

QA Framework for the Effective Communication with Employers

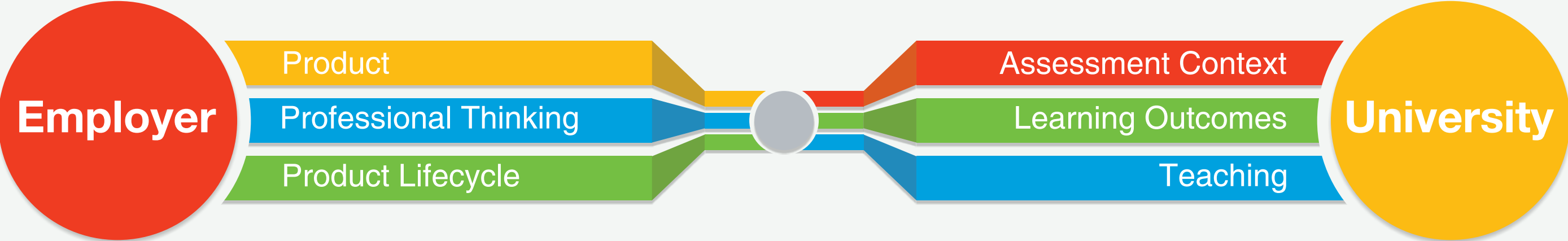
Armenian National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance, Foundation (ANQA)

Introduction

Continuous and effective communication with employers is significant for the strategic development of HEIs. As revealed during external quality assurance activities, the collaboration of employers and academics is fragmented and not regular. "Language of communication" is not understandable for all the stakeholders.

The suggested model comes to serve as **an internal quality assurance** tool for academic programm enhancement:

- When the results of conversation with employers' are used to improve **students' assessment practices and progress**;
- When the suggested "communication language" is understandable and acceptable for all parties (employers, programme directors, teachers, students).



Results of the Piloted Communication Framework

- The framework proved to be effective as it became a tool for:
- Finding understandable language for communication with employers
 - Interviewing employers to find out the working specific context
 - Translating context elements into assessment activities and practice
 - Reviewing student assessment system with active teaching staff
 - Ensuring students yearly progress aligning to employer context
 - Preparing for new cycle of communication

The framework created the environment of mutual understanding between all the stakeholders: employers, university staff and students and assisted in enhancing the academic programs together with employers.

Armenian good practice of university-employer cooperation was presented during 12th European Quality Assurance Forum. ANQA presented and discussed the framework and results of the pilot in translation business with the multinational professional community.

Focus groups discussions have been held with:

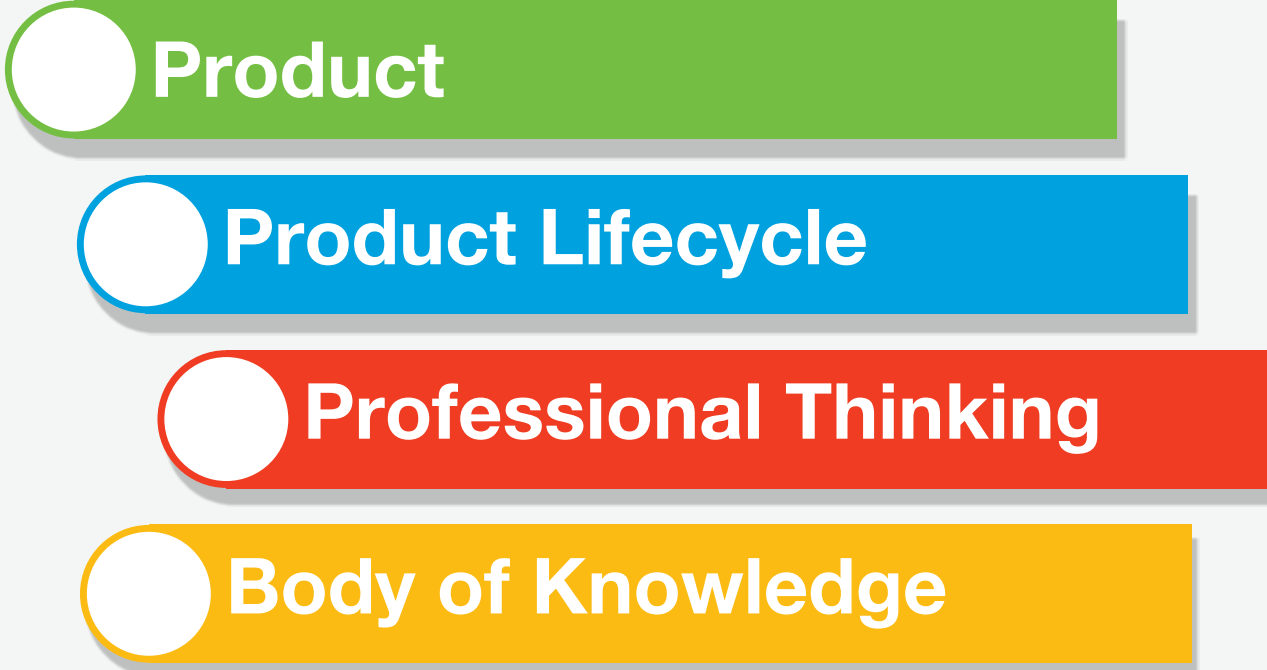
- High level management
- Middle level management
- Staff (3 years' experience)
- Head of Academic Programme
- Teaching staff

The framework has been piloted among:

- **Key IT employers** including umbrella organizations.
- Employers in **Translation business**.

The results have been discussed with academic programme directors and teachers.

Comunication Framework



Employer1 perspective: Our products are legal texts translation such as laws, forensic recordings, international agreements medical resolutions and etc. Employer2 perspective: Results of our service are personal documents, agreements, random texts	Perspective of the head of AP: All these products require specific thinking, and during bachelor studies the students cannot gain all necessary competencies to work with all these products. At Bachelor's level they can acquire some introductory understanding of certain aspects in these specific fields, and at Master level they can choose the field which is proper to their abilities. Generally the assessment here can be project-based.	Professional thinking: Motivation scheme Analytical and logical thinking (using the right word in the specific context, finding different contexts, preparing specific vocabulary from the start of the job), perfection and respect to case responsibility.	Teachers perspective: In fact our students don't know the whole lifecycle of the specialization. For this reason I will include the whole lifecycle of translation in my course with specific assignments: starting from pre-translation activity ending with verification of the translation.	Perspective of the head of AP: "This is an important factor": The whole life cycle of the speciality will be included in the programme starting from the 2 nd year of the Bachelor programme. For every stage of the lifecycle specific assignments will be designed. Assessment will take place for each stage of the lifecycle: self-assessment, peer-assessment, team work, making own tools and reasoning.
Body of knowledge: No big theories, tools, practice, a lot of translations, accumulation of contexts. Debates during studies. Team work, role plays. Real life assignments that make the whole lifecycle	Perspective of the head of AP: The real notion of interdisciplinary skills unfolds at Master's level, however at Bachelor's level assignments will be included in every course focusing on a specific topic and meetings with professionals from different fields and students will be motivated to develop their own vocabulary of terms after each meeting.	Teachers' perspective: I will include teaching specific search technologies in my course to strengthen analytical skills among students. As criteria I'll evaluate development of professional neceser. Reasoning of each editing will be highly requested.	Professional thinking: Realizing responsibility of the work (person who realizes the consequences of the translation quality). Ownership of the product. Working under pressure, meeting the deadlines.	Perspective of the head of AP: This is possible to achieve when the student has first-hand experience of the employers' business environment. I will change the programme so that the students are enabled to visit employers' offices for a week every semester, to shadow a translator. Assessment will be based on a reflection diary and self-assessment with reasoning of decisions. Student and teachers will motivate to do SWOT analyse to raise the responsibility.