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The Report on Termez State University preparedness for future challenges

TERMEZ STATE UNIVERSITY, UZBEKISTAN



Triggering innovative approaches and entrepreneurial skills for students through creating conditions
for graduate's employability in Central Asia

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Introduction

This Report on HEI preparedness for future challenges at Termez State University serves as a basic document for further work on the project “Triggering innovative approaches, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in HEI learners through creating the favourable conditions for graduate’s employability in Central Asia” (TRIGGER) outputs preparation. The assessment is based on the HEInnovate tool - a free self-assessment tool for all HEIs, an initiative of the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, and the OECD LEED, Forum. Generally, it is intended for HEIs who are interested in assessing themselves against several statements related to the entrepreneurial and innovative nature of their higher education environment. The report provides the first practical inside of eight areas:

1. Leadership and Governance
2. Organizational Capacity: Funding, People, and Incentives
3. Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning
4. Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs
5. Digital Transformation and Capability
6. Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration
7. The Internationalised Institution
8. Measuring Impact

The strength and weaknesses of the Termez State University are identified and suggestions for strong support and weakness overcoming are prepared.

The self-assessment of the Termez State University was carried out from the 1st of April to the 27th of May 2021. The respondents included top management of the university, teachers, researchers, and professional and support staff.

Altogether 104 respondents used the HEInnovate tool.

1. Termez State University in a glance

Termez State University is one of the biggest universities located in the south of Uzbekistan. It was established in 1954 as a Termez State Pedagogical Institute. According to Presidential Decree, it became a university in 1992. By 2020, there are 14 faculties at the university with 25000 student enrolment, including day-time, evening-time, by correspondence, or distant forms of education. 717 academic staff and about 500 technical staff are working at the university. Termez State University trains specialists not for only Uzbekistan, but also for neighbouring countries such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. Since 1954, more than 60,000 alumni graduated from the university, and, most of them are successfully working in different fields of the Surkhandaryya region’s economy.

In the recent past, agriculture has played a leading role in the regional economy. In recent years, new networks have emerged. The natural geographical location of the region is favorable, and labor resources are sufficient. Industrial production (light and food industries), agriculture (cotton and wheat growing, cattle breeding, and sheep breeding), and transport (especially rail and road transport) play a significant role in the development of the regional economy.

The leading industries are cotton ginning and cotton processing. Major industrial enterprises are Jarkurganefit Department, Sherabad Ceramics, Sherabad Cement Plant, Denau Oil Extraction, Sariosiyo Stone Sorting Plants, Shurchi Flour Mill, Jarkurgan Spinning and Weaving, Termez Sewing Factories, Shargun Coal and other Surkhandarya Mining Enterprises close joint. More than 4,000 small and private enterprises are operating. The main branches of agriculture are cotton growing, grain growing, horticulture, silkworm breeding, and lemon growing. In the foothills, naturally irrigated land is engaged in agriculture (mainly wheat and barley). Faculties of Chemistry and Technology, Natural Sciences, Information technology, Physics, and mathematics have close relations with the above-mentioned enterprises.

The share of railway transport in the region is large. The length of railways in the region is 300 km. The importance of the highway in the internal and external transport links of the region is very important. The length of paved roads in the Surkhandarya region is 2.7 thousand km.

In addition to the industries and sectors listed above, the graduates will find jobs in other sectors and industries of the economy, particularly finance, banking, taxation, treasury, insurance, culture, education, health, sports, and others.

Faculty of Architecture and Construction, Economics and Tourism, and other faculties have established scientific and academic cooperation with the organizations of the region, the result of which integration of education, science, and production is improved.

In the past, graduates travelled to enterprises and organizations in search of work, but now employers and industry representatives have facilitated the process of recruiting graduates. Happily, the staff of the commission, consisting of personnel staff of employers, conducts work related to the recruitment process (interviews, surveys, written work, logical thinking, etc.) and their results at Termez State University.

The university plays an important role in meeting the needs of the employment rate in the region, having an average of 3000-4000 graduates annually.

The university has 3 campuses, 6 dormitories, and 1 pedagogical institute in the region.

The university offers 36 bachelor's, 25 master's, and 13 doctoral programs.

The number of international students is 175, including citizens of Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan.

2. University organization and management

Termez State University is currently employing more than 1600 employees, 75 teaching staff, 158 PhD, 33 DSc, and 763 non-academic staff. In addition, the university is annually allowing joining the team for those students who are intended to progress their career in the education industry, which basically proves intense growth of employment during recent years.

The university has been financially dependent on the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. However, the Ministry has announced Termez State University financially independent for the last few months, which means that it is up to the university to increase and improve its financial state. In total, the total budget of the university is more than 23 million euros, out of which 16,7 million euros from the private sector, and about 3 million euros from the public sector. In 2021, the university allocated about 20,000 euros for research activities, and about 10, 000 euros for international operations.

The university is currently participating in the process of data collection for THE (Times Higher Education) impact ranking for 2022 which shows how the global higher education sector is working towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This ranking is open to any higher education institution in the world. This is different from THE World University Rankings, which includes a minimum publication volume as part of the eligibility criteria. In UniRank, the leading international higher education directory and search engine featuring reviews and rankings of over 13,600 officially recognized Universities and Colleges in 200 countries, Termez State University ranked 10796th place (<https://www.4icu.org/reviews/universities-english/11921.html>), and 35th place in the national rank of the country (<https://tdi.uz/uz/page/Yangiliklar/1069>).

Termez State University is considered a public institution and offers a very wide selection of majors with a broader approach. There is a State Testing Centre under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is responsible for conducting external quality assurance in all educational institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan every five years. TerSU was successfully certified for Quality Assurance in 2016, and a new certificate is going to be presented in 2022.

Termez State University constantly provides staff training to their employees to ensure growth in their careers, and the progress of the organization, to keep them in line with the organization's goals and aims. The staff of the Department of Marketing and Student Practice always attends regular training in different aspects organized by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education. Although this training is not focused on the best practices, leadership, or staff week, the Department of Marketing and Student Practice is in charge of organizing job fairs, as the last one was held in the university in April, 2022.

