



ATILIM UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGAUGES

2019-2020

QUALITY MANUAL



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ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK
DBE	DEPARTMENT OF BASIC ENGLISH
DML	DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
EAP	ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES
EFL	ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
ELT	ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
MDU	MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT
PDU	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT
SAC	SELF-ACCESS CENTRE
SFL	SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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PREVIEW

Atilim University's academic policies, standards and regulations provide the institutional framework through which the Schools and Departments manage the standards of the notable provision of teaching/learning and organisational procedures. They also enhance the quality of teaching/learning opportunities offered to the students and the creation of a peaceful and productive work environment for the workforce.

This Quality Manual displays the School of Foreign Languages' (SFL) Quality Assurance Policy/Framework together with the various procedures of the Department of Basic English (DBE) and Department of Modern Languages (DML). The Quality Manual covers organisational, teaching, learning and assessment policies aligned with the University's Regulations, supported by accompanying forms, documents, directives, regulations, approved instructions and all related supplementary information.

The SFL Quality Manual highlights, first of all, the university's commitment to excellence in EFL and EAP teaching and learning procedures. It also explains methods of sustainability for continuous improvement of all parties in their efforts to raise student success and experience (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to higher levels.

This Quality Manual sets out the approaches and procedures of all SFL activities for the management bodies of quality in connection with the standards, principles, procedures and enhancement by which the framework will continue to be developed with a positive and constructive point of view. It is obvious that the action of documentation and dissemination of agreed policies is not the end but the start of quality assurance. Therefore, this task requires:

- clear articulation and sharing of policies / standards with all parties
- the provision of the best possible teaching / learning environment for both the students and instructors
- creation of a regular and efficient quality assurance mechanism, to check:
 - how the quality policies are used to offer learning facilities to the students
 - how the students' achievement is evaluated and assessed in line with these standards
 - how high quality education is provided and sustained
 - how quality enhancement is integrated into every aspect of our provision.

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The participation of our stakeholder groups is crucial in defining, assuring, supporting and improving and reporting the quality of the SFL's provision of education. Students, instructors, the administration, top management and the Board of Trustees are the main stakeholders of the SFL. Other key stakeholders are prospective students, academic and professional staff in the departments, the SFLs in other universities and the resource suppliers.

Atilim University's mission and vision statements entailing quality understanding and perspective promote a culture of reflective practice and provide mechanisms for continuous improvement in both the service provision and the quality of the procedures.

From the point of view of improvement, quality is the first thing to be considered. It requires the systematic collection and use of feedback and data, quality benchmarking, input from internal and external parties/experts, continuous engagement with the students as partners, strengthening collaborative approaches, acting on lessons learned and building on best practices. Therefore, it is clarified that:

- the quality policies of the SFL, how standards are set out, assured and reviewed
- the procedures regarding how the SFL departments adhere to the policies during application
- what is expected of the members of the community for quality improvement and enhancement

The SFL enjoys the diversity of its staff and students, academic programs and activities. This diversity results in maximising the potential of the students and the instructors and allocating the available facilities and opportunities fairly in the premises of the SFL and the University.

The expectation from all related parties in respect to Quality Policy and its application is reasonable adherence to the aforementioned policies and procedures. Contribution to support the application of the principles is always most welcome, whenever and if necessary.

Quality is delivered to people, by people, through people!

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I. ATILIM SFL

The SFL is a newly established school combining the 20-year-old Preparatory School and the Department of Foreign Languages which previously reported to the Rector's Office directly and independently.

1.1. Background information

Ever since Atılım University's foundation in 1996, there has been an English Preparatory School which progressively grew both in its quality of teaching/learning and the number of its students. Apart from the Preparatory School, another department was in charge of teaching English to students in their departments upon completion of Preparatory School education. In 2016, the SFL was established and united the two departments under one umbrella.

The SFL was set up by the University Senate Decision dated 07.07.2015 and numbered 07, and since then it has made noteworthy contributions towards targeting the highest level of foreign language training for the students of Atılım University, both in the English medium and Turkish medium departments.

It is the aim of the SFL to help achieve the university's mission by reinforcing and maintaining the high quality foreign language education through the most effective teaching methodologies, research and learning, and by integrating the strengths of the two departments attached, namely, DBE (former the Preparatory School) and DML (former the Department of Foreign Languages). The course curricula offered in the two departments reflect the latest foreign language teaching methodologies available in the field.

At the SFL, it is believed that constant efforts should be made to ensure that the curriculum of the two departments is updated regularly so as to replicate the ever-changing teaching styles and techniques. In addition, the syllabi should be internally reviewed by the staff in the departments depending on the needs. External experts' opinions from the respected foreign language institutes should regularly give the instructors broader exposure added to the in-house professional development activities.

The English language level of the SFL is designed according to the Common European Framework (CEFR) levels. It should be noted that the DBE targets high level English communication skills (B1+) and the DML aims to provide academic English and Professional English courses (B1+ & B2) with their dedicated instructors and support staff. Apart from

that, other foreign languages are offered at the DML to help broaden the views of the students.

The SFL aims to make every effort to reach excellence in foreign language training. This manual has been prepared to explain the quality policies in various fields of the applications in order to contribute to the quality concepts pursued on the whole.

1.2 Mission, vision and shared expectations

The SFL functions in line with the mission and vision in order to raise individuals who are qualified in their foreign language skills.

1.2.1 Mission

The mission of the SFL is to enable the students to become outstanding individuals in their academic and professional lives by equipping them with the foreign language skills demanded at international standards in their specialised areas of study.

1.2.2 Vision

The vision of the SFL is to be an exemplary school which promotes a contemporary approach to foreign language education, to set the standards of language teaching in our country.

1.2.3 Shared expectations

The main aim of the SFL, aligned with the mission and vision of the university, is to provide the students with effective language knowledge and skills as well as academic skills, which will be necessary for their further studies in their departments and future careers.

It is believed and understood that achieving the aims is only possible if each and every member of the department is highly motivated to accomplish it. The main task to be achieved at the SFL is the provision of teaching/learning quality within the specified scope. The generally set out expectations in the realisation of the school mission by all school community are as follows:

- to internalise the SFL's mission and vision with a positive attitude and a high level of dedication
- to adopt a constructive attitude towards students and colleagues, and help to promote team spirit

- to support individual professional development of the staff members to provide general quality improvement as it is believed that ‘school’s improvement’ and ‘individual’s progress’ are inseparable
- to carry out duties (e.g. meeting deadlines, keeping records, collecting relevant data on student progress, being on time for meetings, and exam-related duties) effectively.

