Responsible Bodies

The body responsible for the quality assurance in higher education is the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Turkey. Studies and missions/job descriptions of CoHE, to which all the universities are connected administratively and academically, were laid down by higher education law No.2457, introduced in 1981 and the Constitution of 1982. General Directorate of Higher Education and Overseas Education is responsible for the cooperation with the relevant institutions, which was put into effect in 01.03.2014 within Fundamental Law of National Education (Md.16). Along with the studies done during recent years, CoHE has already been making a kind of quality preaudit with criteria determined in order to secure the quality in opening higher education programs since its foundation. In addition to the criteria, there are also some criteria for employment of academicians. CoHE determines criteria for faculty members and Directorate of Inter-university, a council that works under the auspices of the CoHE, determines criteria for associate professorship. Except for these criteria, universities also determine criteria for appointment of their faculty members within the laws. The standards that can be called as quality preaudits about opening academic programs improved by CoHE and the criteria for the employment of academicians are discussed in Chapter 7. To improve quality assurance, CoHE has carried on a number of studies in recent years. The most solid examples of the studies on quality assurance in higher education are the ‘Bologna Process’ as a part of the EU integration process, Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation put into effect in 2015 and the new CoHE law which is still being prepared.

Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation put into effect in 2015 has led to the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Board. The task of the board as given below as follows:

a) Defining the quality assurance and national policies for accreditation in higher education and present it to the Board,

b) Supporting the establishment of the internal quality assurance systems at tertiary programs and guide tertiary programs about this matter,

c) Organizing conferences, congresses and seminars about the quality assurance mechanisms to help improve and disseminate the quality assurance culture across higher education institutions,

d) Observing the studies across the globe concerning quality assurance systems and developing partnerships,

e) Identifying principles, quality indicators and rules for external quality assurance systems and offering it to the approval of the Board,

f) Informing the tertiary programs concerned about the external quality systems approved by the
board and producing publications about it,

g) Developing a final report based on the reports obtained from the tertiary programs concerned about the self-evaluation and external evaluation for quality assurance.

h) Asking for an external quality evaluation from the tertiary programs (on the condition that they pay for the process), who have not gone through an external quality evaluation system in the last five years,

i) Providing the Board with an evaluation report about the private institutions who aspire to serve as an external quality evaluation and accreditation mechanisms, observing the activities of those institutions and asking for information when necessary, warn them and abolish their approvals by means of the Board,

j) Representing the Board in the international arena of quality assurance in higher education,

k) In line with the articles (d), (f), (g), (h) and (i), sharing the decisions and the actions of the Board online with the public.

(2) In case of any emerging need, Higher Education Quality Board can establish commissions and advisory board to help frame the content and structure of the studies concerned.

The issues concerning the administrative and financial organization of The Quality Board of Higher Education was framed by the law numbered 7033 (The Law Concerning Amendments in Certain Laws and Law Amending Ordinances on Development of the Industry and Supporting Production) and with the Additional Article 35 to the 2547th Law of the Higher Education and published on the Official Newsletter numbered 30111 on 1 July 2017. This amendment enabled Quality Board of Higher Education to gain a financially and administratively autonomous board. [1]

Methods and Approaches to Quality Assurance

“Regulation of Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education” was published in 2005 and a few items were improved in 2006. In the light of this regulation, “Commission for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education” (YÖDEK) started its studies. Commission for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education had made a membership application to European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and it was accepted by the committee of ENQA on 15 June 2007. “Commission for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education”(YÖDEK) which was founded by CoHE in 2005 defined essential processes and performance indicators that help universities to carry out studies of academic evaluation and quality improvement systematically within the scope of Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Regulation. The general objectives of the “Regulation of Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education” can be summarized as follows: Higher education institutions can put concrete criteria and input as commencement steps, but they cannot perform the output control. Council of Higher Education needs to evaluate how and to what extent the input criteria are performed, by the help of an independent board. It is aimed to increase the performance of the universities by means of the new Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation put into effect in 2015, Bologna Process and currently organized quality systems, all of which are expected to have tertiary system educate individuals with universal skills.
It is encouraged in the world that the institutions make output oriented evaluation in higher education, pinpoint the areas that need remedy and establish a challenging area of higher education via accreditation institutions with financial and administrative autonomy who possess a sustainable remedial approach. It is a prerequisite for the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) members, to which Turkey is a member, to possess a financial and administrative autonomy. To this end, publishing of “the Regulation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education” was accelerated by the Council of Higher Education.