The university prioritizes sending professors and academic staff to the leading higher education and research institutions of foreign countries for targeted internships and staff training. The costs of these academic travels are covered by the fund "El-yurt umidi", if the candidates apply for and win scholarships. The next fund is named "Support of innovative development and innovative ideas", which offers a variety of financial support abroad for national researchers. Sometimes, the university offers cost sharing for the staff, such as covering flight, and accommodation costs, to motivate them to participate in training abroad. For 2021, the percentage of the university staff who participated in staff training, seminars and international projects abroad account for only 1%.

The University logo was created in 2018 and was approved by the Supreme Council of the University (visit www.terasu.uz). The front image of the main building of the university, the year it was founded, name of the university and the sun behind are the main parts of the university logo. The Vision of the university is to forge strong, mutual, and positive connections with students so they can achieve independence as well as confidence and gain academic knowledge. The Mission of the university is to strive to be a premier educational institution in Uzbekistan, based on the safety and sustainability of the university environment, where multinational student bodies will gain innovative skills and knowledge for their future careers. The Motto of the university is "Inspiring the future".

The university has a Marketing and Communication Plan in force, which has to be approved by the Supreme Council of the University, and this plan is considered to be one part of the university's Strategic Plan. The main aspects and tasks of the Marketing and Communication Plan are as follows:

- to improve the activities of the Career Centre of Termez State University;
- in-depth analysis of current undergraduate courses and master's specialties based on modern trends and company needs;
- to determine the duration of education based on the characteristics of the fields of study and master's specialties, based on international experience, and taking into account the suggestions of companies;
- to create a database of problems in production enterprises;
- systematic analysis and evaluation of employment processes of graduates of Termez State University;
- to ensure the cooperation of university and companies in the personnel training process;
- to help organize student practice in production enterprises and IT centres;
- to launch the preparation of innovative projects in cooperation with the members of the incubation centres.

The Career Centre of Termez State University is responsible to control all these activities mentioned above.

Internal communication is conducted by the Record Office and the Office of Appeals and Internal Monitoring based on the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 10, 2021, No. PD-6166 "On additional measures to strengthen the personal responsibility of the heads of state administration bodies and local executive authorities in the effective organization of the implementation of legislative documents". These offices mostly communicate with the whole university staff through a single electronic system of interagency named "Ijro.gov.uz". This is a completely new system of monitoring the implementation of laws, decrees, decisions, and orders of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and related Ministries. Additionally, Telegram messenger – a social network is the fastest way to deliver messages, and documents among the university staff and students. Related news and events are also highlighted on the Telegram channel of the university regularly. (Visit: <https://t.me/terdu340>).

External communication is conducted by the Record Office, the Office of Appeals and Internal Monitoring, and the Press Secretary. They can contact government offices, organizations, and other educational institutions. Also, they are in charge of setting external contacts, sending e-letters, analyzing reports, and finalizing the data provided by the departments. The Press Secretary and almost

all related departments have access to external communication. The Press Secretary cooperates with the media, disseminates information, and newsletters, and organizes mass events. News on campus and dormitory life is posted by the Press Secretary on the Telegram channel on a daily basis. However, all types of official letters on behalf of the university administration need registration by the Record Office.

International Relations Office of the university coordinates, monitors and gives operational support for the development of educational cooperation and internationalization initiatives in the field of training, scientific research and academic mobility. The Office aims to develop cooperation strategies with higher education institutions and companies, inside and outside the Asian area, within the scope of student and teacher mobility programs; develop international cooperation actions in terms of scientific research projects, support the exchange of students and teachers between foreign higher education institutions and companies and coordinate their mobility within international programs. The Office is responsible for organizing international meetings, conferences, and visits and is in charge of making contracts with foreign partners.

The official website of the university is www.tersu.uz and information is available in three languages - Uzbek, Russian, and English. International users may have problems with finding relevant information as in the latter two languages the website needs improvements. The navigation is appropriate to international standards, it is simple with a limited number of options and also, includes a clear call to action to the website navigation, particularly to the pages such as departments or administration.

The most effective social media tools are used in order to promote the university. Specifically, they show how the university interacts with the students, address aspects related to class organization and coursework, demonstrate the facilities, and inform them about ongoing events. They are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and the easy-to-use communication abilities of Telegram. These are the direct social network links of the university.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/tersu.uz/>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/tersu.uz/>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/c/Termizdavlatuniversiteti>

Telegram- <https://t.me/terdu340>

Except for social media tools, printed versions of the university brochures and guides play an important role in pre-admission campaigns and the induction of first-year students. The visiting scholars also take advantage of the guides and brochures to get to know the structure, campus life, and facilities of the university. The university provides a high number of brochures at job fairs and conferences held at the university.

As visual merchandising is necessary for retail outlets that depend on heavy foot traffic and it is an effective way to attract customers the university supports merchandise sales inside the campus. Students of the Faculty of Arts together with their craftsmen produce various types of ceramic products, such as national ceramic dishes and national souvenirs. These products are sold on campus shops and beyond – craft fairs and exhibitions. There are two workshops for the students of the Department of National dress, embroidery, and textiles. In these workshops, students produce various types of national clothes, embroidery, and other handicrafts, which will also be offered for sale. The university also has six shops, which mainly offer office supplies, rented by entrepreneurs of the region. After the tender for entrepreneurs in August 2022, the university aims to have more than 20 shops on the campus. In addition, the staff and students of the Faculty of Chemistry show high activeness in producing chemical products and plastic tubes outside the campus. This faculty is also involved in national projects that refer to innovative approaches to salt production in the Surkhandarya region.

As it was mentioned above, the priorities of the Department of Marketing and Student Practice have changed in the last months. They have been engaged in more interactive and student-oriented activities as follows.

