

International Teaching University of Management and Communication
ALTERBRIDGE

Strategic Development Plan
2019-2026

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Introduction

1.1. The Main Landmarks of Strategy

Strategic Development Plan 2019-2026 of the International Teaching University of Management and Communication “ALTERBRIDGE” (hereinafter – “Teaching University”) is a guide document elaborated by the team of the higher educational institution, relies on and provides for the tasks set out in the Unified Strategy of 2017-2021 of Education and Science of Georgia¹, strategic directions document for education and science system development², 2016-2020 strategy document of National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement³, considers authorization standards for higher educational institutions, recommendations determined by authorization guidelines⁴ and reflects the vision, mission, values, strategic development goals, objectives and expected outcomes of the University’s activity.

This document establishes a seven-year plan for sustainable development of the University and is focused on the following directions:

1. Creating awareness and trust in society;

¹ <http://www.mes.gov.ge>

² <http://www.mes.gov.ge/uploads/strategia..pdf>

³ https://eqe.ge/res/docs/NCEQE_STRATEGY_2016-2020.pdf

⁴ <https://eqe.ge/res/docs/guidebookgeo.pdf>;

2. Development of higher educational programs tailored to the requirements of the local and international labor market;
3. Teaching students and promoting their self-realization;
4. Supporting research activities;
5. Quality assurance;
6. Promotion of internationalization;
7. Organizational Management and Human Resources Development;
8. Development of material-technical base;
9. Financial Sustainability.

1.2. Strategic planning stages:

In order to elaborate a strategic development plan, a working group was formed in July 2018, that at the initial stage defined the strategic planning methodology rule⁵, mission, vision and orientation of the University. The primary outline of the organizational structure was developed and the priority areas were identified. For the purpose of evaluating the current situation, the Group has studied the education and labor market research conducted over the past five years, carried out a number of researches concerning the quality, accessibility, internationalization and other ongoing processes in Georgia, also examined the criteria for satisfaction of the labor market requirements, employer's problems and challenges, SWOT and PESTEL analysis was made.⁶ All stakeholders were involved in planning the strategy, including students, participants of continuous education programs, employers from the private and public sector, international partner universities, local and international experts, staff.

⁵ Strategic planning methodology rule

⁶ Research document of ALTERBRIDGE

On the basis of the results, the Group determined strategic goals and tactical objectives, elaborated seven-year strategic and three-year action plans that fully reflect the future vision and perspectives of the University and comply with existing challenges and opportunities.

2. Information about the HEI

2.1. History

International Teaching University of Management and Communication “ALTERBRIDGE” was founded in 2018 by the Educational Center "PR Academy", which has been operating in Georgian Education Market since 2012 in the sphere of general management, strategic communications, organizational studies, human resources and other demanded spheres in the field of preparation/supply of consultancy services, corporate and individual training and training programs.

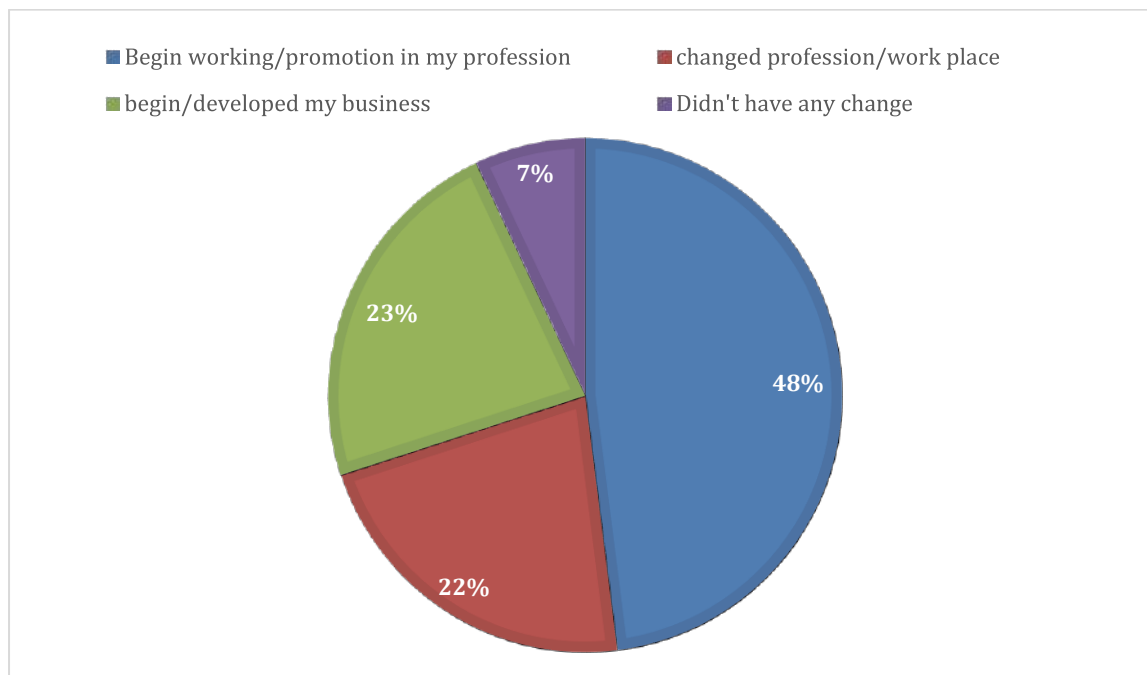
Within the scope of the educational/consulting service, the PR Academy has conducted extensive researches for 6 years, in the field of public opinion and organizational management in Georgia, specific business projects are created and realized, evident examples of personal development and career growth are shown.