II. THE SFL POLICIES

The SFL policies can be defined under four main categories: Organisation, Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Malpractice.

2.1. Organisation policy

It is highly essential for the SFL to have a clear, concrete, orderly and transparent organisation structure to enhance the proper functioning of its bodies.

2.1.1 The organisation structure

The school has two main Teaching/Learning Departments; the DBE and the DML and **six** support units: the Accreditation Unit, TOEFL Centre, **Educational Research Unit, Professional Development Unit**, Self-Access Centre and Student Development and Counselling Unit. The following table (Table 1) shows the organisation structure of the SFL.

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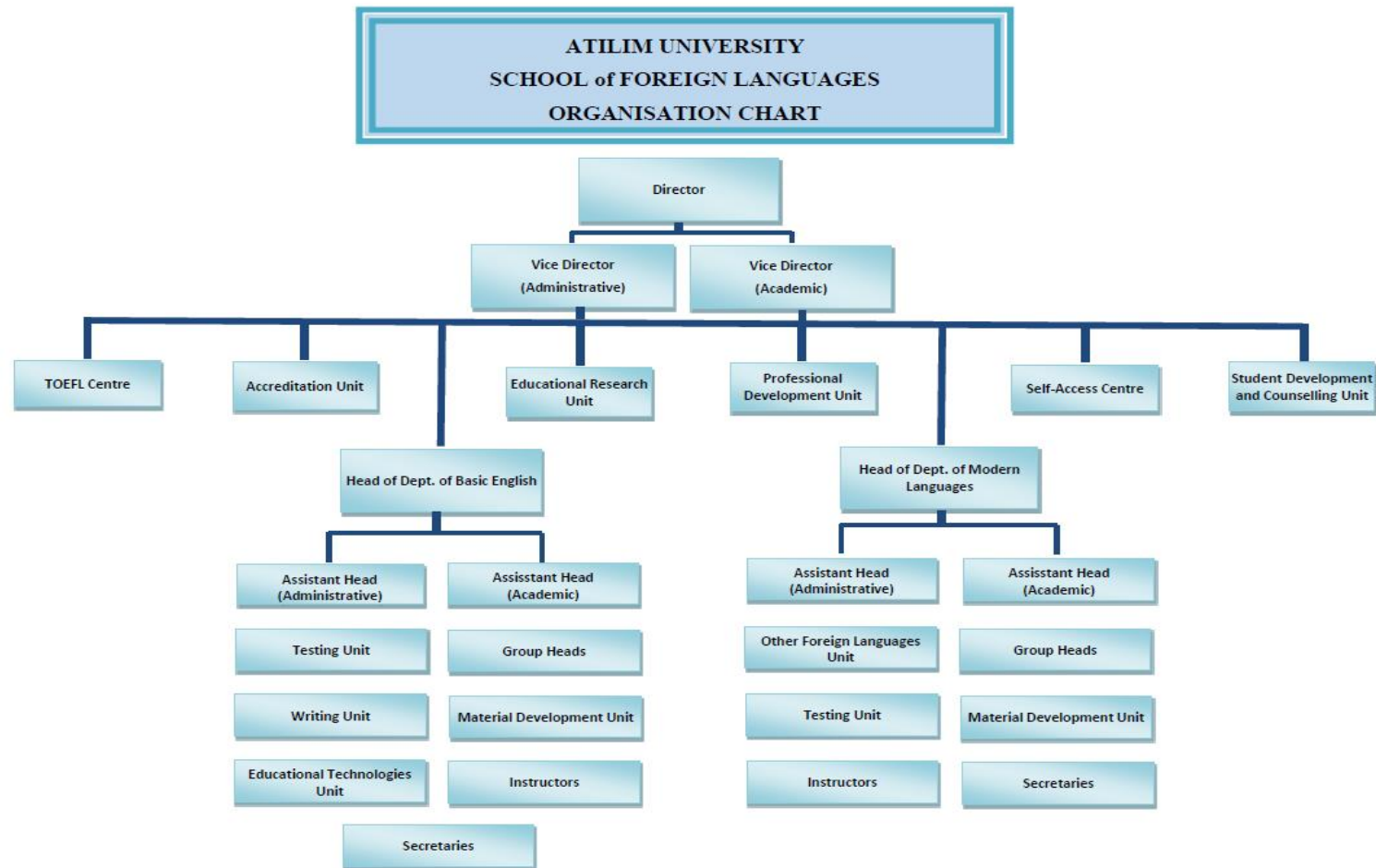


Table 1. Atılım SFL Organisation Chart

2.1.2 Staff resources

The management body of each department consists of one chair and two vice chairs, and four or more group or level heads. To coordinate the teaching/learning process the management body works together with about 130 instructors. The job descriptions of people in charge are clearly written and communicated to the whole community through Instructor's Booklets in each department.

2.1.3 Physical resources

The SFL building has nice classrooms equipped with technological devices such as PCs, projectors, smart boards and internet connection. The building also has several meeting halls, a TOEFL centre, and a self access centre. The school is also furnished with comfortable lounges, a large food court appealing to various tastes and a few vending machines. Since the University cares for people with various disabilities, as a policy, it has adopted a variety of precautions to facilitate their lives. To exemplify, the SFL building has restrooms for handicapped people on each floor, the entrance has a platform for wheelchairs and active elevators to ease movement between floors.

2.1.4 Administrative systems

All teaching and management staff report to their immediate supervisors shown in the organisation chart, and depending on the issue ultimately, to the SFL Vice Directors and finally to the Director who reports to the Rector of the university.

All formal interaction is made through Online Document Management System called EBYS enabling each and every person involved to be informed about the related procedure. Internal communication is through e-mails and messages. Weekly group and department meetings are timely, well-organised and informative and minutes are taken in due course and publicized afterwards.

In all the administrative activities there is an inherent policy of democratic, participatory, cooperative, supportive, productive and humanistic understanding.

University and campus-wide activities and information are shared, contribution is maintained and corporate identity is supported. In this frame, celebrations and grievances are announced to foster the organisational spirit, such as collective tree planting, competitions, sport activities, blood donations, national and religious holidays and best practices.

2.2 Teaching/Learning policy

Teaching and learning policies of the SFL are categorised in five sections, namely, design of education, maintaining and improving quality, learner admission and teaching, learner teaching policy, and staff recruitment and development policy.