- The Department took the initiative to establish a Career Center next to the administrative building of the university, which was a new step for the university toward improving the employment rate of the graduates. The center is specifically designed to assist students with honing their job search skills (www.vacancy.argos.uz, www.ish2.mehnat.uz), identifying and working toward career goals, finding suitable careers, getting referrals to employers, and boosting networking skills.
- Secondly, the department staff launched the project of updating information on the website for the graduates regarding vacancies throughout the Surkhandarya region, including Termez city and all districts. (Visit: <https://tersu.uz/struct/view/1000049>). The information on vacancies is designed on a monthly basis and available in Excel forms.
- The third one is that, the department took an advantage of designing electronic versions of the contract between the university and the student. Although it may seem strange before it was in paper form and the students needed to stay in long lines to get the contract and pay the tuition

fee. Digital forms of contracts can be downloaded online, and even can be sent to the banks to start the payment procedures.

3. Education

The university offers programs according to the needs of the labour market. That is why the number of educational programs can be changed annually. Therefore, student enrolment also varies year by year. For example, According to Decree No. PD-279 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 15, 2022 “On the organization of admission processes to state higher education institutions” the number of students for admission to public higher education institutions of the whole Republic for the 2022/2023 academic year is as follows. Full-time enrolment for a Bachelor's degree is 77,477 seats; correspondence enrolment is 26,095 seats; evening enrolment is 3,725 seats; and distance enrolment is 3,410 seats. Full-time enrolment for a Master's degree is 10,688 seats. These numbers are the minimum seats in order to accommodate the needs in certain fields, but public universities have the right to increase the number of seats according to their capacity. Coming out of these figures, currently, 23,350 students are studying for their Bachelor's degree in the four abovementioned forms of education, whereas, only 1,393 Master's students and 85 PhD students are pursuing their academic degrees. At the end of the academic year 2021-2022, the number of Bachelor's students consists of 23350, whereas Master's Course students are 1393, and Ph.D. students and Post-Graduate studies students are 85 people. The number of international students from Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan is over 130. The admission process for international students is quite simple and not on the basis of tests, but the pass-through interviews.

Termez State University offers 36 Bachelor Programs, 33 Master's programs, and 32 PhD programs in the 2022-2023 academic year. Besides, in cooperation with Vladimir State University (Russia) and Polotsk State University (Belarus), the university offers joint degree programs both Bachelor's and Master's. Students pursue their Bachelor's joint degree in Economics, Russian Language, and Tourism, while for a Master's joint degree, the only option is the Russian Language.

All study programs were accredited in 2016, however, the university does not offer any programs, which have been accredited by international organizations. As mentioned above, within the joint degree program certain degrees and programs obtained at the university are recognized in Russia and Belarus.

In cooperation with Vladimir State University, TerSU students got the opportunity to spend their one semester in Russia, studying Pedagogy, Russian and English as well as Tourism. By the Ministry's

initiative, 5 students attended a Japanese language course in Japan. However, Termez State University has not hosted any incoming students so far.

The university welcomed more than 40 incoming teachers/professors in the last few years and sent more than 50 academic teaching staff to overseas partner institutions to exchange knowledge and give lectures. The university quite often sends non-academic staff – administration members in cooperation with international partners. In the last few years 15 non-academic staff members were sent abroad to exchange their skills and knowledge. Almost 10 of the university students attended traineeships in Germany, working in hotels as receptionists and housekeepers, and in the fields helping with seasonal harvesting.

Until the Covid-19 pandemic, the university had not practised the online teaching process before. During the block down only, the university started to teach Bachelor's and Master's courses online as well as used the ZOOM platform during auditory classes and Moodle program for assignments and assessment.

During the summer holidays, the university is open to different types of activities. The university dormitory is sometimes used for summer school activities, but the university itself does not offer regular summer school opportunities. However, there are several short training courses in various fields held at the university. As an example, the staff of the Faculty of Foreign Philology always participate in short training courses by international organizations and foreign embassies in Uzbekistan. The university offers short training courses for different professionals outside like bankers, military people, school teachers and local government bodies.

New pedagogical models like E-learning and Distance Learning opportunities were offered during the pandemic for students. For the last two years, ICT development has been central to the Strategy Plan of the university. For this reason, a new building for the Faculty of Information Technologies has opened, the Faculty involves an IT park, and 26 IT laboratories, including robotics, Cisco networking, programming laboratories, graphics and design laboratories.

The university does not have a certain system that enables connecting the university with the alumni. Only Faculty staff take measures for the alumni to stay connected with the university and its current students, although it is a spontaneous activity and not based on any Charter of the university. The university encourages alumni engagement in the life of the university only on bigger occasions and

celebrations within the campus. During the pandemic, the Alumni, working overseas universities, were also offered to have lectures online for Termez State university students. In the near future, the university is aiming to apply online-based application that helps to track the graduates.

The university presents online information on the vacancies and internships offered by local organizations and companies (visit: <https://tersu.uz/struct/view/1000049>). There is also a database of companies and other institutions interested in education provision and /or taking interns.

4. Research and Innovation

During the period of HEInnovate assessment the number of published scientific publications exceeds 1500 units, and the number of highly qualified articles exceeds 60 units. The percentage of the total publication published by the university academic staff developed in co-authorship with international collaboration is 47 percent. Besides 3 scientific journals function at our university.

