will affect the improvement of management efficiency in the university to one degree or another.



## Strategies:

- Forming the organizational structure allowing to ensure the long-term strategic development of the university
- Systemizing the internal rules regulating the activity of ATMU (including its structural sections) and increasing content quality
- Forming the quality assurance system in the university
- Increasing the level of satisfaction of students, professor and teacher, and other interested parties
- Decision-making, including distribution of resources in accordance with the strategic planning
- Improving the student representation institutions
- Developing the quality assurance policy

## Success indicator:

- Organizational structure
- Quality assurance system
- Internal rules and guidelines of organization
- Internal processes of organization
- Student experience
- Level of satisfaction of staff and interested parties

# Aim 2. Forming the Highly Qualified Staff Potential

Intention – The quality of service in an educational institution depends initially on the level of professionalism of the staff and their contribution to the mission of the institution. Purposeful staff policy is required to form and maintain a highly qualified staff base in modern condition of increased competition among educational institutions. Many factors, from the objectivity of the company's recruitment rules to the efficiency of the performance evaluation process, from the attractiveness of the salary policy to the comfort of the work environment, should be taken into account while formulating this policy.



## Strategies:

- Developing an effective human resources policy allowing to meet the recruitment, promotion and postgraduate needs of employees;
- Involving experienced industry representatives educated in prestigious higher education institutions in university activities;
- Updating of position guidelines, effective distribution of duties and responsibilities between relevant structural sections and employees;
- Forming performance-based salary system aimed at increasing the motivation of staff members (including taking appropriate incentive measures to accelerate the process of getting a scientific degree and academic title)
- Increasing profession training of staff regularly via postgraduate courses and training programs, including:
  -increasing the quality of scientific research activities
  -improving competencies in teaching content, training and evaluation strategies
  -strengthening of foreign language competences and soft skills
  -increasing the skills of using digital technologies.
- Forming a provision (or support) system aimed at improving the socio-economic and psychological welfare of the staff;
- Ensuring a balanced distribution of teaching loads (including optimizing the active teaching load per academic staff).

## Success indicator:

- The share of specialists possessing (1) scientific degree/scientific title (2) studied at prestigious higher education institutions, (3) having industrial experience among the academic staff in ATMU;
- Foreign languages and the share of internationally certified specialists among academic staff teaching foreign languages;
- The level of foreign language knowledge of administrative and academic staff;
- The number of academic staff mastering proper digital competences.

# Aim 3. Modernizing the Content of Education

Intention – The content of education should enable the personal and professional transformation of students, inculcate in them the competences and values required to grow as worthy citizens and professionals. The content of education should be updated regularly in accordance with modern intellectual trends meeting the changing expectations and needs of the international and local labor market. The process of knowledge creation should be based on regular collaboration, mutual exchange of ideas and experiences among the main interested parties – learners, researchers, employers and educators. The application of teaching methods and approaches that instill independent learning skills in the student should be expanded.



## Strategies:

- Regular update of the content of higher education programs for existing specialties, taking into account international experience and the requirements of the labor market;
- Organization of new specialties that are compatible with the strategic development goals of the University and allow to meet the changing needs of the labor market;
- Integrating high intellectual, technological, social and emotional skills, known as "Competencies of the Future"[1], which are rapidly gaining relevance in the international labor market, into existing educational programs;
- Improving the quality of educational programs;
- Development of new teaching-methodical materials, training resources with the co-authorship of foreign and local experts and continuous improvement of their content;
- Translation of prestigious international publications into Azerbaijani;
- Accelerating the application and dissemination of new pedagogical approaches across the institution that learn from best practices in teaching, learning and evaluation;
- Updating the library fund considering the needs of the educational process;
- Providing access to and promoting the use of international scientific bases.

## Success indicator:

- Content of vocational training subjects included in the program and their mastery results;
- Content updated subject programs, syllabus;
- Published methodical means and other training resources.