2.2.1 Design of education policy

The SFL is committed to provide effective language learning programs for all students enrolled in the university. Irrespective of their field, the SFL offers different language courses to all students for all undergraduate programs, English Medium Departments and Turkish Medium Departments, as well as elective courses in other languages, and also online courses for the associate degree Vocational School programs.

The design of the curricula is carried out taking into account the needs, level and interests of the students. Material selection and preparation is meticulously made and assessment procedures and tools are carefully planned and applied. All design and planning activities are administered according to the regulations of Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and CEFR standards.

2.2.2 Maintaining and improving education quality

The components of each curriculum (such as the aims and objectives, the syllabi, course books/materials and assessment) are in concordance with each other and with the components of the other courses. All curricula and teaching/learning materials are subject to continuous evaluation and revision in a constructive manner. In this frame, any amendments or changes in problematic applications that are suggested by students, instructors or management through evaluation forms, are taken into consideration to improve the system.

2.2.3 Learner Admission

The SFL has got various systems to welcome, categorise and place students in proper learning groups, based on the students' university entrance exam results. Once the students are registered, the SFL has plans and policies to place the students according to their fields of study/departmental faculty. The ones who have been admitted to English medium departments study at the DBE whereas the ones who have been admitted to Turkish medium departments study at the DML.

2.2.4 Learner teaching policy

The SFL aims to ensure that students are given equal opportunities, education and guidance in terms of not only learning a foreign language but also study skills and techniques to help them as autonomous learners and value processes to become happy and contented learners.

2.2.5 Staff recruitment and professional development policy

Instructors are key practitioners of the SFL to make it possible to achieve educational goals effectively. Instructors with the following qualities can join the work team, apart from the required evidence of academic integrity:

- a high level of motivation to teach
- commitment to work and personal and professional development
- eagerness to be autonomous and motivated life-long learners themselves
- efficient teaching/learning skills
- constructive and encouraging attitude to others' ideas
- positive attitude towards students, colleagues and work
- effective team-member skills

Instructors who would like to work with the team need to follow the legal procedures specified by the Rectorate and announced on the official website of Atılım University (www.atilim.edu.tr) in connection with the Council of Higher Education, and apply as instructed.

Necessary support, guidance and opportunities are given to the SFL instructors with an 'open-door' policy on the part of the administration. In the SFL, it is believed that in order to help develop students, it is up to the instructors to develop and change themselves. In order to promote teacher development activities and maintain effective teaching and learning skills, an active Professional Development Unit (PDU) is in charge in each department. Depending on the need of the instructors in the two departments, some or all of the activities below are carried out in a planned and careful manner to empower the instructors at PDU.

- Pre service training
- In service training

- On the job training
- Class observations
- Peer observations
- Action researches

2.3 Assessment policy

In the SFL, the main assessment policy is to be fair, transparent and developmental in every aspect of school activities. The SFL considers assessment an essential component of the applied curricula, and a closely integrated component of the teaching/learning process and all activities.

The assessment policy is targeted not only to evaluate and grade students' learning but also to promote insights into their progress in the constructive learning process. Therefore, effective and diverse assessment methods and tools are crucial in order to both measure whether the objectives have been achieved in the curricular delivery cognitively and also what skills and knowledge need more care and attention so that different techniques, methods and remedial support can be put into use for better results.

Assessment also aims to provide feedback to management, regarding the implementation of the curricula and to act promptly and accordingly in any problem areas if and when necessary.

2.4. Malpractice, appeals and complaints policy

There may be grievances and complaints in a community of people working together in an organisation where there is mutual expectation and set responsibilities. Coping strategies should be developed together with preventive measures in order to compensate these issues. The complaints and problems may be of various types.

The SFL places great importance on having a good rapport with all its students and instructors, and takes all necessary steps to create a motivating and positive work environment. To maintain such an atmosphere, the SFL gives careful consideration to all complaints from students or staff and aims to deal with them promptly in a fair, open, legal, orderly and honest manner through communicating and devoting sufficient time and effort to solve them.

In the SFL, informal complaints can be resolved through communication among people involved, to sort out less serious issues, which do not require lengthy and formal procedures.

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Members of staff who have a grievance in connection with their work should firstly discuss that issue with their Vice Chairs and Chairs respectively. If the matter is not resolved, it is then discussed with the SFL Vice Directors and the Director whose decision or decisions are final.

An appeal can be filed when a member of staff or a student objects to any decisions or sanctions imposed by the Department. The appeal must be filed within the legal time limit specified under the Regulations of the SFL. The SFL committee, consisting of the Director, Vice Directors and Department Chairs, reviews the decision within 15 days, and shall either approve it exactly as it is or reject it, or reconsider it and finalise the decision.

2.5. Quality improvement policy

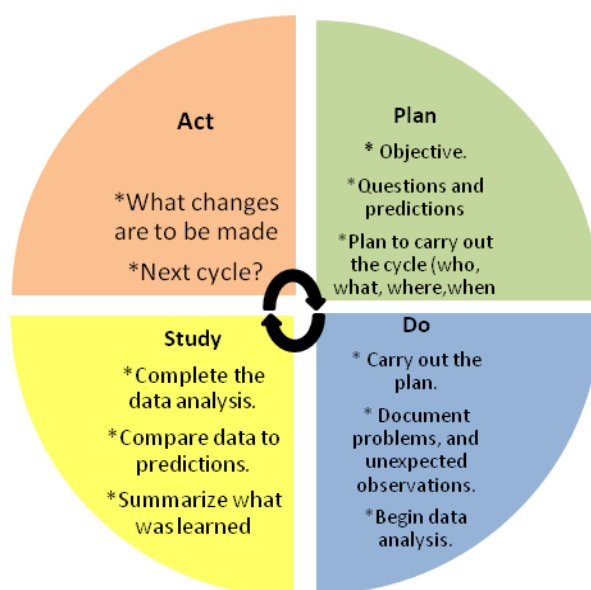
The Quality Improvement Policy aims to improve the quality of the educational and instructional activities at the SFL according to the objectives below:

- To provide suitable curricula to meet student needs effectively and realistically
- To improve standards of teaching and assessment continuously
- To ensure an efficient use of printed and online learning materials
- To foster learner and teacher autonomy
- To improve the school's management systems
- To enhance professional development facilities
- To continuously develop and change positively during the process.