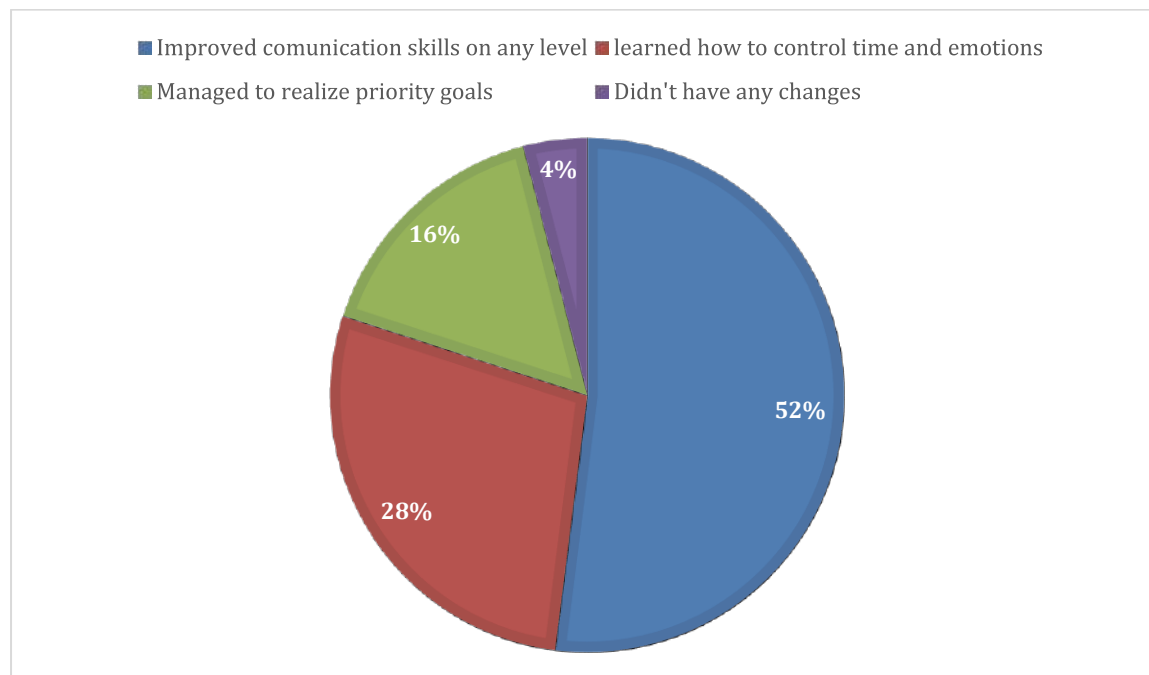
The results of the survey conducted in 2018-2019 have shown that during the learning process or in the shortest period after the completion of the studies the absolute majority of the PR academy's graduates experience significant changes in terms of personal and career development as a result of the acquired knowledge.

In particular, the survey has shown that 93% of graduates experience improvement results regarding professional changes and the personal self-realization rate is 96%.⁷ This once again demonstrates that the introduction/application of transformational teaching methods in educational programs increases the opportunity of employment and self-realization and that in this direction the multi-year experience of the HEI's team is one of the competitive advantages of a new Teaching University.