Termez State University developed 5 international projects, the total value of which exceeds 34,250 euros. In cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, the Central Asian Universities Partnership Program (UniCEN) organized online seminars within the project "Curriculum Master Class: Developing an American Studies Course" and developed a study guide called "American Studies Course". Under the "India Study Room" program with the Embassy of India in Uzbekistan, a room was equipped with a modern and multi-functional electronic board, musical instruments, books in Hindi and English, and pictures introducing Indian culture. In cooperation with Philosophy Faculty of Charles University the mutual research program called "Archaeological research in the Surkhandarya region" is being held in history faculty. Under the US Embassy's Small Grants Program, a collection of English language teaching books will be provided to the university. As the result of the project called "Central Asian Archaeological Landscapes" in cooperation with International Institute For Central Asian Studies (ICASI) centre special materials and books were delivered to the university Information Resource. In addition, there was carried out work on three projects that were developed in cooperation with the European Union, the total cost of which was about 150,000 euros. They are - 1. CBHE Project: 574099-EPP-1-2016-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP PAWER – "Paving the way to interregional mobility and ensuring relevance, quality and equity of access" Grant holder: University of L'Aquila (Italy) From: 2016 to: 2019; 2. CBHE Project: 2017 - 3516/001 - 001 INTRAS – "Intelligent Transport Systems: New ICT – based Master's Curricula for Uzbekistan" Grant holder: Politechnika Gdanska (Poland) From: 2018 to: 2021 Previous Tempus projects at Termez State University; 3. CBHE project: 530786-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-NL-TEMPUS-SMHES TuCAHEA – "Towards a Central Asian higher Education Area: Tuning Structures

and Building Culture” Grant holder: University of Groningen (Netherlands) From: 2012 to: 2015; 4. CBHE project: 544180-TEMPU5-1-2013-1-DE-TEMPUS-JPCR SAMUZ – “Sustainable Agrarian Management Studies for Uzbekistan” Grant holder: Justus Liebig Universitat Giessen (Germany) From: 2013 to: 2016.

Termez State University occasionally welcomes 3-4 visiting scholars per year mostly for the Faculties of Foreign Philology, Economics and Tourism, who stay more than a month. Because of the Covid-19 situation, only one foreign researcher could visit the University in early 2020. The university always offers cost sharing, free flight tickets, and accommodation for the visiting scholars. So far, specialists from the USA, Poland, Germany, Russia, Turkey, France, South Korea, China and Tajikistan got the opportunity to teach in person at the university. Foreign researchers from Poland (1) and Afghanistan (2) are employed at the university. There are 6 Afghanistan Doctoral Students pursuing their PhD degrees at the university.

Research funding between 2016 and 2020 from the state budget was equal to 0.8 million euros, whereas the private sector accounts for only 0.08 million euros. There have not been any research activities funded by European Union, however, the staff of the Faculty of History has long educational and research relationships with Japan, the Czech Republic and China, France and Spain. The university staff and students have done tens of archaeological excavations in the territory of the Surkhandarya Region and reached hundreds of ancient findings, which are preserved in the Archaeology Museum in Termez and were presented at international conferences. Research funding between 2016 and 2020 from international funds is about 0.1 million euros.

For the entire period, the university welcomed one Fulbright specialist from the USA, two specialists from Senior Experten Service (Germany), and one Master’s student for a one-month internship from Munster University (Germany), two Korean specialists within the KOICA program. All those specialists were mostly engaged in foreign language teaching. Termez State University has not received any incoming mobility students from other countries so far for a semester or more.

One of the Termez State University student’s is studying at Munster University within the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Program as well as one employee of the university is pursuing his PhD in Munster University within the fund “El-yurt Umidi” (Uzbekistan).

In 2021 4 new patents were registered by "UZSTANDARD" – the agency for standardization, metrology and certification, but none of them is internationally recognized. The university specialists and researchers obtain 3-4 new patents yearly, especially in Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, and Construction.

5. International cooperation and internationalisation

Termez State University has signed about 70 agreements with foreign partners since 2017, including a Memorandum of Understanding, Agreements of Cooperation, and Joint Degree Agreements. The university itself actively seeks international partnerships and experiences, creates innovative programming and delivery methods, and embraces the internationalization movement without joining any international network or global consortium of higher education institutions.

Previously, the amount of the tuition fee for locals and internationals was determined by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which was too low to enhance the internationalization activities of the university. Today, all universities in the Republic are entitled to offer the amount of tuition fees for the study programs for international students independently. The university has not offered any grants for international students but has lowered the cost of study 2-3 times compared to other universities in Uzbekistan which makes the university easily accessible for people in need from neighboring countries. However, in 2021 special grants were provided only for citizens of Afghanistan based on the special agreement between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Other types of scholarships for international students are not available as there are no institutional, regional, national, or international funding sources. Scholarships are awarded to successful local applicants based on their scores achieved in international or national examinations and their high school or undergraduate grades. Full or partial scholarships are applied towards tuition for education. Therefore, students themselves are mainly responsible for providing for their accommodation, living and travel costs. In addition, local students are entitled to gain Presidential and nominal scholarships, which are presented only once a year. Accordingly, students who receive these scholarships are admitted to the magistracy or doctoral studies of a state university on the basis of an additional state grant without entrance examinations in a speciality corresponding to the direction of the last education.

The Managing Board of Termez State University on International affairs includes the Vice-Rector of International Cooperation and the Head of International Relations Office. They are in charge of shaping the international image of the university and establishing international relations with partner organizations.

Regarding international activities, the university applies bidirectional planning, which is a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. That is to say, the university administration mostly takes initiative to build and strengthen international partnerships, and it is open to receiving any offers made by students and teachers. Moreover, the Ministry also keeps close guidance regarding the international activities of the university. Copies of the international agreements, contracts with international students, and all related information should be presented to the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education.

Newcomers to the university do not struggle with finding their destinations as the campus is full of indication signs. However, almost all signs are in Uzbek. This may generate some problems with internationals. Before the admission process starts, the university applicants and their parents are informed about the help desk contacts where they can get all related information about the admission, examination, documentation and the whole process. When the academic year starts, students can address their faculties for any queries. The students who live in the dormitories can address the dormitory administration for the requests referring to the dormitory life.

Internal communication within the university is conducted in local languages. The service providers are also learning English to serve the internationals professionally.

Students of the Faculty of Arts together with their craftsmen produce various types of ceramic products, such as national ceramic dishes and national souvenirs. These products are sold on campus shops and beyond – in craft fairs and exhibitions.

Several journals and publications come out around a year by the initiative of the university staff. For example, the journal “Science in Surkhandarya” represents the most vital means for disseminating research findings, and is specialized for different academic disciplines or subdisciplines, as well as contains scientific articles and theses of the University’s academic staff and students. The journal “Philological Researches” aims to provide the scientific society with information about the latest research in philology and respective sub-fields, in particular: Language, Literature and Education. Both of these journals are released 4 times per year with a circulation of 8000 copies each year. The newspaper “Termiz Universiteti” comes out twice per month with a circulation of 24,000 copies per year. The newspaper gives information on the latest news, highlights campus activities, and demonstrates some poems, writings and publications of the students and staff.