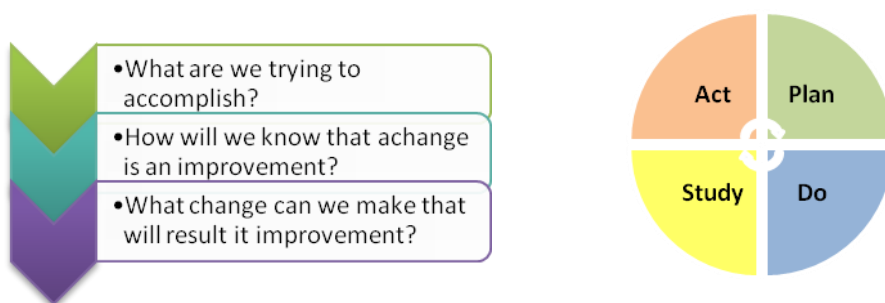
The purpose of the quality improvement aspect at the SFL is to maintain sustainable improvement, planning, implementation, review and improvement of the learning/teaching environment of the institution.

In order to maintain quality at the SFL, the fundamentals of PSDA Improvement cycle are followed. This cycle is constantly monitored by the Chairs, the Director, and the people in charge of quality improvement. The cycle works for all units of the school (curriculum, testing, material development, professional development, and technology and project development units) and the outcomes are reflected in the learning program with the necessary changes and improvements made as shown in the diagram below (Figure 1).

PDSA Cycle



Model for Improvement



*Figure 1. Deming's PDSA Cycle. From *Foundation and History of the PDSA Cycle*, April 2018, from https://deming.org/uploads/paper/PDSA_History_Ron_Moen.pdf*

III. APPLICATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTS

Based on the mission and vision of Atılım University, including commitment to excellence in education, research and public service, the two departments in the SFL design their curricula. As Atılım University offers both English medium and Turkish medium education, depending on their needs and the departments they have registered for, the students either start their language education at DBE or DML. While the students who have registered for the English medium departments are subject to DBE educational curriculum, the Turkish medium department students directly take English education at DML. The duration of DBE's

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Basic English training is about 900 hours while this period is 300 hours at the DML where they are offered Academic and Occupational English Courses.

In the following part all different applications related to quality improvements of the two departments in terms of curriculum, assessment and PDU are briefly described.

3.1. THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC ENGLISH

The DBE is one of the two departments of the SFL, which provides the students whose level of English is below proficiency level with basic language skills so that they can pursue their undergraduate studies at our university without major difficulty.

3.1.1. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN THE CURRICULUM

The main aim of the curriculum followed at DBE, which is in line with the mission and vision of the school, is to provide a quality language learning process for all students who do not succeed in the Atılım University Proficiency Exam (APEX) given at the beginning of the academic year. The curriculum is designed to provide the students with the necessary language skills through skills-based and student-centred activities, which they will need in their future departmental studies. Each component of the curriculum, that is, the syllabus, course books/materials and assessment tools, support each other and undergoes continuous evaluation and revision, and ensures that course delivery meets the established goals.

The overall aims of the DBE curriculum are as follows:

3.1.1.1. Meeting students' linguistic and academic needs

The main aim of the curriculum is to provide our students with the necessary language knowledge and skills to follow the curricula in their disciplines. Upon their graduation from DBE, students are expected to be able to follow lectures, understand extended texts, produce various types of written texts, and present their ideas accurately.

3.1.1.2. Fostering learner autonomy

Learning any language requires ongoing efforts and continuous practice. We aim to raise awareness in our students graduating from the DBE that volition and self-motivation are the keys to success in language learning. We encourage our students to benefit from all the resources that will help improve their language such as the self-access centre, computer labs, library, and any other related materials.

3.1.1.3. Providing individual guidance

We believe that individual attention and support is an absolute must for learners in the learning process. Therefore, we assign academic advisors to our students to guide them in their search for knowledge and personal assistance in their efforts to adapt to their new lives at university. We also offer individual counselling in our Psychological Counselling and Guidance Centre on various topics such as study skills, test anxiety, anger management and motivation.

In order to fulfil its overall aims mentioned above, DBE curriculum consists of three main components.

3.1.1.3.1. Learning objectives

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) forms the basis in determining the objectives of the curriculum and in preparing the syllabus of the programme. The curriculum gives information about the defined objectives to be accomplished at various language levels, specifying the predicted time to be assigned to achieve them. It further informs learners what they are required to do out of class to achieve or reinforce the objectives set.

3.1.1.3.2. Teaching and learning materials

To achieve the learning outcomes, learners use up-to-date course books, supplementary materials both online and paper, and self-study applications. The Material Development Unit (MDU) prepares supplementary materials which support the quality learning taking place in classrooms on demand from Level Heads who are responsible for designing the syllabus. To help students reinforce their understanding the language, homework (on paper), self-study applications, online skills activities and graded readers are also included in our curriculum.

3.1.1.3.3. Assessment tools

Each component of assessment in the curriculum is in line with the learning objectives for particular levels. To assess whether the course delivery meets the level expectations, throughout the term quizzes that assess the four skills and language systems are given on a regular basis that are pre-defined in the syllabus. Since, in our context, speaking is one of the most important skills in the curriculum, continuous in-class speaking assessment is conducted throughout the term. Students are also assessed through two achievement tests to complete the

module. Students are also required to do homework and tasks both on paper and online, which are also specified in the curriculum. Students are given detailed guidelines with sample questions regarding different elements of the end of course assessment in their material packs prepared by the MDU.

3.1.2. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN THE ASSESSMENT POLICY

The DBE is committed to implementing relevant and suitable programmes which prepare students to become autonomous learners in their academic lives. Assessment is closely integrated in teaching and learning progress during the whole process. Assessment aims at monitoring student progress, guiding and remedial teaching if necessary for areas students need to further improve. Students are given quizzes and achievement exams graded separately and each has different weightings in their overall scores. Students are tested in terms of their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the exams prepared by taking the level objectives into consideration. The Testing Unit is responsible for preparing unbiased exams for the productive parts of which instructors are trained and standardized to achieve higher levels of reliability. Likewise, students are trained on how their performance in productive skills be evaluated by the criteria used in the rubrics. The unit is also responsible for reporting the exam results. Students are given opportunity for feedback to learn from their mistakes helping students reach their full potential.

The main objectives of the assessment process at the DBE are to design reliable and valid assessment tools to evaluate the achievement and proficiency level of each student in the target language, to ensure that fair, reliable and valid assessment processes are achieved, to have a clear picture of individual student progress for both instructors and students, to provide an effective examination format, to achieve learner-centred approach to assessment and to ensure learners and instructors are informed about examination and evaluation procedures to maintain transparency during the assessment processes.