[1] to learn more about the competencies mentioned, visit this link: https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/defining-the-skills-citizens-will-need-in-the-future-world-of-work

# Aim 4. Improving the Mastery Level of Students in the Taken Specialty Program

Intention – For a student's success in the labor market as a qualified worker, the student must first fully master the content of the program in the relevant specialty program. Until graduation, the preparation level of a student in a specialty is determined according to the academic results obtained by the student in separate subjects. Educators should try to improve the academic performance of students without undermining the quality of the educational process.



## Strategies:

- Attracting applicants who are talented, highly motivated and having high academic performances to ATMU;
- Monitoring student results throughout the term, analyzing the results, and providing appropriate methodological support to students with poor results during the term;
- Diminishing the achievement gap between students having high and low educational performances;
- Applying various methods of encouragement to increase the academic achievement of the students;
- Improving existing teaching, learning and evaluation approaches;
- Upgrading the academic counseling (tutoring) services;
- Providing continuous and high-quality psychological support to students.

## Success indicator:

- Overall average success performance of students;
- Student satisfaction (measurement of students' satisfaction with the service via periodic surveys and other evaluation methods);
- Graduate employment level

# Aim 5. Establishing the Necessary Tangible-Technical Base and Infrastructure

IIntention – Along with the limited number of rooms and capacity of existing educational buildings of ATMU, problems in the purpose and the structure of the buildings lead to serious obstacles. The establishment of an educational infrastructure that ensures the comfort of the staff and students, enables the implementation of the strategic goals of the educational institution, and the community of interested parties, is of decisive importance for its long-term existence. Ambition to become a "hub of advanced education, innovation and research" of ATMU requires major planning and restructuring of the existing infrastructure.

## Strategies:

- Establishing the campus considering the existing needs and the requirements of the international standards related to the campus;
- Renewing the existing infrastructure in a phased manner using various financing instruments;
- Accommodating university students who need dormitory during their studies;
- Setting up the appropriate infrastructure for students to spend their leisure time effectively;
- Establishing the tourism-oriented enterprises, including hotels and travel agencies, under the control of the university

## Success indicator:

- Necessary infrastructure
- Entrepreneurial activity

# Aim 6. Strengthening of Scientific Research and Innovation Potential

Intention – Improving the quality of teaching at the university cannot be imagined independently of the scientific research process. Scientific research activity together with industrial experience is the key factor affecting the content of education. Gaps in this area have a negative impact on all aspects of the activities of the university to some extent. Strengthening the culture of scientific research and innovation can have a positive effect not only on the intellectual development of academic staff and students, but also on the evidence-based support of the university for social policy in various fields of science and the improvement of the position of the university in international rankings.

## Strategies:

- Establishing the interdisciplinary scientific research center (institute) at the university in order to ensure the institutional development of scientific research activities;
- Working out the long-term development strategy of the university in the field of research and innovation;
- Providing funding for conducting practically significant research in priority directions;
- Conducting research for various organizations, including government agencies, companies, international organizations and non-profit organizations based on the order;
- Improving the content of the programs implemented at the doctoral level;
- Establishing the international joint programs at the master level;
- Involving the doctoral and master students in practical scientific research activities, including ensuring the relevance of dissertation topics.
- Inserting ATMU scientific research journal in international scientific bases;
- Increasing the number of articles published by the academic staff in journals indexed in the "Web of Science" and "Scopus" bases (including encouraging joint research of ATMU employees with researchers from international and local partner universities).

## Success indicator:

- The number of staff whose works were published in journals indexed in "Web of Science" and "Scopus" databases/ number of published articles;
- The number of staff possessing scientific degree and scientific title;
- The number of staff participating as researchers in international research projects.

# Aim 7. Digital Transformation

Intention – Digital transformation requires reviewing all the aspects of the educational activities of the institution. The goal is to form a staff interested in continuous learning and progress, able to work with new technologies and methods, and to create an innovational environment. In the modern world, the main expectation from an educational institution is to become a pioneer of a change, and digital transformation in this sense requires qualitative changes in educational institutions in many ways, from management methods to communication forms, from information acquisition methods to analysis techniques, from the organization of the training process to the measurement of its efficiency. In order to gain a competitive advantage in the education market, digitalization should be quickly evaluated as an opportunity; otherwise, it can become a threat to the future of the enterprise. The challenges caused by the pandemic to the education community have clearly showed the dynamic between opportunities and threats posed by digitalization.

