



**ATILIM UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF FOREIGN**  
**LANGAUGES**

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**2022-2023**  
**QUALITY MANUAL**



Atılım University School of Foreign Languages  
Quality Manual 2022-2023

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

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

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### **PREVIEW**

Atılım University's academic policies, standards, and regulations establish the institutional framework for managing the standards of teaching/learning and organizational procedures within the Schools and Departments. These policies aim to enhance the quality of teaching/learning opportunities provided to students and promote a peaceful and productive work environment for the workforce.

This Quality Manual presents the School of Foreign Languages' (SFL) Quality Assurance Policy/Framework, along with the procedures of the Department of Basic English (DBE) and Department of Modern Languages (DML). It encompasses organizational, teaching, learning, and assessment policies that adhere to the University's Regulations. The manual is supported by accompanying forms, documents, directives, regulations, approved instructions, and all related supplementary information.

The SFL Quality Manual underscores the university's dedication to excellence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching and learning practices. It also elucidates sustainable methods for the continuous improvement of all stakeholders in their endeavors to elevate student success and enhance their experience, encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes, to higher standards.

This Quality Manual outlines the methodologies and protocols for all SFL activities related to quality management, adhering to standards, principles, procedures, and enhancement. It establishes a framework for ongoing development with a positive and constructive outlook. It is evident that documenting and disseminating agreed policies is not the culmination but the beginning of quality assurance. Therefore, this task requires:

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

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The involvement of our stakeholder groups is vital in defining, ensuring, supporting, improving, and reporting the quality of education provided by the SFL. Our main stakeholders include students, instructors, the administration, top management, and the Board of Trustees. Other key stakeholders encompass prospective students, academic and professional staff in the departments, SFLs in other universities, and resource suppliers.

Atilim University's mission and vision statements, emphasizing a commitment to quality, foster a culture of reflective practice and establish mechanisms for continuous improvement in both service provision and procedural quality.

Improvement, first and foremost, hinges on quality. This entails the systematic collection and utilization of feedback and data, benchmarking quality, incorporating input from both internal and external experts, continuous engagement with students as partners, enhancing collaborative approaches, implementing lessons learned, and leveraging best practices. Therefore, it is clarified that:

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

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

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

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

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### **I. ATILIM SFL**

The School of Foreign Languages (SFL) was established through the consolidation of the Modern Languages Department, which previously reported directly and independently to the Rector's Office, with the Preparatory School that has been in service since the establishment of Atılım University in 1996, renamed as the Department of Basic English in 2015.

#### **1.1. Background information**

Since Atılım University's foundation in 1996, there has been an English Preparatory School that has progressively grown in both the quality of teaching/learning and the number of its students. Two years after the establishment of the Preparatory School, another department was created to oversee the teaching of English to students in their departments upon completion of their Preparatory School education. In 2016, the School of Foreign Languages began functioning and united the two departments under one umbrella.

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

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

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

The English language levels at the SFL are designed according to the Common European Framework (CEFR) levels. The DBE targets high-level English communication skills (B1+), while the DML aims to provide academic English and Professional English courses (B1+ &

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B2) with dedicated instructors and support staff. Additionally, other foreign languages are offered at the DML to broaden the students' perspectives.

The SFL strives for excellence in foreign language training. This manual has been prepared to explain the quality policies across various applications to contribute to the overall pursuit of quality.

### **1.2 Mission, vision, and shared expectations**

The SFL operates in accordance with its mission and vision to cultivate individuals who are proficient in their foreign language skills.

#### **1.2.1 Mission**

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

#### **1.2.2 Vision**

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

#### **1.2.3 Shared expectations**

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

It is believed and understood that achieving the aims is only possible if each member of the department is highly motivated to accomplish them. The main task to be achieved at the SFL is to provide teaching/learning quality within the specified scope. The generally set expectations for realizing the school's mission by all members of the school community are as follows:

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

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

## **II. THE SFL POLICIES**

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

### **2.1. Organisation policy**

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

#### **2.1.1 The organisation structure**

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



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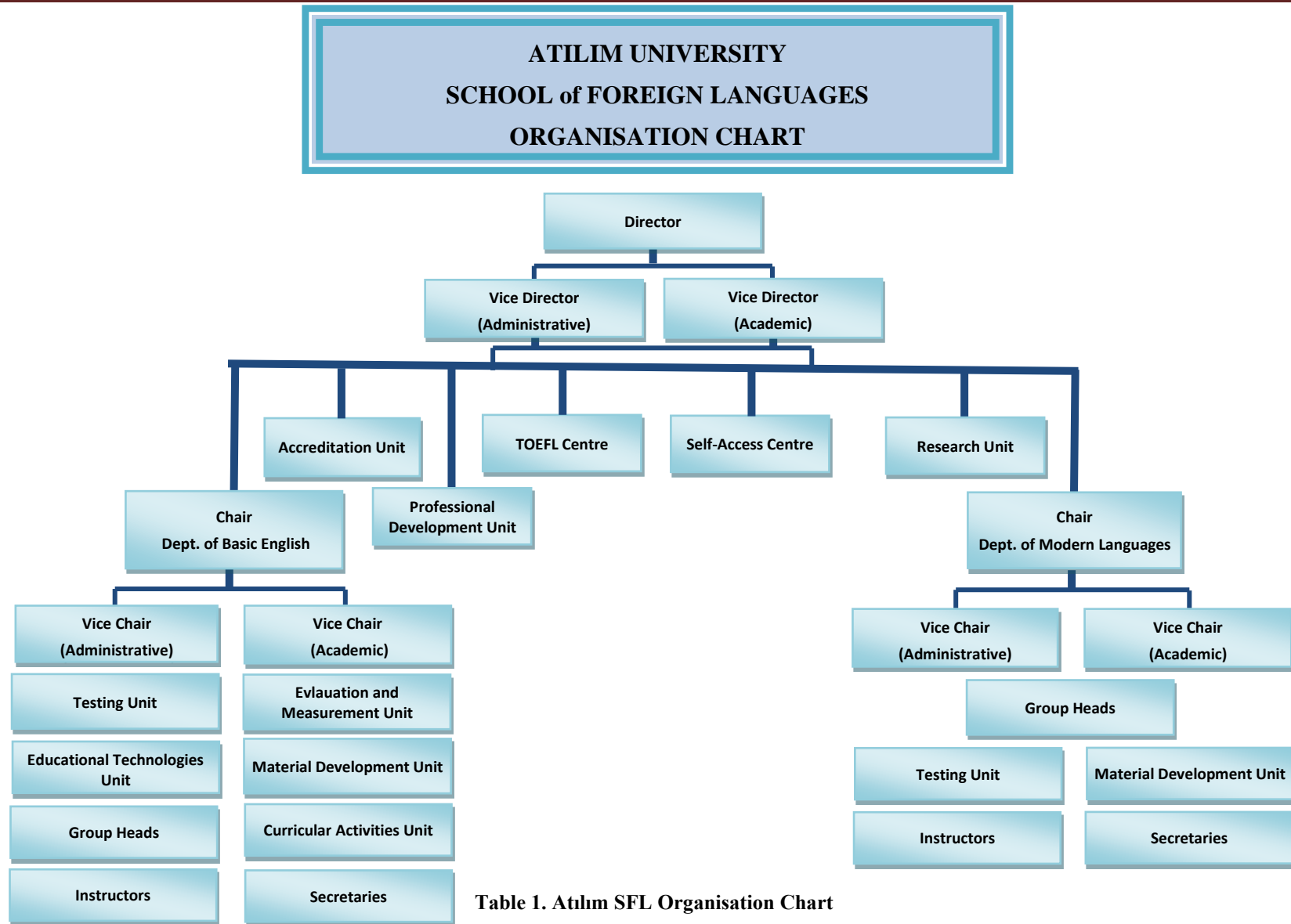


Table 1. Atılım SFL Organisation Chart

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### **2.1.1 Staff resources**

Each department's management body comprises one chair, two vice-chairs, and four or more group or level heads. To coordinate the teaching/learning process, the management body collaborates with approximately 120 instructors. The job descriptions of those in charge are clearly articulated and communicated to the entire community through Instructor's Booklets in each department.