3.1.2.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

As it is commonly known, two crucial qualities which good assessment tools must have are reliability and validity. Therefore, the aim of the DBE is to ensure a high level reliability and validity in the assessment processes.

3.1.2.1. 1. RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to the idea that an assessment tool should produce consistent and accurate results. Two essential concepts are involved in reliability: *inter-rater reliability* and *reliability in terms of the test takers' performance*.

In terms of *scores' reliability*, the DBE provides training and standardization sessions for instructors to ensure that highly reliable assessment tools will be used in the learning process. In addition to this, double marking for each achievement exam and for the writing exam in APEX is crucial for the DBE. Calculation check for achievement exams also helps instructors to detect any kind of measurement error. For formative speaking exams, three instructors are assigned to assess the students' in-class performance in accordance with the criteria that are shared both with the instructors and the students. For summative speaking exams, two instructors are assigned to assess students' oral production performance. As for the *reliability in terms of the test takers' performance*, it is crucial for the DBE to achieve internal consistency in the process of designing assessment tools for all levels and to ensure that each student is familiar with the assessment tools and procedures before they are carried out. To achieve familiarity, specific types of questions requiring similar responses are asked in both quizzes and achievement exams. To increase students' familiarity one sample for each assessment tool is provided in students' material pack. Thus, students have the opportunity to practise similar kinds of question items while learning or practising in/outside class before the exams. Besides, error analysis for each weekly quiz and class achievement graphics for achievement exams are prepared and examined by the Testing Unit and the administration.

3.1.2.1.2. VALIDITY

Validity can be defined as how well an assessment tool measures what it is supposed to measure. Therefore, at the DBE assessment tools are determined in the light of the learning objectives, syllabus and instructional activities. The alignment of the assessment tools with these three significant factors ensures that the assessment process is valid. There are some crucial procedures which ensure the internal verification of this assessment process.

3.1.2.1.2.1 Internal verification

An effective internal verification process has high significance for the DBE. The procedures below are followed so as to ensure that the assessment tools are aligned with the learning objectives, syllabus and instructional activities.

- a) The DBE has a Testing Unit whose members are responsible for exam preparation, implementation, evaluation, standardization and improvement of the quality exams carried out in the DBE in accordance with the outcomes of the learning objectives, syllabus and instructional activities. These exams are as follows; weekly quizzes, writing quizzes, story quizzes, speaking exams and achievement exams. All these exams have a common goal; to assess the achievement levels of students related to the four basic skills.

- b) Each instructor in the Testing Unit is responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation and standardization of the abovementioned exams for different levels, which are designed as D (A₁), C (A₂), B (B₁), and A (B₁₊). The Testing Unit is guided and organized by the Head. Each member of the Testing Unit is responsible for a different level as mentioned above; however, the procedures to maintain an internal verification of the exams are common. Each member of the Testing Unit analyses the related units and their objectives to determine the kind of skill and the language areas of grammar and vocabulary, writes items accordingly, has an initial feedback from the head of the Testing Unit, and from the Head of the Department to detect any problem with the content and layout of the exam and then makes changes as necessary. After that, the Testing Unit member conducts a proofreading session with a native speaker, finalizes items for the exam, implements the exam (has it delivered at the set time and date), sends the answer key to instructors after administering the exam, and takes any possible queries/feedback from the instructors. To be standardized in all classes, the responsible Testing Unit member prepares the revised key in cooperation with the Testing Unit head and other Testing Unit members.

The responsible Testing Unit member for each level takes full account of personality traits of students and impact of test tasks on the students to bias against some students and in favour of some others. While preparing test tasks, Testing Unit members take into account such test takers' characteristics as cultural background, cognitive features, ethnicity, religion,

gender and age. Test task features such as the test environment, the guiding format, input and expected manner of examination are also crucial for the DBE.

All this verification process ensures that the DBE has valid assessment tools in terms of face, content and construct validity.

3.1.2.1.2.2 Invigilation

For DBE, carrying out assessment procedures to ensure a fair and secure exam environment is of paramount importance. To achieve this, before the exam, the Testing Unit sends an e-mail announcing the names of the instructors who are responsible for the invigilation and the invigilation guidelines that all the invigilators are expected to comply with during the exam. By doing this, DBE aims to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skill and knowledge in a suitable exam environment.

3.1.2.1.2.3 Marking

Marking is the process of assigning a numerical value to students' performance in a test. Accurate marking is of great importance at DBE as it clearly affects the reliability of the tests and the validity of the inferences made based on the test scores. This can help all the stakeholders.

In order to ensure marking standards, instructors who are responsible for marking are expected to comply with the invigilation guidelines sent by the Testing Unit before the exam.

For the evaluation of the exams, the Testing Unit assigns teachers to mark the papers and sends an e-mail announcing the marking list, the time of the standardization meetings and the rooms allocated for the meetings a week before the date of the exam.

Achievement tests are double marked and checked a third time for any likely measurement errors. In order to have uniformity in the correction of the tests, all instructors responsible for marking are required to follow the same procedure while marking the exam papers.

Exam results are announced accurately by due time and date. Students can see their exam papers and they are provided with feedback for weekly quizzes, writing quizzes and achievement exams. After the announcement of the exam results, students have the right to request the remarking of their exam paper after within 3 working days (See related procedures).

3.1.3. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The success of any curriculum or teaching and learning policy depends on effective teaching which in turn relies on an effective professional development programme. At the DBE, we are aware of the importance of giving necessary support, guidance and opportunities to our instructors. Through needs analysis, weekly level meetings focusing on teaching practices and the implementation of the syllabus, and reflection reports both written by peers and teacher trainers, the demands of our instructors are determined, and a tailor-made programme is designed and conducted every academic year. In this programme, in-house presentations and workshops moderated by our instructors as well as external trainers and experts are offered at different intervals. At the beginning of each academic year, a comprehensive induction programme is held for newly recruited teachers to familiarise them with School's pedagogical culture and expectations as well as the administrative rules. Teachers are also encouraged to participate in national and international workshops, seminars and conferences.