## Strategies:

- Digitizing the internal management processes of ATMU, including:

-Implementing the electronic document management system for the purpose of electronic document circulation, efficient organization of clerical and archival work (including long-term storage of expired documents);
-Using a single electronic platform for the purpose of optimizing the work of the human resources department and systematically managing the human resources;
-Applying the software that enables systematic data collection, analysis and predicting as part of the quality management system;
-Updating the content and structure of the website of ATMU in accordance with the needs of interested parties;
-Automating the educational processes using the electronic learning system (including by adding new modules to the platform);
-Digitizing the organization of the evaluation process, analysis of the results;
-Digitizing the services using cloud technologies system.

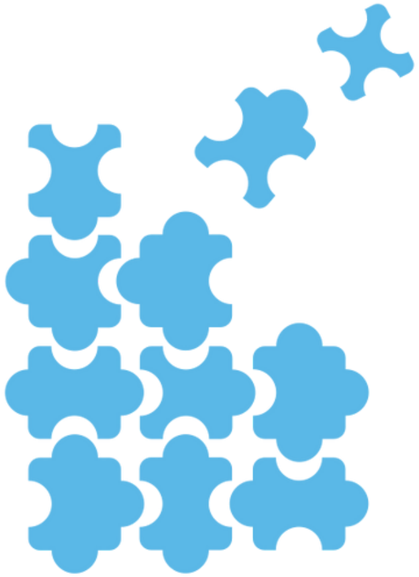
- Developing the digital competence of the staff and students

## Success indicator:

- The percentage of electronization of services provided in the university;
- The number of the staff possessing relevant digital competences;
- Digital competences reflected in proper qualification programs (based on mastery results).

# Aim 8. Internationalizing the Higher Education

Intention – Forming and monitoring of a multilateral internationalization policy is an inevitable condition for continuously improving the higher education institution, providing access to rapidly updated knowledge, bringing international experience and know-how to our country, and finally participating in the process of establishing knowledge at the international level. The main goal of the internationalization strategy is the integration of our university into the European Higher Education Area (EAHE). It is possible to benefit from existing international opportunities optimally in the field of education, research and experience with only a clearly defined strategy.



EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area

## Strategies:

- Improving the content of education in accordance with the requirements and standards of the international higher education system;
- Establishing the favorable educational opportunities for foreign students in ATMU;
- Ensuring the participation of ATMU academic staff and students in educational and research projects funded by international, especially European Union institutions;
- Expanding the academic staff and student exchange opportunities implemented with international partner universities;
- Increasing the number of dual degree programs carried out jointly with international partners;
- Involving the foreign professor-teacher staff in the teaching process;
- Expanding the opportunities of cooperation with international partner institutions in the field of scientific research;
- Organizing the scientific-research events attended by internationally recognized experts;
- Representing the university in international rating systems of the higher education institutions
- Creating a multilateral cooperation platform of higher education institutions of the region in the field of tourism education;
- Accrediting the educational programs internationally
- Forming and implementing policy in the field of involving foreign students;
- Marketing of educational services of ATMU in foreign countries via the Azerbaijan Tourism Bureau and other appropriate partners.

## Success indicator:

- The number of double degree programs (considering various specializations) / number of students studying in these programs;
- The number of staff /students participating in exchange programs;
- The number of foreign students studying in ATMU;
- Position of ATMU in international rating systems;
- Number of internationally accredited study programs.