⁷ Research document of ALTERBRIDGE, p. 52.

Diagram #1 – Changes of professional development





Nowadays, PR Academy's services are used by international and local organizations, small and medium businesses, non-governmental and public sector representatives. Among them are TBC Bank, the Parliament of Georgia, Georgian Post, Georgian Railway, National Center of Manuscripts, Ministry of Agriculture, Civil Service Bureau, International Organizations: GIZ / UNDP / USAID / NDI / UNICEF, etc. The PR Academy is the winner of several grants and tender competition.⁸

Successful experiences of educational process management focused on instantaneous result and the formation of a team of companions led

⁸ www.pra.ge

to the idea of creating a higher educational institution execution of which has started since 2016. In particular, in recent years the PR Academy systematically develops its relations with local and international educational institutions, strengthens its cooperation with the public sector, participates in projects executed by the donor and non-governmental organizations –in the field of education, democratic development, the government empowerment, gender equality, raising of awareness, supporting the future leader women support and other areas. Creates a strong platform for attraction and employment of academic personnel.

In 2017, through electronic auction the organization acquired a non-agricultural land plot of 1141 sq.m located at Tskneti Highway in Tbilisi, wherein 2018 a modern design building was built which fully satisfies the authorization standards of a higher educational institution and creates maximum commitment for research, teaching and development.

In 2018, International Teaching University of Management and Communication “ALTERBRIDGE” LLC was founded on the base of the PR Academy, one of the competitive advantages of which is the multi-year experience of founding and managing team, solid reputation, recognition, high rate of employees and loyal staff. Hence, this is the best prerequisite for establishing another educational center oriented on employment and self-realization in Georgia, which will create educational programs tailored to the requirements of the labor market considering gained experience and create the competitive, qualified human resource by using transformational teaching methods.

2.2. Definition of the name

The name “ALTERBRIDGE” was selected considering the Mission and Future vision of the University. It is a juxtaposition of functional meaning. Particularly, by choosing this name, the University takes responsibility by its activities to become an alternate bridge between science and society, education and labor market and to create new opportunities for self-realization of future generations at national and international levels.

2.3. Educational Activity

- Bachelor and Master programs of higher education;

- Certification programs, training, professional courses;
- Research projects, scientific conferences.

2.4. Values

- Professionalism
- Mutual trust and teamwork
- Publicity and transparency
- Ethics and justice
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Patriotism
- Academic freedom
- Continuous development

2.5. The Mission of the University

The mission of the Teaching University is to give people new opportunities for personal and professional self-realization. For that it creates accessible conditions for research and acquiring knowledge, establishes an international platform for interaction of education and labor market, promotes improvement of public relations in the country.

2.6. Vision

By 2026, International Teaching University of Management and Communication “ALTERBRIDGE” will be the highly-rated higher education institution, which by a strong team of professionals, the international standards-based programs, an ecological infrastructure, research activities and transformational teaching methods creates competitive, qualified human resources, ensures continuity of education process, promotes the processes of internationalization and commercialization of education and science and contributes to the development of “knowledge economy” in the country.

3. Current situation and challenges

3.1. Situation Analysis

Today, the Georgian education system and the integrated institutions in this system face significant challenges. Changes made during the last decade, in particular, the processes of integration in European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Research Area (ERA), the education quality enhancement and internationalization of educational system, as well as aspiration to reform of educational system in post-soviet countries and to create the new system complying with the global requirements, redefined the priorities in Georgian educational sphere.

The new social-economic development strategy of the Government "Georgia 2020", as well as the Georgian Government's four-point plan of reforms gives priority to education that ensures human capital increasement and effective involvement in the country's development processes. Accordingly, the following issues are defined as the strategic directions of the Education and Science of Georgia, namely, such as ensuring compliance of education programs with requirements of internal and external labor market, enhancement of education quality and availability, professional training linked to employment, the connection of higher education, science, technology and innovation with the sustainable development of country's economy, strengthening national, social and cultural characteristics, etc.

In order to satisfy the set priorities, today the country is reviewing the quality assurance mechanisms of higher educational institutions' activities and bringing them within compliance with the authorization and accreditation upgraded standards. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) has been introduced in higher education institutions; standards of internal and external quality assurance have been improved; The National Qualification Framework for Educational Programs is being adapted to accreditation requirements; the mobility system of students and academic personnel has been improved.