There is also a staff appraisal system which aims to acknowledge and evaluate teacher performance and identify the needs of individual instructors as a basis for professional development activities. The criteria for the performance evaluation of DBE instructors are effective teaching performance and leading students to success. The purpose of this evaluation is to motivate our instructors to work more efficiently and qualitatively. At the beginning of each academic year all the instructors are informed about the criteria they will be evaluated by. At the end of each academic year, each instructor is given a score considering different components such as participating in study groups, contribution to examination and material preparation, class success at the end of terms, etc. (for details see Instructor Performance Evaluation Criteria). The head of the department interviews each teacher personally and has a semi-structured interview about the teacher's personal opinions considering:

- the education system of the school in general, including the syllabus, materials, online studies, assessment and performance evaluation criteria
- the extracurricular activities he/she has been involved in
- the teacher's own personal reflection on his/her performance
- the administrative system
- suggestions the teacher would like to offer

- his /her strengths and weaknesses
- how he/she is planning to improve himself/herself

3.2. THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES

The DML is the other department of the SFL. It functions with highly qualified English language professionals and is committed to excellence in teaching/learning and service in the following disciplines: General and Academic communication skills; critical reading, research, presentation skills and academic writing.

3.2.1. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN THE CURRICULUM POLICY

In DML curriculum applications the concept of quality is maintained at all levels; preparation, practice and evaluation. Firstly, curricula are prepared according to the departments. Apart from the academic needs of the students, this process is followed through questionnaires sent to the departments. Beside the academic needs, future job skills are also taken into consideration, and the 3rd year studies at DML are spared for these skills.

In addition, during practice, all curricula are under scrutiny in terms of quality. Every month course review meetings are held where immediate amendments are carried out upon requests from practising instructors if need be. Finally, all curricula are subject to formative and summative evaluations, during which the necessary main changes and quality improvement practices are applied. All quality applications are carried out with all the parties: instructors, demands from departments and students, practising teachers, heads and admin personnel.

In the following part, the applications in quality improvements of the curriculum at the DML will be explained.

3.2.1. 1. Curriculum aims

The main aim of the curriculum is to provide the students with a good command of the language and academic skills that are necessary for their studies in different departments, and occupational skills that will help them in their future lives. In order to realise these aims the department is eager to provide variety of curricular choices and learning and acquisition opportunities. In addition, the department provides various other foreign language courses and online courses if requested. The DML curriculum is subject to continuous improvement and change in accordance with the academic, social and technological changes.

3.2.1.2. Meeting academic needs

For the DML curriculum, identifying the needs and writing the objectives and outcomes is the starting point of the quality cycle, which continues with the implementation of the teaching/learning processes. For the development of the curriculum, feedback forms are collected from students and instructors on a regular basis to see if it serves their needs.

To inform all parties about the details of the courses offered, the following information prepared in line with the Bologna Agreement, is documented and shared through Student Handbooks, Instructors' Booklet and on the DML web page:

- the course descriptions based on Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR),
- the aims and objectives of the courses,
- the content, materials, and syllabi
- the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) values.

Upon the specification of the objectives of the DML, different teaching/learning processes are prepared, and according to their levels and needs students are grouped and placed in proper courses. In this framework, students of English medium departments are offered Academic English Courses (EAP) followed by English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) Courses.

On the other hand, students of Turkish medium departments are offered Basic English Communication Skills Courses followed by English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) Courses.

Additionally, for those students who need a second foreign language, the requested foreign language courses are offered.

3.2.1.3. Fostering learner autonomy

The DML aims to encourage the students to benefit from the existing facilities, such as computer labs, library, TV rooms and other related materials, through which they will eventually learn how to make their own decisions regarding their academic needs. By using online platforms, they are expected to make use of every opportunity to be able to interact with native speakers and other language learning materials at their reach. That is why in most

of the courses offered by DML, there is an online or flipped learning component so that students can study at their own pace and self-chosen time and place.

3.2.1.4. Providing individual guidance

In DML courses there are some components concerning various topics, such as study skills or coping with test anxiety in order for students to be happy, contented and successful individuals. For more serious problems like anger management as well as probable various defects (hearing, speaking impediments, etc.), instructors get help from the Psychology Department of the university for seminars and guidance. In addition to these, each instructor at the DML has an extra office hour for each class, for student consultation.

3.2.1.5. Effective use of teaching/learning materials

The course books, online materials and supplementary materials prepared by the department staff, all have a great role in helping achieve the learning objectives. Additional printed and online sources, such as graded readers, extensive reading materials and videos, to be used at different language levels in and outside of the classroom, are also components of the teaching materials.

Based on the aims and objectives and also taking the students' initial freshman level and expected sophomore level into consideration, the course materials are either ordered from publishers or prepared in-house. The materials are carefully divided into chunks of weekly plans, suggestions regarding classroom strategies and activities are included in the operational plans for ease in the collective handling of the materials in line with the syllabus.

3.2.1.6. Utilising teaching/learning methods, techniques and strategies

The DML serves quite diverse students at all the faculties and departments either with Basic English Skills or EAP. Therefore, varied methods and techniques for teaching and facilitating learning English are applied, depending on the level and the needs of students.

The methods, techniques and strategies can change in a learning environment, depending on the level, department of the course, homogeneity of the group in terms of motivation, attitudes and values students apply to learning. The skilful and willing instructor is the guide on the students' side, a co-learner and a facilitator. Thus, he/she can use all available resources, (including him/herself), and conditions to draw the student to the learning process

helping the students to stay involved, active and participative. In this framework, visuals, videos, realia, demonstration, drama, mimicry, technology, and all kinds of integrated strategies can be used for the realisation of learning through application. The methods, techniques and strategies are designed to facilitate cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning.

The main issue in this process is to encourage the students to discover their learning styles and establish communication channels with the instructors and peers to support their development. After all, it is they who have to succeed in the ‘learning act’ and be proud of themselves.

3.2.2. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluation and assessment are the two sides of the teaching/learning coin. Because assessment is the manifestation of learning or achievement, various assessment tools are used to help students display their learned skills or knowledge.

The best way is to create suitable settings where students put their newly acquired skills into use. Therefore, at different times of the term, different tools are used to test how much learning and acquisition have taken place compared to the expected level. Each assessment type is determined and written in the curriculum documents at the beginning of the term (Bologna documents) in accordance with the learning objectives and is shared with all the parties. Time, place, number, type, grades, weighting of each assessment tool in the end-of-term grade values, and test specifications are all documented in the curriculum.

In addition to mini tasks and quizzes given throughout the term, the midterm exam, the final exam and continuous assessment (including portfolios, presentations, classroom participation, online tasks, scheduled papers, as well as online assignments) are used. Each assessment tool is carefully planned to give way and chance for all students to display their learning and improvement.

Before each evaluation instrument is applied, students are given adequate instruction and guidelines with sample questions regarding different elements of the assessment (see Course memos, test specifications). They are also provided with written task sheets through which they are clearly guided. After the application of written exams, answer keys are shared and marker agreement and consistency is enhanced through standardization meetings. The process is augmented and justified by random checking and second marking.