# Aim 9. Diversifying the of the University Based Educational Services on the lifelong education principle

Intention – Our university should also create educational opportunities for continuously developing the intellectual and professional training level of our students, acquiring new competencies in accordance with the changing needs of the labor market, and participating as productive individuals in the economic life of the country, regardless of age group along with ensuring citizens' right to continuous education. The organization of various courses and training programs via informal forms of education can contribute to the educational mission of the university and serve to increase its reputation and strengthen its financial sustainability along with formal education.

## Strategies:

- Providing and marketing services in various areas of additional education in ATMU;
- Carrying out informative events in the direction of implementation of lifelong education concept in ATMU;
- Establishing the training programs within the framework of cooperation with international certification bodies and other related partners;
- Developing the educational and training programs in the direction of teaching new professions;
- Improving the process of preparing student admission order.

## Success indicator:

- Educational services portfolio
- The number of foreign students studying at the university

# Aim 10. Reinforcing Long-term Financial Sustainability

Intention – For the long-term development of the university, including for the implementation of the activities intended in the strategy, diversification of its current income and optimization of expenses are required. Competition over financial opportunities is expanding in the condition of a rapidly increasing competitive environment in the local education market. In this direction, the university administration should follow a clear and feasible financing policy in a timely manner, via an appropriate evaluation of existing risks and opportunities.



## Strategies:

- Developing long-term strategy related to the diversification of financial sources, including forming the fundraising policy;
- Coordinating the budgeting process with strategic planning, ensuring the participation of structural sections in the budget planning process and the transparency of this process (including the implementation of the correct budget forecasting, considering the current demand and the attractiveness of specialties while developing student admission plans);
- Achieving the dynamics of continuous growth of salaries of academic and administrative staff;
- Establishing Donation Fund (or Support Fund) of ATMU;
- Setting up the transparent management system of extra-budgetary revenues;
- Forming the policy related to effective management of funds collected for the Trade Union.

## Success indicator:

- Growth dynamics of incomes/financial sources
- Financial management system

# Aim 11. Creating the Brand of the University Based on a Shared Vision and Values

Intention – The basis of any branding activity stands on the quality of the provided service and customer orientation. Only if these conditions are met, an effective brand can be created and add lasting value to the development of the university. In the education market, there is a need for clear communication of the attractiveness of services of ATMU in educational and other fields in comparison with its competitors. Rebranding of university should be implemented as a modern educational institution, the value difference created by the provided services should be clearly communicated to the target audience, and the opportunities for sharing and networking around the new brand should be evaluated via effective branding and marketing activities.



## Strategies:

- Implementing the branding of the university based on its long-term intention
- Forming the effective/systematic marketing policy/plan and mechanisms
- Bringing students, colleagues and academic staff together via various formal and informal activities for the formation of common experiences, giving them the opportunity to socialize

## Success indicator:

- Rebranding
- Marketing measures

# Aim 12. Establishing Productive Collaborations with Interested Parties

Intention – The main goal of collaboration with interested parties is to encourage them to contribute to the clarification of the policies of the university, the improvement of educational and research activities and the promotion of the university. Interested parties guide the long-term development of the university by participating in the decision-making process and carrying out public control over this process.



## Strategies:

- Expanding opportunities for cooperation with industry in the process of education, research and quality assurance, includes:

-Organization of a certain part of the teaching process in companies specialized in the relevant field (in the form of sessions instilling practical competencies);
-Participation of prestigious experts, industry representatives in the process of improvement of educational programs and teaching process and involvement in the training process as a guest speaker;
-Improvement of the content of production experience programs in partner enterprises and formation of the mentoring tradition;
-Implementation of joint research projects considering the needs of the state and industry.

- Strengthening the relations of the university with alumni, including:

-Regular monitoring and analysis of the employment dynamics of alumni and increasing their employment opportunities;
-Encouraging active participation of alumni increasing the attractiveness of ATMU as a university, including fundraising, establishing cooperation with industry and organizing mentoring.

- Creating an alumni network (officially ATMU Alumni Association) and regularly organizing events

## Success indicator:

- Joint programs with employers/industry
- Research and other projects on order
- Alumni employment dynamics
- Alumni network

## CONTACT US

You can apply for any question that interests you

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