### **2.1.2 Physical resources**

The SFL building features well-equipped classrooms with technological devices such as PCs, projectors, smart boards, and internet connections. Additionally, it includes several meeting halls, a TOEFL center, and a self-access center. The school is furnished with comfortable lounges, a large food court offering various tastes, and a few vending machines. The university's policy includes provisions to facilitate the lives of people with various disabilities. For example, the SFL building has restrooms for handicapped individuals on each floor, a platform at the entrance for wheelchairs, and active elevators to ease movement between floors.

### **2.1.3 Administrative systems**

All teaching and management staff report to their immediate supervisors as shown in the organizational chart. Depending on the issue, matters are ultimately escalated to the SFL Vice Directors and finally to the Director, who reports to the Rector of the university.

All formal interactions are conducted through the Online Document Management System called EBYS, which ensures that everyone involved is informed about the related procedures. Internal communication is carried out through emails and MS Office Teams channels. Weekly group and department meetings are held in a timely, well-organized, and informative manner, with minutes taken and publicized afterward.

In all administrative activities, there is an inherent policy based on democratic, participatory, cooperative, supportive, productive, and humanistic principles.

University and campus-wide activities and information are shared to maintain contribution and support corporate identity. In this context, celebrations and grievances are announced to foster organizational spirit. These may include collective tree planting, competitions, sports activities, blood donations, national and religious holidays, and best practices.

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### **2.2 Teaching/Learning policy**

The teaching and learning policies of the SFL are categorized into five sections: design of education policy, maintaining and improving education quality, learner admission policy, learning and teaching policy, and staff recruitment and development policy.

#### **2.2.1 Design of education policy**

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

The design of the curricula is tailored to meet the needs, level, and interests of the students. Material selection and preparation are conducted meticulously, and assessment procedures and tools are carefully planned and applied. All design and planning activities adhere to the regulations of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and CEFR standards.

#### **2.2.2 Maintaining and improving education quality**

The components of each curriculum, including the aims and objectives, the syllabi, course books/materials, and assessment, are harmonized with each other and with the components of other courses. All curricula and teaching/learning materials undergo continuous evaluation and revision in a constructive manner. Any amendments or changes to problematic practices suggested by students, instructors, or management through evaluation forms are taken into consideration to improve the system.

#### **2.2.3 Learner Admission**

The SFL has various systems in place to welcome, categorize, and place students in appropriate learning groups based on their university entrance exam results. After registration, the SFL has plans and policies to place students according to their fields of study or departmental faculty. Those admitted to English medium departments study at the DBE, while those admitted to Turkish medium departments study at the DML.

#### **2.2.4 Learning & teaching policy**

The SFL aims to provide students with equal opportunities, education, and guidance. This includes not only teaching them a foreign language but also imparting study skills and techniques to help them become autonomous learners. The goal is to instil in them a value for lifelong learning, ultimately leading to their happiness and contentment.

#### **2.2.5 Staff recruitment and professional development policy**

Instructors are key practitioners at the SFL, playing a crucial role in achieving educational goals effectively. In addition to demonstrating the required evidence of academic integrity, instructors with the following qualities can join the work team:

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

Instructors who wish to join the team must adhere to the legal procedures specified by the Rectorate, which are announced on the official website of Atılım University ([www.atilim.edu.tr](http://www.atilim.edu.tr)) in connection with the Council of Higher Education. They must apply as instructed.

The SFL provides necessary support, guidance, and opportunities to its instructors through an 'open-door' policy on the part of the administration. It is believed that to help develop students, instructors must also develop and evolve themselves. To promote teacher development activities and maintain effective teaching and learning skills, each department has an active Professional Development Unit (PDU). Depending on the instructors' needs in the two departments, some or all of the activities below are carried out in a planned and careful manner to empower the instructors at the PDU.

- Preservice training
- In service training

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

### **2.3 Assessment policy**

In the SFL, the primary assessment policy is to be fair, transparent, and developmental in all aspects of school activities. Assessment is considered an essential component of the applied curricula and is closely integrated into the teaching/learning process and all activities.