The process of putting the Regulation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Higher Education in effect was enhanced by the participation of the academic community and other shareholders. In this process the tentative regulation was sent to the higher education institutions, and the tentative regulation was also published in the official internet site of the Council of Higher Education so that other shareholders were able to provide feedback to the draft version of the regulation. Following the evaluation of the feedback provided by the higher education institutions and other shareholders, the regulation was then completed and sent to the board concerned. Consequently, the Regulation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education, which enabled internal and external quality systems of the academic and administrative processes in higher education institutions and accredited the external evaluation institutions as well as defining the duties and responsibilities in this process, was published in the Official Newspaper on 23 July 2015. This regulation is expected to contribute to the transition from quantitative and vertical development to the qualitative and quality-related development in higher education, which has been quite successful since early 2000s as a priority for the country.

Within the Regulation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the core focus is to control the output processes and the management of those processes. To this end, a unit in CoHE – not a directorate but composed of independent participants, was established, which is called Quality Board of Higher Education. Quality Assurance System of Higher education primarily deals with the internal and external quality systems of the academic and administrative processes in higher education institutions and accredit the external evaluation institutions as well as defining the duties and responsibilities in this process.

Mission of the "Quality Board of Higher Education"

This Board is to coordinate two major missions related to the external evaluation:

- Institutional Evaluation
- Program Accreditation

Institutional evaluation of the higher education institutions in every 5 years is mandatory and has to be performed. This evaluation takes the mission and originality of each university into account and approaches institutions from the perspective of self-evaluation. One of the most important aspect of this evaluation process is that the universities are expected to publish the evaluation report on their official internet websites.

As for the program accreditation, the competencies specific to a given program, are to be performed by agents which are accredited by the Board and will be expected to perform their duties in line with the principles and processes set by the international quality assurance norms.

Quality Board of Higher Education is also responsible for monitoring the higher education institutions in order that they have their institutions monitored by an accredited agent in both institutional and program level quality assurance systems. In addition, the Board is also responsible for coordinating
the quality assurance studies in higher education as well as other relevant provisions.

Mission of the Quality Board of Higher Education

- Defining the national policies and strategies for accreditation and quality assurance in higher education by taking the approval of the CoHe,
- Supporting the higher education institutions to build up their own internal quality assurance systems and guide the institutions accordingly,
- Providing workshops, meetings, trainings and other relevant provisions to develop and disseminate the quality culture,
- Observing the national and international quality assurance systems in higher education and perform cooperative studies at national level,
- Defining the criteria, principles, quality indicators and rules for the external quality assurance and accreditation by taking the approval of the CoHE,
- Informing the higher education institutions about the external quality evaluations and accreditation procedures by publications,
- After the self-evaluation and external evaluation processes performed by the higher education institutions, preparing the final report by including the suggestions to improve the quality and submit it to the CoHE,
- Asking the CoHE to perform the external evaluation process for the institutions which did not perform any external evaluation in 5 years, by fining the expenses to the given institutions,
- Submitting the suggestions to the CoHE each year concerning the quality development processes and encountered problems during the external evaluation processes performed in the higher education institutions,
- In order to carry out duties in the areas of external quality evaluation and accreditation, evaluating the application of the agents to become an external quality representative, providing the ones which are found appropriate, monitoring their work processes and taking information as well as warning or cancelling their accreditation if necessary,
- Representing the CoHE in the international arena about the quality assurance in higher education,
- Performing the other relevant duties given by the CoHE within the frame of the Law 2547.

Selection of the Members of Higher Education Quality Board

- 5 chosen by Council of Higher Education,
- 4 chosen by the Board of Interuniversity,
- 1 by the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology,
- the Ministry of Development,
- the Ministry of Finance,
- the Ministry of National Education,
- the Ministry of Health,
- Turkish Sciences Academy,
- Turkish Scientific and Technologic Research Institution,
- Directorate of Turkish Health Institutes,
- Institution of Vocational Competencies
- Institution of Turkish Accreditation
- The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- and 1 representative student;

the Board is made up of 21 members.
Council of Higher Education announced the selection of the five members in official website and the applications were accepted personally. In Higher Education Quality Board, a president is chosen among the members selected by the CoHE and the chosen president identifies one vice president among the members selected by the Interuniversity Board.

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