3.2.2.1. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The primary aim of DML is to achieve reliable and valid outcomes in a consistent and transparent manner during the assessment processes. In order to do so, quality control and recording mechanisms are established for every written exam and continuous assessment tool, including various tasks performed throughout the term. Quality control is ensured through a system of sampling, moderation, and internal verification in compliance with the requirements of the curriculum offered. (*See course files*)

3.2.2.2. RELIABILITY

As for reliability of the exams prepared, depending on the type of decision expected to make, either **KR21** or **square-error loss analysis** are used. Language level vocabulary range, skills to be tested, question types, text length, balance of recognition and productive skills are carefully planned. Test specifications are used to ensure that the test prepared enjoy congruence and are equivalent. The similar exam conditions are applied in both the midterm and final exams, with the questions and possible responses going through consistency and reliability checks. The Testing Unit designs the exams in a way that all students that take the same exam have the same opportunity to demonstrate their performance fairly in a secure environment. The Testing Unit is also responsible for informing learners and instructors about the exam and standardization format and procedures, ensuring the standardization of the tests, providing instructors with guidelines on how to implement the exams and for holding standardization sessions for the instructors in the assessment of productive language skills (i.e. writing and speaking exams).

3.2.2.3 VALIDITY

DML exams are valid in that the objectives of the course are the base features to be tested. In other words, course outcomes and test specifications match each other. In order to improve validity, goals and objectives of every course are clearly defined and shared with students at the beginning of the semester. The exams are prepared based on the test specifications. They are reviewed and finalised upon the feedback provided by different parties. (*See Written exam preparation procedure*) The crucial procedures which ensure the validity of the exams are as follows:

3.2.2.3.1 Internal Verification

Internal verification is a highly important quality assurance in DML courses. It is noteworthy to state that the exams prepared throughout the academic year combine all the productive and receptive skills and the language areas of EAP.

The written tests are prepared in line with the test specifications which are determined considering the aims, objectives and content of the course. Test specifications define the test content and clearly explain how that content will be assessed. The specifications also serve as a link between the content standards and the items in the particular test. The Testing Unit is subject to design tests that are sensitive to race, gender and cultural background and free from any topic that might provoke severe emotional reaction on the part of the students and instructors. The exam system including the components in connection with the outcomes, the question formats and the scoring criteria are shared with students and instructors at all courses. This helps the students not to suffer from ambiguity. (*See exam procedures and test specifications*) In order to ensure that internally assessed work consistently meets the determined outcomes, the following procedures are followed:

- The Testing Unit is responsible for developing, designing, implementing and improving the quality of exams, in accordance with the outcomes in the curricula.
- The Testing Unit ensures that the outcomes of the curriculum align with each individual test item.
- These exams include written exams, which aim at assessing the language achievement levels of students with respect to all language skills.
- The Testing Unit provides students and instructors with information regarding the nature and content of the tests prior to the tests, through class instructors, as well as with the criteria to be used in the assessment of receptive and productive skills. They also carefully plan the application of exams in order to give each student the same opportunity to demonstrate his/her performance in the areas tested.

Each DML course is assigned to certain members of the Testing Unit, who deal with all the issues related to the above-mentioned exams of the course. Although the people in charge

are divided into groups, each group follows the same procedures to maintain an internal verification of the exams as stated below.

3.2.2.3.2. Invigilation Procedure

Invigilation is a duty and responsibility for conducting a particular exam session in the presence of candidates. Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the exam process. In accordance with regulatory requirements, the role of the invigilator is to:

- provide a safe and secure environment for the students that take the exam,
- ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and thoughts,
- ensure the security of the exam papers and completed response sheets, before, during and after the exam,
- prevent possible student malpractice,
- prevent possible administrative failures, (*See* duties and procedure of invigilation and proctoring)

Assessment procedures are carefully carried out at DML to ensure that security is maintained and that exams are conducted fairly and that a suitable environment is provided for all students to sit the exams. Depending on the class size and/or the physical conditions of the exam room, one or more invigilators are allocated to written exams and certain (two) jury members are allocated to oral production exams. (*See* exam procedures, invigilation duties and exam programs)

3.2.2.3.3. Marking Procedure

There are large groups of students who take the same course and naturally the same exams. Assigning a numerical value to language learners' language knowledge and gaining a clear understanding of how well the students have acquired some knowledge and skills in order to become effective users of language is the main focus of marking.

All instructors at DML are responsible for the implementation of marking/grading. It is essential that the instructors abide by the rules such as:

- confidentiality and fair application of all procedures,
- following the agreed rubrics/criteria to mark tasks,
- giving clear and comprehensible oral and written feedback on the tasks,

- having a clear-cut understanding of how well they are doing,

After the administration of the written exams, answer keys are prepared, standardization meetings are carried out for improving rater agreement, and lastly random checking and third marking are applied for further marker standardization.

Marking is necessary not only in the exams, and in special settings, but there are also in-class or out-of-class tasks to be marked. (Sample Task sheet, portfolio form/information) For such tasks, the following points are carefully planned: the aim of the task, the requirements of the task, the procedures of the task, the allocated time and grades for sub tasks. During the process, not only is the displayed skills and knowledge marked, but the students' attitudes, attributed value to the task (quality) and time management are also evaluated.

After the meticulous administration of the exams, there is the standardization session for all courses so that fair marking can be ensured. Upon completion of the first marking using the same answer keys for each exam, random check is used and second marking may be applied if need be.

Test results are announced accurately and in a timely fashion. All the students are provided with regular feedback to help them track their own progress and reach their full academic potential. Therefore, students are encouraged to see their exam/task papers and get feedback. Since testing is a reflection of teaching, students are given opportunities to learn from their mistakes. Students have the right to ask for remarking of the test paper upon the announcement of the results (in 7 days). (*See* related procedures). Grades are recorded and statistical analyses such as KR21 and square-error loss analysis are carried out for both academic and administrative purposes.

3.2.3. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN DML PDU

In compliance with the SFL Staff Development Policy, the PDU Division is of great help for instructors either through pre-service and in-service training or observations and feedback giving. On the other hand, the instructors are all in the process of continuous learning and self-development. With all the learning and teaching activities and understanding, DML acts as a learning institution in all ways in order to facilitate EFL learning of the students. Teacher action research studies are very good examples of searching for new trends in ELT and EAP. (Samples)

3.2.3.1. Seminars and Workshops:

The DML and the PDU prepare and organize pre service, in service and midterm seminars and workshops. The pre-service, in-service training and induction programs are designed to welcome and orientate the new instructors towards the department atmosphere and refresh the existing instructors in possible curriculum changes and ELT trends.