The assessment policy aims not only to evaluate and grade students' learning but also to provide insights into their progress in the constructive learning process. Therefore, effective and diverse assessment methods and tools are crucial. They help measure whether the objectives have been achieved in the curricular delivery cognitively and identify areas needing more care and attention. This allows for the implementation of different techniques, methods, and remedial support for better results.

Assessment also aims to provide feedback to management regarding the implementation of the curricula and to prompt action in any problem areas, if necessary.

### **2.4. Malpractice, appeals and complaints policy**

In a community of individuals working together in an organization with mutual expectations and set responsibilities, grievances and complaints may arise. It is important to develop coping strategies along with preventive measures to address these issues. These complaints and problems can be of various types.

The SFL places great importance on fostering good relationships with all its students and instructors, taking all necessary steps to create a motivating and positive work environment. To maintain such an atmosphere, the SFL considers all complaints from students or staff and aims to address them promptly and fairly. This is done through open, legal, orderly, and honest communication, with sufficient time and effort devoted to resolving them.

In the SFL, informal complaints can be resolved through communication among the involved parties to address less serious issues that do not require lengthy and formal procedures. Staff members with grievances related to their work should first discuss the issue with their respective

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Vice Chairs and Chairs. If the matter remains unresolved, it is then brought to the attention of the SFL Vice Directors and the Director, whose decisions are final.

An appeal can be lodged when a member of staff or a student object to any decisions or sanctions imposed by the Department. The appeal must be filed within the legal time limit specified in the Regulations of the SFL. The SFL committee, comprising the Director, Vice Directors, and Department Chairs, reviews the decision within 15 days. They may either approve it as is, reject it, or reconsider it and finalize the decision.

### **2.5. Quality improvement policy**

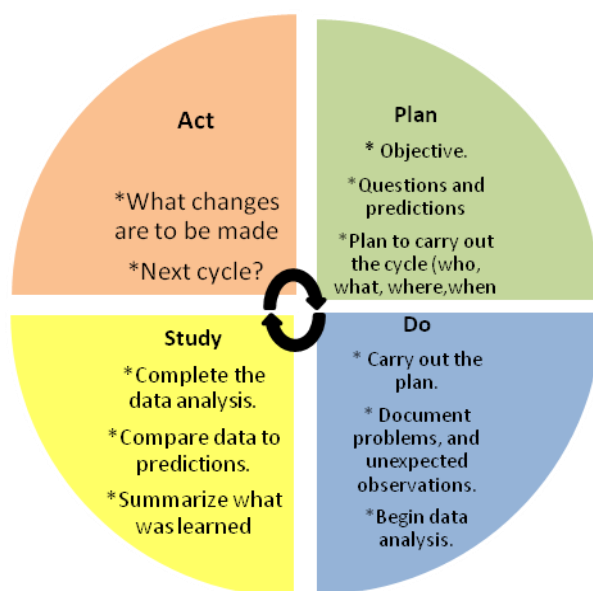
The Quality Improvement Policy aims to enhance the quality of educational and instructional activities at the SFL, guided by the objectives below:

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

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

To uphold quality at the SFL, we adhere to the fundamentals of the PSDA Improvement cycle. This cycle is continuously monitored by the Chairs, the Director, and those responsible for quality improvement. It applies to all units of the school, including curriculum, testing, material development, professional development, and technology and project development units. The outcomes of this cycle are reflected in the learning program, with necessary changes and improvements implemented, as illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 1).

### PDSA Cycle



### Model for Improvement

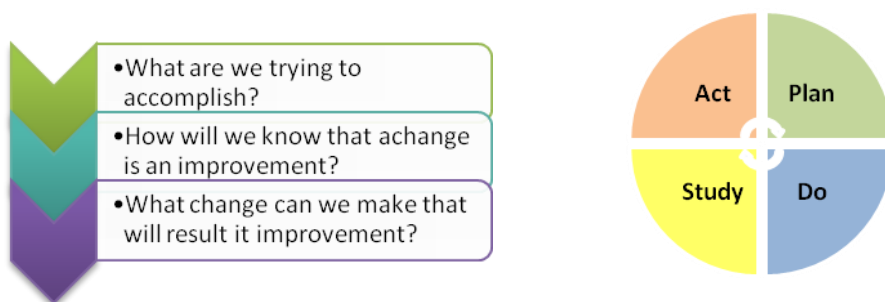


Figure 1. Deming's PDSA Cycle. From *Foundation and History of the PDSA Cycle*, April 2018, from [https://deming.org/uploads/paper/PDSA\\_History\\_Ron\\_Moen.pdf](https://deming.org/uploads/paper/PDSA_History_Ron_Moen.pdf)