Taking into consideration these processes, the entry of a new higher educational institution in the education market of Georgia and obtaining status is associated with significant challenges, requiring conduction of the deep researches and strategic decisions based on

3.2. Research of labor market demands, higher education quality, and internationalization processes in Georgia

For the purpose of studying the situation and issues at the Georgian educational market, the Teaching University's team has reviewed the results of studies conducted in recent years in relation to the education quality, accessibility, internationalization, and also labor market requirements, published scientific papers and statistical data.

Research has been carried out which analyzed students' attitude towards higher educational institutions and in general toward education received in Georgia, problems and challenges in the field of management, human resources management and personnel motivation processes in organizations operating in Georgia.

As a result of the analysis the document was created, which, on the one hand, is firmly grounded basis for the establishment of educational programs of the ALTERBRIDGE, for determination of the correct orientation of landmarks in strategic development and educational activities' policy-making process policy and, on the other hand, represents the theoretical and practical manual for further researches aimed at improving education and labor market interaction's quality.⁹

3.3. SWOT analysis

The Team of the Teaching University has conducted a SWOT analysis for Strategic Planning aimed at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the higher educational institution, as well as its opportunities and dangers.

S - Strengths	W - weaknesses
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⁹ Research Document of the ALTERBRIDGE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The High reputation of the founding brand in the consumer and employment market; ♦ Experience and connections of the managing team; ♦ Favorable location and ecological environment of the HEI; ♦ A New building of modern design and international standards; ♦ Educational/workspace adapted to students/personnel; ♦ Interdisciplinary and experimental education methods at all levels of teaching; ♦ Availability of continuous education at any point of time; ♦ Loyal staff and team spirit; ♦ Resource and experience in implementation of professional retraining and personal development training programs; ♦ involvement in social and public activities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low recognition of the new brand at the first stage of development; ▪ Lack of perfect leverage of self-evaluation due to the absence of graduates; ▪ Absence of student dormitory; ▪ Low recognition in international scientific space; ▪ lack of sports infrastructure;
<p>O - Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising awareness on local and international markets; ▪ Effective activities to attract students; ▪ Involving students / staff in field / related events / research projects / social activities; ▪ Involvement of local and international partners; ▪ The Attraction of local and international grants; ▪ Development of joint/exchange programs; ▪ on basis of on permanent studies creation of new programs and improving existing ones relevant to labor/consumer market requirements; ▪ Deepening cooperation with private and public sectors; ▪ Development of student life; ▪ elaboration of vocational education programs; ▪ Elaboration of doctoral educational programs 	<p>T - Treats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High competition in the higher education market; ▪ Georgia's weak educational attractiveness for highly developed countries students; ▪ Frequent legislative changes in education area; ▪ Employers' passivity in engaging in the elaboration of educational programs; ▪ Reducing demand for higher education;

4. Strategic Goals and Objectives in the context of the seven-year period of development

Goal #1 - Raising awareness in society and reputation management:

In order the Teaching University to obtain rated higher educational institution's status, the establishment of recognition in the public and trust is set as one of the priority tasks, for which in strategy of the HEI reputation management-oriented communication activities are provided, the permanent response on topics actual in the society, initiation of social and public projects, carrying out student-oriented activities and active marketing campaign

Objectives:

1.1. Creation/raising recognition of the HEI
1.2. Cooperation with mass communication media;
1.3. Carrying out activities planned for contribution to community development
1.4. Promotion of attracting students;
1.5. Online reputation, digital marketing;
1.6. Development of internal corporate communication;

Goal #2 - Establishment/Development of educational programs tailored to the requirements of the local and international labour market

The adequate linkage of education to employment market is a substantial challenge to the modern educational system. Directions and programs selected by the HEI are tailored to development of transferrable skills in young people, ability of using knowledge into practice, adaptation to working environment and self-realization, strengthening the role of education and science, internationalization opportunities, and internal and external labor market requirements, for which, in process of planning-development of the HEI's educational programs, close cooperation with employers, involvement of entrants, students, graduates and staff, research analysis, internationalization and the labor market requirements are taken into consideration at all levels.