Additionally, campus journalism has been founded recently at the university which is led by students. In this regard, students will report on weekly news highlighting the most important issues about university activities. (visit: Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/Termizdavlatuniversiteti/videos>, Telegram: https://youtu.be/Tr0Hc4_e9vY)

A social project named “My path” also started in March 2022 which gives the academic staff and students of the university to share their success stories. (visit: <https://youtu.be/DTZiEeKHZk>).

The transparent grading system at universities and for the whole republic is regulated by the Charter by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education on the system of monitoring and evaluating students' knowledge in higher education institutions. (<https://lex.uz/uz/docs/3916793?otherlang=1>)

According to the charter, the Comparative table of student learning assessment in higher education is as follows:

UZBEKISTAN GRADE CONVERSION SYSTEM							
Grades in all Uzbek HEIs	Russian Grade System	ECTS — European Credit Transfer System	USA Grade system (A- F)	GB grade system (%)	Japan grade system (%)	Korean grade system (%)	Uzbek grades in Percentage (%)
«5»	«5»	«A»	«A+»	70 — 100	80 — 100	90 — 100	90 — 100
			«A»				
			«A-»	65 — 69			
«4»	«4»	«B»	«B+»	60 — 64	70 — 79	80 — 89	70 — 89,9
		«C»	«B»	50 — 59			
			«B-»				
«3»	«3»	«D»	«C+»	45 — 49	60 — 69	70 — 79	60 — 69,9
		«E»	«C»	40 — 44			

			«C-»				
			«D+»				
			«D»			60 — 69	
			«D-»				
«2»	«2»	«FX»	«F»	0 — 39	0 — 59	0 — 59	0 — 59,9
		«F»					

6. Informatisation

The university has a universal electronic platform HEMIS (<https://hemis.tersu.uz/>). This universal platform includes numerous functions that cover many areas of students learning and the university staff's activities. The platform enables students to get information about tuition fees and payment, curriculum and schedule of classes, level of course completion, and obtained credits and also it is possible to download the contract form for financial procedures with the help of this system. The lecturers will be able to get the following information: the timetables of classes; midterm exams and final exams; students' attendance in classes. The university staff will be able to get the following information: personal and educational background of students and lecturers; timetables of classes for all students and academic staff; student attendance; workload (occupancy) of lecture rooms and halls; the implementation of the teaching load of lecturers; the information about the scientific work (published books and textbooks, articles, participated project and etc.) Besides the HEMIS platform, the university has an official website (www.tersu.uz) and a Telegram channel (<https://t.me/terdu340>) that has about 17 thousand subscribers. There are students and university staff able to get a wide range of information. Above mentioned HEMIS universal platform (system) also has academic (educational) components which include:

- Course resources (the soft versions of lecture texts, PowerPoint versions, course plan and relevant literature)
- The course tasks (tests, self-education topics and assignments)
- This platform also includes students' graduation system (educational monitoring and midterm exams);

Every student has a cabinet, where all information such as personal information, studied courses, obtained grades and other information is saved. Since all universities are connected to the HEMIS

platform all this information becomes available to another university (the university where the student transferred). In the second half of 2022, the Ministry of Higher Education announced the new rules for students' mobility. The new regulations incorporate more opportunities for the mobility of students among state universities.

The university is connected to the Unified national system of Labour under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan (<https://my.mehnat.uz/login>). The university HR office managers can get information about university personnel by logging into the system which includes staff's personal information, educational background and work experience.

In the period under review, Termez State University had no strategic plan for internationalization, but in 2022, because it became an economically independent university, a special strategic plan was developed. In this strategic plan of the University, the term "internationalization" is not recognized and is not officially recognized as strategically important, but the development of international cooperation is noted as one of the four main directions for 2022 – 2030.

Between 2016-2020 the academic staff was not required any certain English level. However, according to Presidential decree No. PD-5117, from 19th of May 2021 and the Cabinet of Ministries decree No. 312 from 19th of May 2021 all academic staff of HEIs must have at least B2 level in any foreign languages until the 1st September of 2023. Language teachers are required to have a C1 level in foreign languages of their specialty. Moreover, the applicants for all Master's degrees are required to have foreign language certificates in order to apply for their documents.

The position of Vice-Rector of International Cooperation was lacking at the university. As the number of international students and international partners increased, and dual degree programs started, the university experienced formal restructuring in early 2021. Recommendations on the criteria for conducting international relations and signing protocols are developed by the International Department of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Based on these recommendations and criteria, the staff collaborate with foreign partners. In some individual or emergency cases, this scheme may work differently: the university itself decides on what criteria to choose for foreign partners or develops recommendations itself and only then coordinates it with the Ministry.

Certain official documents at the university are drawn up simultaneously in the Uzbek and English languages. The application form for admission to the university is issued in 3 languages: English, Russian, and Uzbek. Transcription of diplomas and diploma supplements are issued in English and Uzbek only. The university strategic plan and the internationalization plan are issued only in the national language. The most asked questions are issued only in English and Uzbek.

The university has allocated some funding for international operations, stimulated staff and student mobility, and participated in international projects. As the university strategy has been developed recently all the funding for international operations will be done in agreement with the internationalization strategy only beginning from September 2022. The best improvement for the university internationalization model will be having separate staff/coordinators for specific purposes (international students and visa processes; international and national grants; joint/dual degree program coordinators).

According to the university's strategic plan for internationalization activities, the university focuses on international student mobility, academic staff mobility, bilateral or multilateral cooperation, strategic partnerships, summer schools, international capacity-building projects, joint/double degree study programs with international partners, internationalization of curricula, international research activities.

The university does not offer any free online courses but hosts many short and long-term trainings and language courses for students within the campus. Most of these courses are conducted by the students and charge the participants as well. With the help of these less charged language courses, the students are having opportunities to get different types of national and international certificates. Student tutors are also benefiting financially from these courses.