### III. APPLICATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTS

Aligned with the mission and vision of Atılım University, which emphasizes excellence in education, research, and public service, the two departments in the SFL design their curricula. At Atılım University, students can choose between English medium and Turkish medium education based on their needs and the departments they have registered for. Students enrolled in English medium departments begin their language education at DBE, following its

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educational curriculum. On the other hand, students in Turkish medium departments receive English education directly at DML. The Basic English training at DBE spans approximately 900 hours, whereas at DML, students undergo a 300-hour program, which includes Academic and Occupational English Courses or online courses tailored to the departments' needs.

The following section provides a brief description of various applications related to quality improvement in the two departments, focusing on curriculum, assessment, and the PDU.

### **3.1.THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC ENGLISH**

The DBE is one of the two departments of the SFL, aimed at equipping students whose English proficiency level is below the required standard with basic language skills. This preparation enables them to pursue their undergraduate studies at our university without significant difficulty.

#### **3.1.1. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN THE CURRICULUM**

The main aim of the curriculum followed at DBE, aligning with the mission and vision of the school, is to offer a high-quality language learning process for all students who do not pass the Atılım University Proficiency Exam (APEX) administered at the beginning of the academic year. The curriculum is structured to equip students with essential language skills through skills-based and student-centered activities, preparing them for their future departmental studies. Each component of the curriculum, including the syllabus, course books/materials, and assessment tools, complements one another and undergoes continuous evaluation and revision to ensure that course delivery aligns with the established goals.

The overall aims of the DBE curriculum are as follows:

##### **3.1.1.1.Meeting students' linguistic and academic needs**

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

##### **3.1.1.2.Fostering learner autonomy**

Learning any language requires ongoing efforts and continuous practice. We aim to raise awareness in our students graduating from the DBE that volition and self-motivation are the



key to success in language learning. We encourage our students to take advantage of all resources that can help improve their language skills, such as the self-access center, computer labs, library, and other related materials.

### **3.1.1.3. Providing individual guidance**

We consider individual attention and support essential for learners in the learning process. Therefore, we assign class advisors to guide students in their search for knowledge and provide personal assistance in adapting to their new lives at university. Additionally, we offer individual counseling at our Psychological Counseling and Guidance Center on various topics, including study skills, test anxiety, anger management, and motivation.

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

#### **3.1.1.3.1. Learning objectives**

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) forms the basis in determining the objectives of the curriculum and preparing the program's syllabus. The curriculum provides information about the defined objectives to be accomplished at various language levels, specifying the predicted time required to achieve them. It also informs learners about the tasks they are required to do outside of class to achieve or reinforce the set objectives.

#### **3.1.1.3.2. Teaching and learning materials**

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

#### **3.1.1.3.3. Assessment tools**

Each assessment component in the curriculum aligns with the specific learning objectives for each level. To evaluate whether the course delivery meets the level expectations, regular quizzes assessing the four skills and language systems, as predefined in the syllabus, are administered throughout the term. Since, in our context, speaking is one of the most important

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skills in the curriculum, continuous in-class speaking assessment is conducted throughout the term. Students are also assessed through two achievement tests to complete the module. Additionally, they are required to complete homework and tasks, both on paper and online, as specified in the curriculum. Detailed guidelines with sample questions regarding various elements of the end-of-course assessment are provided to students in their material packs, which are prepared by the MDU.

### **3.1.2. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN THE ASSESSMENT POLICY**

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

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

#### **3.1.2.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

As commonly understood, two essential qualities that good assessment tools must possess are reliability and validity. Therefore, the aim of the DBE is to ensure a high-level reliability and validity in the assessment processes.