Objectives:

2.1. Facilitating effective interaction of education and labor market
2.2. Research of labor and consumer market requirements;
2.3. Updating existing educational programs and keeping up with current changes;
2.4. Implementation of joint programs with the involvement of partner universities;
2.5. Development of new educational programs
2.6. Introduction of Vocational Educational Programs
2.7. Ensuring transparency of educational activities at every level of action

Goal#3 – Student’s teaching, personal development and self-realization

The main priority of the Teaching University is to make the student sterling, realizable persons. For this purpose, the HEI develops the best practices of transformational teaching – will introduce experimental and interdisciplinary teaching methods in the educational process of teaching that are focused on the instant understanding of the received knowledge, acquiring of creative and entrepreneurial skills, enhancement of logical thinking and realization of personal potential.

Objectives:

3.1. Promoting the development of students' logical and entrepreneurial thinking;
3.2. Involvement of students in research activities
3.3. Promoting students' career and personal development;
3.4. The Self-realization of students via participation in social, creative, sport and business activities;
3.5. Development of students' incentives mechanisms;
3.6. Organizing the activities of supporting students with special educational needs and students with disabilities;
3.7. Supporting for socially vulnerable students;
3.8. availability of obtaining knowledge continuously by the development of electronic teaching systems;
3.9. Promoting lifelong learning;
3.10. Development of educational resources;

Goal #4 - Supporting research activities

Facilitating research activities is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, which will create a new opportunity for the HEI to expand its activities in different directions. Consequently, one of the main landmarks of the Teaching University Development Strategy is related to strengthening of research potential, for which it creates an accessible and transparent environment for research and relevant initiatives - supports discovering and raising young researchers; Ensures students/staff engagement in scientific projects, cooperates with donor organizations; Develops research infrastructure; Ascertains public opinion and data of field competences;

Objectives:

4.1. Development of research projects financing system;
4.2. Extension of cooperation with scientific foundations;
4.3. Deepening partnership with donor organizations;
4.4. Development of research potential of academic personnel;
4.5. Contributing to the popularization and commercialization of science;
4.6. Introduction of effective mechanisms for ensuring academic integrity;

Goal # 5 - Quality assurance system enhancement

The activity of the Quality Management Office for the continuous quality assurance of educational activities relies on (PDCA) plan - do - check - act principle. The Quality Management Internal and External Mechanisms are developed at the Teaching University, the Quality

Management Office makes assessment via the tools developed through close cooperation with the appropriate structural units of the Teaching University, the obtained results are taken into account by all branches conducting educational and scientific activities.

Objectives:

5.1. Introduction/development of internal and external mechanisms of quality assurance
5.2. Introduction/development of assessment mechanisms for educational programs
5.3. Introduction/improvement of assessment mechanisms for educational process management
5.4. Improvement of response mechanisms for violation of internal regulation, norms of ethics and conduct;
5.5. Study of the personnel (academic, invited) satisfaction / needs and improvement of response mechanisms;
5.6. Study of satisfaction/needs of students and improvement of response mechanisms;
5.7. Monitoring the efficiency of quality assurance mechanisms

Goal #6 - Organizational management and human resource development

The key prerequisite for quality assurance and improvement of results in all stages of education is the development of human resources in educational institutions, continuous professional growth of administrative and academic personnel. The goal of the Teaching University is to create fair and effective systems for labor motivation, incentives, activity assessment and career planning and gain the status of one of the best employers in the Georgian educational market, which, on the one hand, will facilitate the attraction of qualified human resource in the HEI and on the other hand, ensure ability of providing qualitative education.

The effectiveness of management and sustainable development of the organization is based on the Statute and Charter created by the Teaching University, as well as regulation for staff selection, motivation, evaluation-monitoring, Business Continuity Plan, which ensures the stability of the HEI and is grounded on and reflects the approaches defined by values of the HEI.

6.1.	Improvement of organizational management and human resources development policy;
6.2.	Optimization of organizational structure;
6.3.	Elaboration of mechanisms for attracting competitive, highly qualified administrative personnel and loyalty mechanisms;
6.4.	Development of organizational culture;
6.5.	Organizing personal and professional growth programs for administrative staff;
6.6.	Annual monitoring of the implementation of Strategic Development and Action Plan and assessment of results;
6.7.	Introduction/Development of electronic systems for organizational management and record management;
6.8.	Retraining university academic personnel in modern teaching methods and communication skills
6.9.	Increase of affiliated personnel
6.10.	Increase of invited foreign personnel

Goal # 7 - Promoting internationalization process

Teaching University aims to contribute to grow of Georgia's educational attractiveness at the international market, as well as to create the new perspectives of receiving international education in the country, for which it is expanding its international relations, strengthening foreign components in educational programs, together with international partners introduces joint programs, supports international mobility of students, academic personnel and researchers.