During the summer holidays, the university is open to different types of activities. The university dormitory is sometimes used for summer school activities, but the university itself does not offer regular summer school opportunities.

International students at the university are supposed to learn the Uzbek language in order to successfully acquire the courses as the main references and the language of instruction in most classes is the Uzbek language. Exceptions are only The Faculty of Foreign languages, where they are expected to speak in the relative language, and the Faculty of Economics and Tourism, where lecturers offer

instructions in the English language. The university does not offer new pedagogical models for international students.

University students have access to a multinational work environment during their academic path. Based on the agreement of cooperation with German companies and institutions, the students have spent their certain periods abroad doing job shadowing and internships. So far, students worked in hotels and conducted field practices in Germany.

The website of university runs in three languages – Uzbek, Russian and English. International users may have problems with finding relevant information as in the latter two languages the website needs improvements and regular updates.

The Vice Rector of International Cooperation and the International Relations Office are mainly responsible for the international promotion of the university. At the same time, all other departments of the administration closely help with related areas to increase the internationalization of the university. However, the university does not have any international program to encourage international visibility.

Since 2016, the university staff has participated in more than 10 international fairs, 7 staff weeks and 3 international days organized by the university partners mostly in Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

The university offers joint degree programs for both Bachelor's and Masters. Students pursue their Bachelor's joint degree in Economics, Russian Language, and Tourism, while for a Master's joint degree, the only option is the Russian Language. In this regard, the university cooperates with Polotsk State University (Belarus), Kazan State University and Vladimir State University (Russia). For Bachelor's degree, students spend their first two years at Termez State University, and the other two years abroad while for a Master's degree 1+1 is applied.

Electronic versions of the university brochures and guides are available in English, Russian and German languages.

7. Self-assessment of dimensions based on HEINNOVATE

HEInnovate is a self-assessment tool for Higher Education Institutions that wish to explore their innovative potential. It guides universities/ organisations through a process of identification, prioritisation

and action planning in eight key areas (dimensions). HEInnovate diagnoses areas of strengths and weaknesses, opens up discussion and debate on the entrepreneurial/innovative nature of your institution and allows you to compare and contrast evolution over time. The final overall results, achieved by the Termez State University ranged from 3.4 to 3.9 after the survey, ranging from 3.5 to 3.9. The results obtained in eight main directions are above average, and the innovative potential of the university can be assessed as adequate.

DIMENSION: Leadership and Governance

The results of the dimension Leadership and Governance are recorded in the range from 3.6 to 3.8 on a 5-point scale. It means that the participants – university administration, deans and vice-deans of the faculties, heads of the departments and teachers evaluated the performance of the university in improving Leadership and Governance as an average of 3.7 coming out of 5. If we look it through in detail, about 75 percent of the respondents have the idea that entrepreneurship is a major part of the university's strategy, there is commitment at a high level to implementing the entrepreneurial agenda, and there is a model in place for coordinating and integrating entrepreneurial activities across the university, the university encourages and supports faculties and units to act entrepreneurially, and the university is a driving force for entrepreneurship and innovation in regional, social and community development.

In order to develop this area, the university needs to take the following measures:

1. Have a mission statement and written strategy, setting out an entrepreneurial vision for the future of the institution;
2. Strengthen responsibility and accountability for the development of new activities and initiatives that stimulate entrepreneurial potential;
3. Encourage and reward departments and employees who have achieved entrepreneurial and innovative results and let them share their experience;
4. Encourage active participation in the development and implementation of local, regional and national strategies for innovation and entrepreneurship;
5. Launch volunteering projects within and beyond the campus by stimulating active participation of the staff and students;
6. Allow faculties or units within the institution to take full responsibility and ownership of the development of new structures and centres.

DIMENSION: Organisational Capacity: Funding, People and Incentives

The results of this dimension are recorded in the range from 3.5 to 3.7 on a 5-point scale, which means that about 70-75 percent of survey respondents think that entrepreneurial objectives at university are supported by a wide range of sustainable funding and investment sources, the university has the capacity and culture to build new relationships and synergies.

The university is lacking in creating an entrepreneurial environment and attracting stakeholders with strong entrepreneurial backgrounds, supporting business start-ups, developing partnerships with other external stakeholders, and encouraging the entrepreneurial skills of all employees.

In order to develop Organisational Capacity, the university needs to take the following measures:

1. To ensure a strong connection between the financial strategy and the long-term commitment of the university to invest in entrepreneurship and innovative activities;
2. The university administration should create structures for communication between employees and students, as well as for joint decision-making;
3. People with strong entrepreneurial experience should be recruited from the private sector, public or voluntary sectors;
4. Key performance indicators should be set for all employees who support the implementation of the business program;
5. Provide institutional funds to staff to stimulate innovation and change.

DIMENSION: Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning

The results of this dimension are recorded in the range from 3.5 to 3.7 on a 5-point scale which means that about 75 percent of university respondents agree with the idea that the university offers a range of learning opportunities that promote innovative teaching and learning across all disciplines and diverse informal learning opportunities and experiences to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and skills. Unfortunately, the university lacks in co-designing and delivering the curriculum with external stakeholders. In addition, entrepreneurship research is not integrated into the entrepreneurial education offered.

In order to develop Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning, the university needs to take the following measures:

1. The results of entrepreneurship training should be approved at the university level;
2. Integrate external stakeholders' experience and expertise into the development and delivery of extracurricular learning activities and support services;

3. Entrepreneurship education outcomes should be recorded in student achievement records;
4. Encourage staff and researchers to study the latest research on entrepreneurship;
5. Provide events whereby staff and educators can exchange new knowledge and ideas, incorporating the latest research.

DIMENSION: Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs

According to the survey results on the dimension Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs, the university seems to be a good entrepreneurship supporter in most aspects with some lack in raising awareness of entrepreneurship and in stimulating the entrepreneurial intentions of students, graduates and staff to start up a business or venture. The university also needs improvements in supporting its students, graduates and staff to move from idea generation to business creation.