The areas that instructors need additional guidance, support and training are determined through questionnaires, meetings and reflection reports.

Some workshops are delivered by the PDU coordinator and some are delivered by external experts. After the seminars, instructor implications are collected through discussion sessions or questionnaires.

3.2.3.2. Conferences:

Apart from frequent in-house seminars and workshops, teachers are encouraged to join conferences or seminars outside the university, to develop and share experiences.

Procedures for attendance at national and international activities are as follows;

- As stated above, the instructors are encouraged to attend and present at both national and international conferences. In order to join the conferences there are certain steps to be followed in this process, such as:
- The instructors inform DML Administration about their intention to attend a conference or the administration encourages certain instructor(s) to attend a conference, depending on his /her performance responsibility.

Other main activities by the PDU are as follows:

- Regular meetings with instructors, focusing on weekly teaching practices and the implementation of the syllabus,
- Ongoing course review forms and meetings
- Meetings with individual instructors
- End of term evaluation forms
- Encouragement of instructors to engage in active research in their classrooms and to participate in various projects according to their interests

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- Assigning institutional tasks to perform (1Book 1Topic, Speaking club, İz Journal, Cumhuriyet Newspaper etc.)
- Getting the consent and permission of the university to join in writing a book outside the university
- To organise a university wide seminar or conference to augment institutional wellbeing
- If an instructor wishes to do research in the classroom or do a larger-scale research on campus, s/he needs to get the consent of the administration by giving detailed information about the nature of the study, i.e. how the participants will be treated, how the standards in the school will be affected, and how the findings will be disseminated. (Atılım Research Rules and Ethics)
- Upon the (written) request of the instructor, the department sends the petition to the SFL administration for approval and to be sent to the Board of Trustees in order to get the institutional form permission and, if need be, to provide a budget for the registration and other expenses. The instructor represents the SFL and the University during the conference/or activity.
- After the conference or the activity, the instructor informs colleagues about his/her impressions and benefits so that everyone benefits and also writes a report.

3.2.3.3. Staff Appraisal Policy

In the Department of Modern Languages, there is a Staff Appraisal System which aims to acknowledge and evaluate teacher performance and identify the needs of individual instructors as a basis for professional development activities. The Head/Director interviews each teacher personally at least once a year and has a semi-structured interview about the teacher's personal opinions considering:

- The education system of the school in general, including the syllabus, materials, online studies, assessment and performance evaluation criteria
- The extracurricular activities s/he has been involved with
- The teacher's own personal reflection on his/her performance

- The administrative system
- Suggestions the teacher would like to offer
- His/her strengths and weaknesses

Following the interview, both parties, the Chair and the teacher, write a reflection on their personal views of the interview. They are then expected to sign the written document and give it to the Chair to be kept in their personal file. If there is anything the teacher cannot or does not want to state directly, they are free to discuss it later.

IV. QUALITY MAINTENANCE PLANS

As can be seen in the following information, quality maintenance is crucial for the DML in all cognitive applications; teacher learning, assessment, teacher training and also in affective issues like complaints, grievances as well as celebrations. In this framework, for all areas of practice, quality is ensured through proactive measures, like plans, procedures, rules and regulations, information sharing, caring and being mindful towards each other in the DML community. It may be necessary to keep an eye on the university's mission and vision to guide the applications. Below is more detailed information about quality ensuring adherence to practices.

4.1. ACTION PLAN FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Quality Maintenance is crucial for the SFL especially in the curriculum because it is directly related and open for renewal as long as quality is maintained; therefore, quality improvement checks and amendments are always made without hesitation, although changes of any kind may come with great bonus and workload for the administration and instructors as well.

4.1.1. Action plan for quality improvement in teaching/learning

During the change process the following considerations are always kept in mind;

- Designing the curriculum in such a way that it will make it possible to attain the objectives stated in the curriculum based on the CEFR
- Training instructors on the developed curriculum and the CEFR indicators
- Proposing and designing the types of questions that will bring instruction and testing in line with terms as stated in the curriculum document

- Showing the objectives and test specifications and types of question on the curriculum
- Supporting the syllabus with additional materials for the required types of question
- Informing learners on the components of the curriculum
- Integrating online platforms into the curriculum
- Training instructors and learners about the online components of the curriculum
- Improving/updating the technical equipment in each class and computer laboratory
- Developing Flow of Feedback to and from All Parties (reports, announcements, messages, course memo, Bologna Documents, feedback forms, meetings and minutes etc.)

4.1.2. Action plan for quality improvement in assessment

As part of the quality assurance policy, not only the input component of the curriculum is considered but also assessment is highly important for us. Therefore, the following points are considered deeply:

- Ensuring that assessment methods meet the objectives of the CEFR (Test what you teach and transfer skills)
- Revising and editing question types used in exams
- Raising teacher awareness of what, why and how to test
- Training instructors about various assessment methods
- Revising the marking criteria to improve standardisation among classes
- Getting continuous feedback from instructors and students on the evaluation and improvement of special tasks like project/ portfolio work
- Developing question item banks for future reference and use

4.1.3. Action plan for quality improvement in staff training

When quality is concerned in a teaching/learning environment the workforce is the key component. Instructors are the backbone of the whole workforce, therefore their training and

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quality improvement is of utmost importance to serve the (customers) students. The following are the points of consideration for staff training for future reference;

- Instructors should be consulted for training needs through questionnaires
- Instructors should share and discuss their ideas with the staff training unit
- Instructors can be asked to complete a reflection sheet to reflect on their own teaching (appraisal)
- Meetings can be held to discuss strengths and areas of improvement for each instructor (appraisal)
- Instructors can often invite colleagues to be observed by the PDU coordinator (if needed, video recorded) and feedback given afterwards (peer coaching)
- All instructors are trained on how to use the available technology and how to support their classes
- More peer observations and class observations should be arranged

4.1.4. Action plan for improvement in complaint procedures

- Documents and forms will be revised and improved as needed
- Cases which are specific to the systems and procedures carried out in the school will be added to the complaint procedures in the quality manual and students' handbook
- Possible outcomes of complaints, appeals or investigations will be added to the quality manual and learner manual to inform both the staff and learners about what to expect when a complaint is made
- Records of complaints, appeals and investigations can be recorded