Objectives:

7.1.	Introduction/development of internationalization policy;
7.2.	International recognition raising;
7.3.	Strengthening foreign language components in the HET's educational programs;

7.4. elaboration/development of joint, exchange, double degree programs

7.5. Facilitating participation of students/academic personnel in international mobility and international scientific-educational projects;

7.6. elaboration/development of mechanisms for attracting foreign students/personnel;

Goal#8 - Development of material-technical base

Teaching University is located in the new, modern design building, built by the latest standards. Flexible location, ecological environment, fully adapted space, healthy food service and comfortable academic/working auditoriums tailored to students and personnel creates the best conditions for learning and research activities. Continuous care for the improvement of the learning environment and the creation of new perspectives is one of the priorities of Strategic Development of the HEI.

Objectives:

8.1. Upgrading material-technical base;

8.2. Upgrading university computer labs with the latest technology.

8.3. Development of library material and human resources

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| 8.4. Development of adapted environment and creation of new opportunities for persons with special educational needs and persons with disabilities across the whole territory of Teaching University; |
| 8.5. Implementation/development of energy efficient systems |
| 8.6. Arrangement/development of infrastructure for educational auditoriums provided by the project; |
| 8.7. Creating new research, consulting and workspaces for students and personnel; |
| 8.8. Making conference hall on 300 people and its corresponding infrastructures (reception space, catering, water closets, recreation zone and other facilities); |

Goal# 9 - Ensuring financial sustainability

The activities of the Teaching University are focused on creating a stable environment for students with qualitative education, research and development, for which the financial sustainability mechanisms, business continuity plan and action plan oriented on permanent development have been elaborated.

Objectives:

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| 9.1. elaboration and development of a financial management policy and control system. |
| 9.2. Attracting investments/alternative sources of financing; |
| 9.3. Introduction/deepening financial cooperation with donor and commercial organizations; |
| 9.4. Attracting research projects financing; |

9.5. Introduction/development of the system of internal grants and scholarships
9.6. Improving the mechanism of students' quota maximization;
9.7. Improving flexible mechanisms for paying student's tuition fees/incentives;
9.8. Increasing the contingent of students;

* The goals and objectives defined by the Seven-year Strategic Development Plan are shown and described in details in the Three-year Action Plan of the HEI that defines and determines the action landmarks and indicators of assessment for 2019-2022¹⁰.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategic Development Plan

The Quality Management Office shall monitor the fulfillment of strategic development and action plans. Monitoring aims at timely adaptation to environmental changes, avoiding of accumulation of shortcomings and eliminating ongoing organizational problems. Monitoring includes quantitative and qualitative indicators of assessment through which once a semester or a year, the level of achieving strategic goals is determined by obtaining information about the actual situation from the responsible structural unit. Responsible structural unit submits to the Quality Service the information in the form of the special report. The assessment is done through the comparison of the target benchmark to the current situation benchmark, and the margin of error observed in the comparison process is described in percentages. The assessment of the achievement of strategic goals is conducted once a year.

The monitoring and results response system consist of the following stages:

- Responsible structural units submit a detailed written report to the Quality Management Office within the established terms;
- Quality Management Office converts received information into target benchmark, carries out the intercomparison analysis of the planned and actual situation and determines the need of identifying the amendment;

¹⁰ Three-year Action Plan of the HEI.

- In case of non-performance, partial performance and/or violation of the term of the activities undertaken by the Strategic Development and Action Plans makes the relevant analysis for the determination of the reasons for the delay and elaborates the combination of the measures to be taken;
- Quality Management Office annually submits to the Rector of the Teaching University a report on the performance of activities envisaged by Strategic Development and Action Plans;
- The Rector of the Teaching University together with the relevant structural units determines the response measures and issues the relevant decrees for structural units. Responding is done by an adequate correction of the existing strategic plan with respect to the changing environment¹¹.

¹¹ Monitoring Mechanisms for Implementation of Strategic Development and Action Plans