By the numbers on the survey, the results of this dimension are recorded in the range of 3.4 to 3.8 on a 5-point scale. The figures say that the university should steadily improve the way it approaches Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs as the university needs offering or facilitate access to business incubation as well as mentoring by experienced individuals.

The following measures should be taken by the university in order to improve Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs:

1. Create and provide financial literacy courses to improve understanding of the financial concepts and how to apply them in practice them in practice;
2. In order to effectively implement startups, it is necessary to closely connect training, mentoring and incubation activities to access to financial activities;
3. Wide promotion of the incubator for university students and regular organization of events with the participation of potential entrepreneurs within the career center of the university;
4. Provide opportunities for students to be involved in research projects leading to entrepreneurial opportunities and to take up internships with entrepreneurs;
5. Provide intellectual property assistance for potential start-ups;
6. Create a Mentoring programme to help students foster their entrepreneurial activities.

DIMENSION: Digital Transformation and Capability

According to the survey results, the results of this dimension are reported to be in the range of 3.4 to 3.7 on average on a 5-point scale. The numbers show that although the university experiences well-functioning digital culture, it is lacking in having bottom-up innovation.

Despite the fact that the university is attempting to greater engagement with digital technology to provide opportunities for innovative curriculum design and delivery, new pedagogies, learning processes and assessment methods, the university staff and students are still missing digital competence and skills, which are crucial today for every aspect of life.

The following measures should be taken by the university in order to improve Digital Transformation and Capability:

1. Develop a strategy that sets out the goals of how the institution will seek to innovate and improve by digital transformation;
2. Provide training and development opportunities to staff on the use of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment;
3. Create a system that evaluates and monitors the benefits and conveniences of digital transformation in all areas of innovation and entrepreneurship at the university;
4. To attract and keep students, use digital channels like social media, websites, email marketing, and more.
5. Develop mobile apps to keep students informed about happenings on campus, news, and more.

DIMENSION: Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration

According to the results obtained after the survey, the average figure in this dimension ranges from 3.4 to 3.7 on a 5-point scale, which points out that the respondents consider that the university should pay more attention to providing opportunities for staff and students to take part in innovative activities with business and the external environment. Moreover, in order to exploit new knowledge the university is supposed to integrate research, education and industry activities.

The following measures are put forward to improve activities in the dimension of Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration:

1. Involve external stakeholders in the work of the institution through governance, teaching, research, support for student activities and positions with institutes and centres;
2. Organise events that encourage engagement with external stakeholders, such as lectures, joint workshops, breakfast meetings and other networking events and opportunities;
3. Establish a special system to get information and experience from the wider ecosystem in cooperation with local governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with youth employment;

4. Work directly with Technopark built by Innovative development of the Republic of Uzbekistan where students can work on their business projects independently and within incubators within this Technopark in joint activities with local entrepreneurs;
5. To monitor research activities at the regional, national and international levels in order to identify new knowledge and current problems

DIMENSION: The Internationalised Institution

International relations have been enhanced at the university for the last few years. Therefore, the university scored higher in this dimension with figures ranging from 3.6 and 3.9 on a 5-point scale. The proportions show that although the university owns an internationalisation strategy and supports international relations, it lacks in harmonising its internationalisation strategy and entrepreneurial agenda together with explicitly supporting the international mobility of the staff and students.

Additionally, the partnerships should be fully functional, not just paper agreements, and engage both staff and students. Regarding more than 70 written agreements and memorandum of understanding of the university with international partners, there should be more international activities such as international mobility of the university staff and students. The international dimension should be reflected in the university's approach to research as well.

The following measures are put forward to improve activities in the dimension of Internationalised Institution:

1. Ensure the internationalisation strategy reflects its entrepreneurial agenda;
2. Promote international mobility through exchange programmes, scholarships, fellowships and internships;
3. Increase the number of joint/double degrees which include entrepreneurship and innovation in their curriculum;
4. Incentivise, recognise and reward international mobility;
5. Ensure all departments and faculties actively participate in international research partnerships and networks;
6. Ensure that relationships with international research partners support its entrepreneurial agenda.

DIMENSION: Measuring Impact

Having the results of the survey in the dimension Measuring Impact, it is noticeable that the university focuses on the volume and quality of intellectual property generation and research income generation, rather than on graduate entrepreneurship, teaching and learning outcomes, retaining talent, the contribution to local economic development or the impact of the broader entrepreneurial agenda.

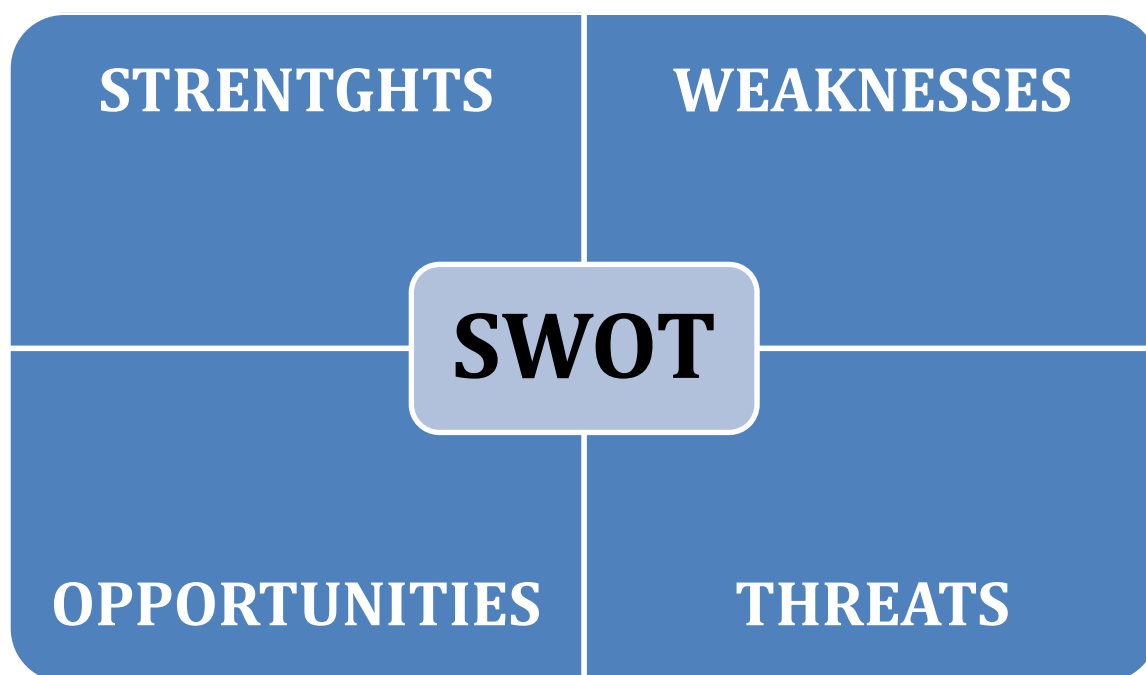
According to the results obtained after the survey, the average figure in this dimension ranges from 3.5 to 3.6 on a 5-point scale. These numbers show that the university has problems with assessing entrepreneurial teaching and learning. As it was mentioned above, the university supports start-ups but it is important to monitor and evaluate start-up support activities to ensure that they are providing the appropriate, quality of support in an effective manner.

