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- There are both public and private universities in Azerbaijan
- Every year, a number of agreements and notes are signed to cooperate between local and foreign higher education institutions

Detailed info:

### **1. General information**

Establishment and operation of educational institutions, both state and private, is monitored by the Ministry of Education and competent authorities. There are both public and private universities in Azerbaijan. Every year, a number of agreements and notes are signed to cooperate between local and foreign higher education institutions. Any educational institution should receive a special permit (license) from the respective executive authority (Ministry of Economics) under the established legislation in order to provide educational activities. State educational institutions are issued special permanent permits (license). Private educational institutions founded by the individuals and legal entities of the Republic of Azerbaijan are issued special permits (license) for a 5-year period.

### **2. The structure of the Higher Education system**

In the Republic of Azerbaijan, access to higher education is open to every person who finishes secondary education level of general school. Azerbaijan started the reform of its higher education system by joining the Bologna Process in 2005, followed by the adoption of the new Law on Education in 2009. This law formally introduced the European Credit Transfer System, three-cycle system of study and diploma supplement. As a result, from the academic year 2009/2010, all newly admitted students have studied under the reformed study programmes at all higher education institutions.

Higher education is divided into three levels: First level (Bachelor Studies), Second level (Master Studies), and the Third level (PhD Studies). Higher education in Azerbaijan is provided at universities/institutes/academies/conservatoires.

Higher education institutions organize and implement study programmes within an academic year commencing, as a rule, on 15th of September and lasting for 12 calendar months.

### **An academic year might be divided into:**

- two semesters, each lasting 20 weeks;
- summer semester lasting 6 weeks;

## **2.1. First Cycle (Bachelor) Programmes**

First cycle studies are offered at all types of higher education institutions in Azerbaijan. A condition for entering a first-cycle study programme is the completion of general secondary and/or specialized secondary education and passage of an entry exam.

### **2.1.1 Branches of study**

Bachelor studies last from four to five years (240 or 300 ECTS) for full-time education (part-time education period is longer by one year). Upon completion of this level of studies, the student receives a Bachelor degree.

Main branches of higher education studies in Azerbaijan are:

- Humanities and social sciences;
- Art and culture;
- Business and Economics;
- Education;
- Natural sciences;
- Technological sciences;
- Agricultural sciences;
- Healthcare, welfare and services;
- Medical sciences.

## **2.2. Second Cycle (Master) Programmes**

### **2.2.1. Branches of Study**

The length of studies at master's level takes from 1,5 to 2 years (90 or 120 ECTS). In order to enroll at Masters programme, students must have completed Bachelor's degree with at least 240 ECTS.

### **2.2.2. Progression of Students**

The student must pass a particular exam at a time determined by HEIs from the moment the relevant lectures are over, to the start of the next semester lectures. There is an obligation to attend 75% of class hours for passing the exam in particular subject. If the student fails to attend these hours or to pass an exam, he or she has to select the same subject and to enroll next academic semester again. A maximum number of selections of failed subject and exam passage attempts are not determined.

### **2.2.3. Student Assessment**

The maximum given score is 100 for each discipline, 50 points of which are accumulated during the semester and the other 50 points during the examination session. The points accumulated within the multi-score system indicate the followings:

- less than 51 points – unsatisfactory
- 51-60 points – fair
- 61-70 points – satisfactory
- 71-80 points – good
- 81-90 points – very good
- 91-100 points – excellent

Students have to accumulate minimum 17 points to pass the exam. Overall points from pre-examination and examination performance after accumulation must not be less than 51 points for obtaining the ECTSs of the subject.

### **2.2.4. Certification**

The authority responsible for certification is the higher education institution. Upon completion of the first level of higher education, the student receives a diploma with his/her relevant professional title, average degree and the number of ECTS earned. The Ministry Education gives blanks of the diploma and the academic transcript to HEIs. The student also receives a diploma supplement, which contains information regarding the level, type and content of the studies completed successfully.

## **2.3. Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes**

### **2.3.1 Organization of Doctoral Studies**

The third Cycle (PhD) of higher education in Azerbaijan is the only level at which ECTS not implemented yet.

Training of highly qualified scientific pedagogical human capital in the Republic of Azerbaijan is executed through the doctoral studies, which is the highest education level, (in case of military education institutions – graduate military course) and is completed with the final award of relevant degrees. Doctoral studies are carried out in two programs - Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Sciences. Doctoral studies are carried out on both full-time and part-time basis.

Higher education institutions and scientific organizations, offering doctoral studies, also execute the training of scientific and scientific-pedagogical cadre through dissertation research.

Full-time education under the Doctor of Philosophy program lasts for 3 years, part-time 4 years and with dissertation research for 4 years. Full-time education under the Doctor of Sciences program lasts for 4 years, part-time for 5 years and with dissertation research for 5 years. In exceptional cases, education period can be extended and it is applicable for all the degree types.

### **2.3.2. Assessment**

Doctoral student works according to individual work plan approved by the academic council of higher education institution and scientific organization during his/her time in doctoral studies. Doctoral student is required to deliver reports during the meetings held by the department, division, chair and and laboratory from time to time with regards to the work plan progress. Those who complete individual work plan and scientific-research work are allowed to defend their dissertations to acquire a "Doctor of Philosophy" degree. Doctoral students deliver annual reports to the academic council of higher education institution and scientific organization on the implementation of individual work plan. Progress of the student is determined based on the report. A doctoral student shall complete a dissertation, undergo approbation, and defend it in accordance with the pre-determined rules in the course of doctoral studies to obtain a "Doctor of Science" degree.

### **2.3.3. Certification**

Alumni, who completed their education in doctoral studies and with dissertation research, are awarded with the relevant certificate and reference of the education institution about passing their examinations.