#### **3.1.2.1.1. RELIABILITY**

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

In terms of *scores' reliability*, the DBE provides training and standardization sessions for instructors to ensure that highly reliable assessment tools will be used in the learning process. Furthermore, double marking is crucial for each achievement exam and for the writing exam in APEX, as mandated by the DBE. Calculation check for achievement exams also helps instructors to detect any kind of measurement error. For summative speaking exams, two instructors are assigned to assess students' oral production performance. Regarding *the reliability of test-takers' performance*, achieving internal consistency in designing assessment tools for all levels is crucial for the DBE. It is also important to ensure that each student is familiar with the assessment tools and procedures before they are implemented. To promote familiarity, similar types of questions eliciting comparable responses are included in both quizzes and achievement exams. Additionally, one sample of each assessment tool is provided in students' material packs to enhance their understanding. This allows students to practice similar question items while learning in or out of class before the exams. Furthermore, the Testing Unit and administration conduct error analyses for each weekly quiz and review class achievement graphics for achievement exams.

#### **3.1.2.1.2. VALIDITY**

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

##### **3.1.2.1.2.1 Internal verification**

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

- a) The DBE has a Testing Unit whose members are responsible for exam preparation, implementation, evaluation, standardization, and improvement of the quality exams carried out in the DBE in accordance with the

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outcomes of the learning objectives, syllabus and instructional activities. These exams are as follows; weekly quizzes, writing quizzes, story quizzes, speaking exams and achievement exams. All these exams have a common goal; to assess the achievement levels of students related to the four basic skills.

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

The responsible Testing Unit member for each level carefully considers the personality traits of students and the impact of test tasks on them to prevent bias against some students and ensure fairness for all. When preparing test tasks, Testing Unit members take into account various characteristics of test takers, including cultural background, cognitive features, ethnicity, religion, gender, and age. Additionally, they consider test task features such as the test environment, the format of guidance, input, and the expected manner of examination, which are all crucial aspects for the DBE.

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

#### **3.1.2.1.2.2 Invigilation**

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

#### **3.1.2.1.2.3 Marking**

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

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

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

Achievement tests undergo double marking and a third check to detect any potential measurement errors. To ensure consistency in test correction, all instructors responsible for marking are required to adhere to the same marking procedure for exam papers.

Exam results are accurately announced by the specified time and date. Students have the opportunity to review their exam papers and receive feedback for weekly quizzes, writing quizzes, and achievement exams. Following the announcement of exam results, students have the right to request a remark of their exam paper within 3 working days. (See related procedures).

### **3.1.3. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The success of any curriculum or teaching and learning policy depends on effective teaching which, in turn, relies on an effective professional development programme. At the DBE, we are aware of the importance of giving necessary support, guidance, and opportunities to our instructors. Through needs analysis, weekly level meetings focusing on teaching practices and the implementation of the syllabus, and reflection reports both written by peers

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and teacher trainers, the demands of our instructors are determined, and a tailor-made programme is designed and conducted every academic year. In this program, in-house presentations and workshops are conducted by our instructors, as well as external trainers and experts, at various intervals. At the beginning of each academic year, a comprehensive induction programme is held for newly recruited teachers to familiarise them with School's pedagogical culture and expectations as well as the administrative rules. Teachers are also encouraged to participate in national and international workshops, seminars, and conferences.

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

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

### **3.2. THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES**

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

#### **3.2.1. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN THE CURRICULUM POLICY**

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

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

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

##### **3.2.1. 1. Curriculum aims**

The main aim of the curriculum is to provide the students with a good command of the language and academic skills that are necessary for their studies in different departments, and occupational skills that will help them in their future lives. In order to realise these aims the department is eager to provide variety of curricular choices and learning and acquisition opportunities. In addition, the department provides various other foreign language courses and online courses if requested. In this respect curricula for six Basic English courses have been designed to be offered online in the 2019-2020 academic year for the students of the School of Law. This is a good example that the DML curriculum is subject to continuous improvement and change in accordance with the academic, social and technological changes and needs.

### **3.2.1.2.Meeting academic needs**

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

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

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

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

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

Additionally, for those students who need a second foreign language, the requested foreign language courses are offered. In this frame presently five other foreign languages are offered in four levels.