The university should have mechanisms and activities in place to regularly monitor and evaluate the intended outcomes and impacts of knowledge exchange and collaborative activities across all faculties and departments.

The following measures are put forward to improve activities in the dimension of Measuring Impact:

1. Set clear intended outcomes/impacts related to its entrepreneurial agenda;
2. Set clear objectives for the impact of entrepreneurship courses and activities;
3. Measure the intended outcomes/impacts immediately following the end of support measures and at later dates to measure the success in relation to start-ups;
4. Set clear objectives and intended outcomes/impacts for knowledge exchange linked to its entrepreneurial agenda;
5. Undertake regular mapping exercises of the internationalisation activities in teaching and research to prioritise and further develop its entrepreneurial activities.

8. SWOT analyses based on self-assessment



STRENGTHS

- high scientific potential of the university staff;
- availability of departments (Departments of Economics and Management, Finance and Tourism) aimed at forming entrepreneurship education;
- systematic establishment of relations with employers and local government;
- graduates willing to acquire entrepreneurship education;
- availability of qualified specialists in entrepreneurship education;
- availability of funding to create required conditions to enhance entrepreneurship;
- inclusion of subjects related to entrepreneurship education as an additional subject;
- organization of a career center with the aim of expanding the field of activity of the marketing department;
- expansion of production activities at the university;
- establishment of modern typography and printing house to raise awareness of entrepreneurship education

WEAKNESSES

- lack of experience in managing and implementing international projects;
- structural differences in university management and work organization and the high level of administration;
- lack of modern infrastructure facilities;
- lack of support for personal initiatives;
- low level of knowledge of foreign languages of the staff and students;
- low efficiency of commercialization of research results;
- funding is centralized to the administration only;
- all faculties and departments do not react in a way that is required
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OPPORTUNITIES

- attract more experienced specialists from abroad;
- attract foreign students due to its convenient geographical location (bordering Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan);
- increase revenue from research, innovation and commercialization;
- increase staff and student participation in grants annually announced by Ministry of Innovative development for getting an international internship in best foreign institutions;
- establish international and local relations with large information resource centers and scientific institutions;
- monitor and encourage students get involved in awarded competitions for start-ups organized by the khokim (governor of the region).

THREATS

- changes in educational programs and their loss of relevance;
- some students may not see entrepreneurship education as relevant to their studies;
- changes in labor market requirements for graduates;
- poor economic conditions in the labor markets due to COVID restrictions;
- oversupply of workers or skilled workers in the labor market;
- failure of graduates to meet the requirements of the labor market in terms of quality;
- lack of interest in creating start-ups and personal businesses;
- increased competition due to the increase of higher education institutions in the region

9. The main areas for further intervention on Termez State University preparedness for future challenges

Activity	Dimension	Who	When
Introduction of "Financial Literacy" courses	Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs	The Academic and Methodological Department of the university	From the 2022-2023 academic year
Organization of scheduled meetings and master classes with businessmen with practical experience in production and with a prestigious brand	Organisational Capacity: Funding, People and Incentives	Department of Commercialization of Scientific and Innovative Developments of the University	From the 2022-2023 academic year
Organization of training and facilitating rooms equipped with practical training programs for the formation of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills	Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs	the university in cooperation with partner organizations	From the 2022-2023 academic year
Organization of personnel training and exchange of experience in the field of education on the basis of joint educational programs with foreign higher educational institutions	The Internationalised Institution	International Relations Office of the university	Permanent, From the 2022-2023 academic year
Organization of competitions, Olympiads and various events aimed at the development of entrepreneurship education	Organisational Capacity: Funding, People and Incentives	All Faculties	Starting from the 2022-2023 academic year
Organization of production workshops, mini workshops, national craft activities at the university	Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration	the Department of Finance and Planning of the University	Permanent, From the 2022-2023 academic year

Creating a platform that helps university graduates get a job	Digital Transformation and Capability	Career Centre of the university	Starting from the 2022-2023 academic year
Making proposals on the procedure for allocating preferential loans for financial support of students who want to start entrepreneurship	Organisational Capacity: Funding, People and Incentives	University Administration, Faculties	Starting from the 2022-2023 academic year
Development of qualification requirements for educational areas and subjects in curricula in agreement with employers	Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning	The Academic and Methodological Department of the university	Starting from the 2022-2023 academic year
Regular assessment of students' knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship education	Measuring Impact	the Department of the State Inspectorate for Quality Control of Education of the university	Starting from the 2021-2022 academic year
Conduct annual surveys among employers in the region to improve the quality of entrepreneurship education	Measuring Impact	the Department of the State Inspectorate for Quality Control of Education of the university	Starting from the academic year 2022-2023

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