### **3.2.1.3. Fostering learner autonomy**

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



with native speakers and other language learning materials at their reach. That is why in most of the courses offered by DML, there is an online or flipped learning component so that students can study at their own pace and self-chosen time and place which have been enriched with the addition of new online curriculum.

#### **3.2.1.4. Providing individual guidance**

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

#### **3.2.1.5. Effective use of teaching/learning materials**

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

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

#### **3.2.1.6. Utilising teaching/learning methods, techniques and strategies**

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

The methods, techniques and strategies can change in a learning environment, depending on the level, department of the course, homogeneity of the group in terms of motivation,

attitudes and values students apply to learning. The skilful and willing instructor is the guide on the students' side, a co-learner and a facilitator. Thus, he/she can use all available resources, (including him/herself), and conditions to draw the student to the learning process helping the students to stay involved, active and participative. In this framework, visuals, videos, realia, demonstration, drama, mimicry, technology, and all kinds of integrated strategies can be used for the realisation of learning through application. The methods, techniques and strategies are designed to facilitate cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning.

The main issue in this process is to encourage the students to discover their learning styles and establish communication channels with the instructors and peers to support their development. After all, it is they who have to succeed in the 'learning act' and be proud of themselves. For smooth running of the teaching-learning procedures in the courses either r face to face or online mode, not only students but also instructors undergo well planned orientation and training.

### **3.2.2. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

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

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

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

Before each evaluation instrument is applied, students are given adequate instruction and guidelines with sample questions regarding different elements of the assessment (see Course memos, test specifications). They are also provided with written task sheets through which they

are clearly guided. After the application of written exams, answer keys are shared and marker agreement and consistency is enhanced through standardization meetings. The process is augmented and justified by random checking and second marking.

#### **3.2.2.1. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

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

#### **3.2.2.2. RELIABILITY**

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

#### **3.2.2.3 VALIDITY**

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

preparation procedure) The crucial procedures which ensure the validity of the exams are as follows:

#### **3.2.2.3.1 Internal Verification**

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

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

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

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Each DML course is assigned to certain members of the Testing Unit, who deal with all the issues related to the above-mentioned exams of the course. Although the people in charge are divided into groups, each group follows the same procedures to maintain an internal verification of the exams as stated below.

### **3.2.2.3.2. Invigilation Procedure**

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

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

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

### **3.2.2.3.3. Marking Procedure**

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

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

- confidentiality and fair application of all procedures,
- following the agreed rubrics/criteria to mark tasks,

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- giving clear and comprehensible oral and written feedback on the tasks,
- having a clear-cut understanding of how well they are doing,

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

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

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

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

### **3.2.3. QUALITY APPLICATIONS IN DML PDU**

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

### **3.2.3.1.Seminars and Workshops:**

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

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

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

### **3.2.3.2.Conferences:**

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

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

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

Other main activities by the PDU are as follows:

- Regular meetings with instructors, focusing on weekly teaching practices and the implementation of the syllabus,
- Ongoing course review forms and meetings
- Meetings with individual instructors
- End of term evaluation forms
- Encouragement of instructors to engage in active research in their classrooms and to participate in various projects according to their interests
- Assigning institutional tasks to perform (1Book 1Topic, Speaking club, İz Journal, Cumhuriyet Newspaper etc.)

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

### **3.2.3.3. Staff Appraisal Policy**

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

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



- His/her strengths and weaknesses

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

#### **IV. QUALITY MAINTENANCE PLANS**

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

##### **4.1. ACTION PLAN FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

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

###### **4.1.1. Action plan for quality improvement in teaching/learning**

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

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

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

#### **4.1.2. Action plan for quality improvement in assessment**

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

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

#### **4.1.3. Action plan for quality improvement in staff training**

When quality is concerned in a teaching/learning environment the workforce is the key component. Instructors are the backbone of the whole workforce, therefore their training and quality improvement is of utmost importance to serve the (customers) students. The following are the points of consideration for staff training for future reference;

- Instructors should be consulted for training needs through questionnaires

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

#### **4.1.4. Action plan for improvement in complaint procedures**

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